MAKING IRELAND BRITISH
1580–1650
Making Ireland British
1580–1650

NICHOLAS CANNY
For Morwena
who has lived with this book
as long as she has with me
Preface

This book has been so long in the making that I can hardly remember a time when I have not been wrestling with questions concerning British settlement in Ireland, and the relationship between this engagement and simultaneous British involvement with North America. To the extent that, when I undertook my archival research, I was seeking after a deeper understanding of the place of Ireland in the history of Britain’s overseas expansion, what I have accomplished may be described as an exercise in what is now fashionably known as Atlantic History. My persistent efforts to connect developments in Ireland with simultaneous happenings in England and Scotland would seem also to qualify the book for inclusion under the equally fashionable category of New British History. However, my concern to relate events in Ireland, and Britain, to happenings on the continent of Europe would suggest that I am indifferent to fashion when I treat the histories of these two islands as but parts of the history of Europe. Two other aspects of my work which might puzzle readers when they seek to categorize this as a book, and me as a historian, is first that I give equal attention to social, economic, religious, intellectual, and political factors in influencing the episodes I have chosen to study, and second that I put evidence from what used to be described as creative literature on an equal footing with that gleaned from official documents, and other more conventional sources.

What readers may find unusual, or even unsettling, in my method is accounted for by many considerations, of most of which I am but dimly aware. However, while cognizant that truth in any absolute sense is beyond the reach of any human being, I still believe that I have a responsibility as a historian to seek to understand what motivated those people from the past whose lives I have chosen to study, and to explain how their actions impacted upon the human condition in their own and in subsequent generations. To this end I have, in the course of writing this book, and throughout my scholarly career, eschewed trends and orthodoxies; I have pursued my enquiry wherever the evidence leads me; and I have tried, whenever possible, to write from original sources with a view to understanding people, and the events in which they engaged, on their own terms.

To facilitate this latter ambition I have striven to describe the various groups who are the subjects of my enquiry as they would have done themselves, in preference to labelling them with historians’ descriptions. Thus, the settlers in these pages are variously English, New English, Scots, Welsh, and British, depending on the particular context; and those of Anglo-Norman descent are
Preface

Old English, but never Anglo-Irish, which is a historians’ term, and an inaccurate one at that. The only group who have presented me with a difficulty in this respect are those of Gaelic ancestry who were referred to by both settlers and Old English of the time as Irish or natives; I have chosen to describe them rather as Gaelic Irish, which is an Anglicization of the Irish-language usage that the people themselves employed. Those of Anglo-Norman ancestry who, as the settlers contended, had degenerated from the civility of their ancestors did not have a term to describe their condition, nor did they acknowledge it, but I have on occasion adopted the term Gaelicization, a coinage of Kenneth Nicholls, whenever it has proven necessary to describe a process which did take place, and I have used Anglicization to describe the obverse of that process. Similarly, in naming places, I have striven always to cling to the usage of the time. Most counties in Ireland were delineated during the years covered by this study, and I always use the names then chosen rather than alternatives selected by an independent Irish state after 1922, or those wished by some nationalist politicians of today. This leaves us with Queen’s County, rather than County Laois, King’s rather than Offaly, and Londonderry for the enlarged County Coleraine. Town and townland names that were the product of the plantation process described in this book have been similarly adopted except in those situations, such as Parsonstown for Birr, where the new coinage had not won general acceptance. When I refer to the composite monarchy ruled over by James VI and I and by King Charles I, it is always described as Britain and Ireland, and I deliberately avoid the politically loaded phrase ‘the British Isles’ not least because this was not a normal usage in the political discourse of the time.

The result of the investigation on which I have been engaged for a quarter-century is a weighty volume but one whose architecture permits easy access. Thus, despite a strong unifying argument which lends it coherence as a book, the individual chapters, and their sections, are clearly signposted and each is designed to make sense when read in isolation from the whole. The book is, essentially, about those people, whether in Britain or Ireland, who promoted plantations or colonization schemes in Ireland or who participated in such programmes. At every stage I ask what they knew when they engaged upon actions which they believed to be innovative, how they reached their decisions after they had evaluated the evidence available to them, and what they hoped to achieve by their schemes. In every instance I avoid passing judgement, but the close analysis of motive and intent leads logically to a consideration of how the best-laid schemes worked out in practice. This, in turn, leads to a consideration of how the sequence of colonization ventures launched upon Ireland between 1580 and 1650 impacted upon the pre-existing peoples and social groups resident or born in Ireland, and I again strive to see events through their eyes.

If I might describe the outcome of my work of writing and research negatively, it is not a general history of Ireland and Britain during these tumultuous
decades. However, the evidence presented here should force a revision of much received wisdom concerning the histories of both islands and the relationship between the two, while it also sheds some light on colonization as practised by Europeans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and on the character of revolt in early modern Europe. If readers are persuaded that I have cast these subjects in a new light I will consider my time to have been well spent.

No book could be completed without the assistance of others and I shall begin by thanking the owners of manuscripts and the many archivists who have treasured the papers that constitute the raw material from which this work has been fashioned. Mentioning all who have facilitated me would lead to an inordinately long list of debts, and I will leave it to the bibliography to identify my obligations. In some instances assistance in the archives went beyond the call of duty and I would like to record special thanks to the late Tom Wragg and Peter Day at Chatsworth House, to Julia Merritt at Sheffield City Library, to Mary Robertson at the Huntington Library, California, to Gerry Lyne and Noel Kissane of the Manuscript Room, in the National Library of Ireland, and to those who attended to me at the Scottish Record Office whose names I have shamefully forgotten. A special word of gratitude is also due to Bernard O’Donoghue, the director of the National Library of Ireland, who has hearkened to my frequent complaints that opening hours in the Manuscript Room there were particularly inadequate for students living outside Dublin even if his remedy to the problem came too late to benefit my own research.

I would also like to record my appreciation to those individuals and institutions who provided, or mobilized, financial and academic support, great and small, for me when funds for humanities research in Ireland were limited. Here I would list Royal Irish Academy/British Academy exchange fellowships in 1976–7, 1977–8, and in 1994–5, which enabled me to undertake research in British libraries and archives during vacation periods; a short visiting fellowship at the Huntington Library, California, May 1980, which enabled me to scrutinize the relevant papers in their manuscript holdings, and year-long fellowships first at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, for 1979–80, and then at the National Humanities Center, North Carolina, for 1986–7. In these latter institutions, I enjoyed seemingly unlimited time to pore over manuscript material on microfilm, and to discuss with others, who also had leisure to reflect, where my research was leading me. Here I would record my thanks to Sir John Elliott, who sponsored my visit to the Institute at Princeton, and to Jack Greene and Joan Thirsk who most closely shared my research interest during the year at North Carolina.

Visits to foreign research institutes were especially vital to me because my home university, once University College, Galway, and now the National University of Ireland, Galway, was poorly endowed with books and research
facilities when I commenced the research for this book. These deficiencies have been remedied to the point where we can now boast of a modest research library, and here I would like to thank Marie Reddan, the librarian at the James Hardiman Library at Galway, and her staff, as well as the governing authority of the university who enabled these developments. The university also provided a grant from their millennium fund towards the cost of making maps and an index, and Sinead Armstrong proved herself an imaginative cartographer. Yet another foreign institution came to my assistance at the final stage; this time the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, whose invitation to spend 2000–1 as a Fellow in Residence enabled me to proceed with copy-editing, proofreading, and indexing the book expeditiously, and in a most congenial environment.

Even with all such assistance it would have been impossible to complete the writing of such a large book without some release from the grind of teaching and administration that is the lot of every Irish academic at the outset of the twenty-first century. It was thus fortunate that resources to provide such release became available in 2000 with the establishment by the Higher Education Authority of a Centre for the Study of Human Settlement and Historical Change at NUI, Galway. Since the research associated with this book was largely instrumental in persuading the HEA, and its academic assessors, to fund this Centre, it is appropriate that Making Ireland British 1580–1650 should be its first academic output. The book will, I hope, prove to be the point of departure for continuing innovative research on the broad subject of Human Settlement and Historical Change.

Despite the university’s poverty in material resources during the early years when I laboured on this task, I have always had the benefit of colleagues in the Arts Faculty, and more especially in the History Department, who proved themselves true scholars willing to debate the issues and sources I have been grappling with. Intellectual sustenance also came from the small, but lively, group of early modernists, in Literature as well as in History, who, down through the years, have corresponded with me, initially by post, but more recently by email. Some scholars have given generously of their time to read and comment upon individual chapters or sections, and my thanks to each one is recorded in the notes to the particular chapters. Some sections have also been tried out on the academic community as conference papers, journal articles, or as chapters in edited books, and I thank the editors and audiences who have given me the benefit of their criticism.

Up to the time of submission of a full text to Oxford University Press, nobody, besides myself, has seen the work in its entirety, and I ask the indulgence of all who have offered advice on the parts if they conclude from their reading of the whole that I have not always been guided by their counsel.
I am also grateful to successive commissioning History editors at Oxford for their confidence that I would see this mammoth task to completion; to Ivon Asquith who offered me a contract many years ago, to Tony Morris who not only refrained from forcing me to abide by my contract but gave me the indulgence to engage in other historical writing which he duly saw through the Press, and finally to Ruth Parr who persuaded me both to proceed with writing the book and to refocus it. I am even more indebted to Ruth Parr because she did not quail when she came to realize the true dimensions of what I had been describing to her as a big book, and because she was readily persuaded by the reader, to whom she turned for advice, that the subject warranted this scale of attention. The reader, as it transpired, was Jane Ohlmeyer, who unmasked herself to me once it became clear that this would result in her excellent pointers for improvement being implemented more effectively. I would also like to record my appreciation of the work of Michael Watson, who saw the book through the Press, of Jackie Pritchard, who proved a sympathetic copy-editor, and of Jackie Brind, who compiled the index.

The commune with living scholars and helpful history editors that has kept me mentally alert has complemented that with earlier generations who have addressed the same problems that interest me, even if not in a similar fashion. Some of this interaction, going back to Seeley, Lecky, and Froude in the 1880s, has, of necessity, been confined to reading and thinking about their work, but I received encouragement in my early days from the frequently maligned generation of Edwards and Moody, but particularly from the late G. A. Hayes-Mc-Coy, who taught me, and from David B. Quinn, who inspired me. Their immediate successors who specialized on seventeenth-century Ireland were also invariably helpful, even when they looked quizically on colonization as an organizing framework for my endeavour, and here I would especially mention Aidan Clarke and Hugh Kearney. These debts make me conscious that I have been left holding the torch which has been passed to me, and I, in turn, am happy to record its acceptance by a succeeding generation which includes the many who have attended my undergraduate classes at Galway, but more especially to those who have proceeded to research degrees under my supervision, and research students of other institutions who have turned to me for advice, whose work I have had frequent occasion to refer to in the notes. The thanks due to my wife need to be recorded by way of dedication.

N.C.

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Contents

LIST OF MAPS

1. SPENSER SETS THE AGENDA
   1.1. Discoursing in Dublin
   1.2. Poetry as Politics: *The Faerie Queene*
   1.3. Spenser as Moral Philosopher in 1596
   1.4. Spenser’s *View of the Present State of Ireland*
   1.5. Conclusion

2. THE ENGLISH PRESENCE IN SPENSER’S IRELAND
   2.1. The Background
   2.2. Soldiers
   2.3. Officers
   2.4. Administrators
   2.5. Conclusion

3. THE MUNSTER PLANTATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE
   3.1. The Theory
   3.2. The Practice
   3.3. The Consequence

4. PLANTATION IN IRELAND 1603–1622: THEORY AND PRACTICE
   4.1. The Politics of Plantation 1603–1622
   4.2. The Plantation of Ulster: The Theory
   4.3. The Plantation of Ulster: The Practice 1609–1622

5. THE POLITICS OF PLANTATION 1622–1641
   5.1. The Report of the Commission of 1622
   5.2. The Plantation Issue 1622–1632
   5.3. Wentworth’s Policy of Plantation 1632–1641
   5.4. Conclusion

6. THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN WENTWORTH’S IRELAND
   6.1. The Establishment

xv
## Contents

6.2. British Settlement in Ireland: Evidence from the Estate Records 308
6.3. The British Presence in Munster 336
6.4. The British Presence in Ulster 347
6.5. The British Presence in Leinster 362
6.6. The British Presence in Connacht 384
6.7. The British Presence in Ireland: Appearance and Reality 389

7. PLANTATION AND ITS POLITICS: THE IRISH RESPONSES 402
7.1. The Problem 402
7.2. The Irish at Home 403
7.3. The Irish Abroad 418
7.4. Natives and Strangers 432
7.5. Conclusion 455

8. THE IRISH INSURRECTION OF 1641 461
8.1. The Historiographical Background 461
8.2. The Rising in Ulster in 1641 499
8.3. The Rising in Connacht and Clare in 1641 492
8.4. The Rising of 1641 in Leinster and in Waterford 501
8.5. The Rising in Munster in 1641 524
8.6. Conclusion 534

9. CONCLUSION: MAKING IRELAND BRITISH 1580–1650 551

BIBLIOGRAPHY 579
GLOSSARY 607
INDEX 609
List of Maps

3.1. Model of a Munster seignory  131
3.2. Mapping, surveying, and settling in Munster  139
3.3. The assignment of estates in Munster  141
4.1. Plantations in Ireland before 1622  186
6.1. Munster settlers and the wider world  312
6.2. The distribution of British settlers in Munster c.1641  337
6.3. Youghal’s network of Irish commerce c.1641  345
6.4. The distribution of British settlers in Leinster c.1641  363
6.5. Dublin’s network of Irish commerce c.1641  367
8.1. The rising in Ulster in 1641  479
8.2. The rising in Leinster in 1641  504
CHAPTER ONE
Spenser Sets the Agenda

1.1. DISCOURSING IN DUBLIN

Among the many Elizabethan tracts that have a bearing upon England’s involvement with Ireland, *A Discourse of Civill Life* by Ludowick Bryskett is frequently referred to by scholars. 1 Although not published until 1606, the text had been composed in Ireland about twenty years previously, and had originally been dedicated to Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, who had been Bryskett’s principal patron during the short interval that Grey served as governor in Ireland 1580–2. 2 There is little original thought in the *Discourse*, and Bryskett acknowledged that it was no more than a translation, conflation, and an adaptation into an Irish setting of three Italian treatises on moral philosophy, published during the 1560s and 1570s when Bryskett himself had been on the Continent. 3 Neither does Bryskett’s *Discourse* shed much fresh information on social conditions in Ireland or on government policy. Scholars allude to the text principally because Bryskett introduces his friend Edmund Spenser as an interlocutor in the dialogue which, among other matters, was devoted to a discussion of the purpose behind Spenser’s composition

It is my intention in this chapter to appraise the works and career of Spenser from the perspective of a historian, but, for the most part, using creative literature which usually falls within the purview of literary scholars. I consider myself justified in doing so because neither Spenser, nor his intellectual mentor Philip Sidney, would have recognized such boundaries to knowledge as exist in academia today. However I do recognize significant differences between the methods of the historian and of the literary scholar, and I make no pretensions to being other than a historian, albeit one who accepts the merit of cross-disciplinary endeavours. I am grateful to Elizabeth Fowler for reading and commenting upon a preliminary draft of this chapter thereby diverting me from many false trails, even if not keeping me to what she, as a literary scholar, would regard as the right course.

1 *A Discourse of Civill Life: Containing the Ethike Part of Morall Philosophie, Fit for the Instructing of a Gentleman in the Course of a Virtuous Life*, by LOD : BR. (London, 1606, STC 3958); the text cited here is Ludowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, ed. Thomas E. Wright (Northridge, Calif., 1970), and is referred to as Bryskett, *Discourse*.

2 The dating of the composition of the text is uncertain but it would appear to have been written no earlier than Grey’s departure from Ireland in 1582 and no later than the appearance in print of the first three books of the *Faerie Queene* in 1590; the generally accepted date of composition is 1584; for general details on the career of Bryskett see H. R. Plomer and T. P. Cross, *The Life and Correspondence of Ludowick Bryskett* (Chicago, 1927); Deborah Jones, ‘Ludowick Bryskett and his Family’, in C. J. Sisson (ed.), *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), 243–362; A. C. Hamilton et al. (eds.), *The Spenser Encyclopedia* (Toronto, 1990), 119; on Grey, *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 341–2.

3 The principal treatises employed by Bryskett were Giambattista Giraldi, ‘Tre dialoghi della vita civile’, in De gli hecatommithi (1565); Alessandro Piccolomini, *Della instituzione morale* (1566); and Stefano Guazzo, *La civil conversazione* (1574).
of the *Faerie Queene*, sections of which had been seen in draft by some of the party.\(^4\)

The setting in which Bryskett’s *Discourse* was enacted is so imitative of Cicero and Horace, and of Italian Renaissance authors, that one can suppose it to be largely fictive. Bryskett, who in 1582 had been disappointed when passed over in favour of Geoffrey Fenton (the translator of Guiccardini) for the position of secretary to the Dublin administration, loftily portrayed himself as one who, with the permission of Lord Grey, had then resigned from the arduous but ineffectual position of clerk to the Irish Privy Council, where his health was being impaired by constant writing and standing, so that he could devote more time to the concerns of the mind and especially the study of moral philosophy.\(^5\) This preoccupation, he contended, would prove more profitable to the commonwealth because it would enable him to discuss principles, gleaned from the writings of the ancients, that would serve for the education and guidance of young subjects of the English crown. Bryskett claimed that he had also withdrawn from the social life in Dublin—shades of Niccolò Machiavelli—for reasons of health to a ‘little cottage’ which he had ‘newly built’ within a mile of the city and overlooking it. There, supposedly, he had taken to gardening while taking the physic that had been prescribed for him by Thomas Smith the apothecary, and it was there on a spring day, when in consultation with Smith, that he was pleasantly surprised by a visit from eight of his friends and former associates who had walked out from Dublin to visit him. The conversation that ensued, and which was continued over two further days (with the company going home each evening and returning in the morning), developed into *A Discourse of Civill Life*.\(^6\)

While we are not obliged to accept this narration at face value, we can be certain that the characters identified were indeed acquainted, and that they engaged in occasional discussions on those very issues that were treated in the *Discourse*. We can also assume that serving English officials in Ireland, such as Bryskett, Spenser, and Geoffrey Fenton, who had literary pretensions, were accustomed to exchanging scholarly work in progress with each other, and with acquaintances in England, so that they could have the benefit of criticism from their peers. It is thus entirely plausible that several of Bryskett’s visitors had seen parts of the *Faerie Queene* in draft, and that Spenser in turn had enjoyed a preview of Bryskett’s translation of ‘A Dialogue of Civil Life’ by Giambattista Giraldi, which was the principal source for the *Discourse*. Some arguments in the *Discourse*, and in Spenser’s open letter to Raleigh which served as a guide to the *Faerie Queene*, suggest that Spenser and others of the group were familiar with the arguments of Philip Sidney’s *The Defence of Poesy*,


\(^5\) Ibid. 16–17.

\(^6\) Ibid. 7, and passim; the similarity to Machiavelli is as in his letter of 10 Dec. 1513 to Francesco Vettori, printed in Eric Cochrane and Julius Kirshner (eds.), *The Renaissance* (Chicago, 1986), 182–5.
which, although not published until 1595, is thought to have been written, or begun, by Sidney in 1580. Sidney would also appear, like the parties to the Discourse, to have had a preview of the Faerie Queene because, when speaking in his Defence of Poesy of the appeal of poetry to martial men, he can only have had the Faerie Queene in mind when he pronounced that ‘Orlando Furioso or honest King Arthur [would] never displease a soldier’. Similarly, it is highly probable that, a decade later, Edmund Spenser, Richard Beacon, and William Herbert discussed and compared each other’s ideas when all three, who were then planters in Munster and officials on the provincial council there, undertook the writing of treatises on the reform of Ireland, and these three certainly made copies of their texts available to people of influence in England.

The occurrence of such exchanges would not necessarily have meant that these literati were of one mind on all issues. However, regular interaction would have meant that the more articulate administrators in Ireland were brought to focus their minds on common problems even if they did not arrive at common solutions. Such exchanges, especially where they concerned English policy in Ireland, would have been followed closely by a broad spread of serving officials in Ireland as well as by those senior figures in the English government who professed interest in Irish affairs, if not by the queen herself. These observers might have been divided over the solutions proposed, but such difference of opinion can be explained more readily by reference to the circumstances and the patronage connections of individuals than to their ideological fixations.

Bryskett’s selection of the group of individuals who were party to his dialogue is interesting in itself. Of those from among the nine whose earlier careers can be traced, all can be seen to have been closely associated with the Sidney/Leicester political faction either because they owed their appointments to Sir

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Henry Sidney when he had served as governor in Ireland, or because they had enjoyed the favour of the earl of Leicester and his associates at court, or because they had had previous contact with Philip Sidney, described by Bryskett as ‘that worthy bright light of our age’. This factional identification meant that the members of the group are all likely to have been supporters of Lord Grey, who had, in effect, been advanced by Leicester for appointment as governor of Ireland in 1580 when Queen Elizabeth had refused to concede that post to Leicester’s nephew Philip Sidney, who may have exhausted his credit with the queen by advising her in writing against her proposed marriage with Francis, duke of Alençon and Anjou. Grey had been previously mooted for this posting in 1572 (then also on Leicester’s prompting), and after his appointment in 1580 he ‘was sent’ (presumably by the queen) to take counsel from the earl of Sussex, whose service as governor, he diplomatically assured Sussex, would become the ‘ground work’ for his own rule. This assurance was far from sincere because Sussex, although married to a sister of Sir Henry Sidney, had long been a bitter opponent of both Leicester and Sir Henry Sidney, and Sussex would have been further resented by Grey because he was a defender of Mary queen of Scots and an advocate of Queen Elizabeth’s proposed marriage to the French duke. It is therefore altogether more likely that Grey was guided by Sir Henry Sidney’s advice to him on ‘how to proceed in his Government of that kingdom’, and he is likely also to have been furnished with a copy of Philip Sidney’s ‘Discourse on Irish Affairs’ which was probably as much a statement by the young Sidney of what his policies would have been, had he procured the post, as it was a defence of the administration of his father.

The association of the Dublin discoursers with the Leicester/Sidney/Grey connection meant also that they too can be identified with the advanced Protestantism of the middle years of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. This would not have defined them so much theologially as it would have positioned them with those who believed that religion and politics were inextricably linked. For them, therefore, Catholicism was a proven tyrannical force—certainly since the Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Day in 1572—which was intent on cancelling the achievements of the Protestant Reformation everywhere, but especially in England where it hoped to advance its ambitions either through

10 Bryskett, Discourse, 3; Bryskett had been guide and tutor to Philip Sidney on his European tour.

11 Grey to Burghley, 19 Sept. 1572, in A Commentary of the Services and Charges of William Lord Grey of Wilton by his Son Lord Grey of Wilton . . ., ed. Sir Philip De Malpas Grey Egerton (London, 1847), 66; Grey to Sussex, 29 June 1580, in Commentary, 66–7; Sir Henry Sidney to Arthur Lord Grey, 17 Sept. 1580, in Commentary, 68–74; Philip Sidney, ‘Discourse on Irish Affairs’, in Miscellaneous Prose, 8–12; only a fragment of this ‘Discourse’ survives but that fragment indicates that Grey would have had to look no further for draconian advice; Philip Sidney against the queen’s proposed marriage, 1579, in Miscellaneous Prose, 33–57; more generally on Grey’s appointment, and of the interest of the Sidneys in it, see relevant correspondence in Arthur Collins (ed.), Letters and Memorials of State, 2 vols. (London, 1746), and De L’Isle and Dudley Manuscripts, 2 vols. (HMC, London, 1925).
arranging a Catholic marriage for Queen Elizabeth, or through having the Catholic queen of Scotland installed on the English throne. It was quite clear to those advanced Protestants who were stationed in Ireland that that kingdom would play a particular role in this subversion, and their presumptions on this score were given credence by the Desmond and Baltinglass revolts of 1579, which enjoyed papal sanction, and which Grey was assigned to suppress. Further proof of sinister machinations aimed at the overthrow of Protestantism was that Grey was recalled from his assignment in 1582 while the war was still raging. On the positive side these advanced Protestants had a particular interest in Ireland not only because it was the part of the queen’s inheritance where Protestantism needed most urgently to be established, but because it was also the only place where a sizeable English army was maintained in the queen’s pay, command of which would be critical in the event of their having to defend a Protestant succession in England through military conflict akin to that then raging in the Low Countries and in France. The appointment of Grey to the Irish post seemed therefore perfect from the point of view of his supporters in England, and their clients in Ireland, both because he (like his father before him) had a commendable military record, and because he had been a strident opponent of a Catholic succession to the English throne, having advocated the execution of Mary queen of Scots, following the Ridolfi plot of 1571, and having served on the jury which, in 1573, had condemned the duke of Norfolk to death on the charge of threatening the political stability of England by aspiring to marry the Scottish queen without the consent of Elizabeth.12

This explanation of what Lord Grey and his supporters stood for will indicate that all parties to the Discourse would not only have felt betrayed by Grey’s summary recall in 1582, but would also have considered that his dismissal cancelled any possibility of securing Ireland for Protestantism, at least in the short term.13 Apart from their close association with one particular court faction in England, the group isolated by Bryskett was a representative cross-section of the administrators who had come to prominence in Ireland during the 1580s and who were to persist there until the 1640s. The first defining feature was that all were committed Protestants, and all but the lawyer Robert Dillon were English born. Dillon, however, had had much of his education in England, and although of Old English lineage had come to identify closely with the Reformation and had been persistently promoted in the administration over the heads of more experienced members

13 Spenser, View, 20, 91–2, and 106–7; Bryskett’s steadfastness to Lord Grey is clear from the fact that he dedicated the Discourse to him even though Grey had already been recalled.
of the Old English community of the Pale who were either loyal to the old religion or lukewarm supporters of Protestantism. It is probable that Dillon was indeed a friend of Bryskett, but there may be some tokenism associated with his inclusion, as there was in the early seventeenth century on those rare occasions whenever ‘a native [and] a Protestant of eminent and approved abilities and integrity’ could be found to fill a position in Ireland by English administrators who would normally promote the candidacy of one of their own faction.

Bryskett’s group included one churchman, John Long who held the primatial see of Armagh; two senior administrators, Sir Robert Dillon the Chief Justice, and Dormer the queen’s solicitor; four captains in the army, Christopher Carleil, Thomas Norris, Warham St Leger, and Nicholas Dawtrey; and two minor officials, Edmund Spenser and Ludowick Bryskett. These three distinct elements represented the three constituent parts—the church, the army, and lay officials—of the English administration that was to govern Ireland over the next half-century. Tensions always existed between the three elements, and they surfaced even in the Discourse when Archbishop Long reprimanded Bryskett for having stepped beyond the bounds of secular discourse into the realm of theology. Such vocational jealousies exacerbated rivalries that derived from patronage connections to the point where some scholars have treated the political history of Ireland during the years 1580–1640 as the chronicle of such rivalries. What united these three elements of the ruling group was however far more binding than anything that divided them, and we see in this present instance that good relationships were restored between Long and Bryskett, once the latter had apologized for the misunderstandings that had made it appear that he had stepped into the ‘marches’ of the Church. The truth was that their shared attachment to Protestantism gave the several elements of the ruling elite a sense of purpose and cohesion that was more fundamental than any division, and it had a particular bonding effect in Ireland after the 1580s when lines of religious division at the upper social level within the English-speaking community were

15 See, for example, Wentworth to Secretary Coke, 3 Aug. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, Letter Book 9, fo. 243), where the governor recommended Mr James Donnellan, chief justice of Connacht, for the position of justice of the common pleas, in the knowledge that it tended to ‘content and please this people extremely when any of their own nation ceteris paribus [other things being equal] are preferred’.
16 Bryskett, Discourse, 7; the apothecary Thomas Smith was but an accidental participant in the early stages of the conversation and was not present after the first day.
17 Bryskett, Discourse, 18–19.
18 See for example Terence O. Ranger, ‘The Career of Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork, in Ireland, 1588–1643’ (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1959); the first section of this thesis is organized around the internal politics of the ruling group; see also Victor Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 1616–28: A Study in Anglo-Irish Politics (Dublin, 1998).
19 Bryskett, Discourse, 19.
to become ever more starkly drawn between those who were stridently Protestant, and those who identified with militant Catholic doctrines as these had been redefined at the Council of Trent. This clear-cut division forced the Protestant rulers to recognize themselves as an isolated group within a society that was rapidly becoming more self-consciously Catholic. Their inwardness was marked increasingly by a tendency to marry within their own ranks and to contemplate alliances for their children with families of Old English or Gaelic lineage only where these were negotiated at such a young age or under such strict conditions that conversion of the Catholic party to Protestantism would be certain.\(^{20}\)

Such responses lay in the future and there is no evidence that any of Bryskett’s select group understood how their relationship with Ireland would develop. However it is clear that they did see themselves to be culturally isolated (whether as Protestants or mostly English born is not clear), and obliged to engage upon an educational endeavour to promote civil, by which they meant English, standards. Thus Bryskett, while suggesting that his \textit{Discourse} was designed for the edification of all the queen’s subjects, seemed to think that it was especially appropriate for ‘this barbarous country of Ireland’, and would be ‘rare in such a place, where almost no trace of learning is to be seen and where the documents of Philosophy are the more needful because they are so season [rare]’.\(^{21}\)

While designed with the needs of Ireland in view, Bryskett’s \textit{Discourse} was intended more specifically to assist those who had the responsibility to promote the reform of the previously Anglicized population in Ireland through the process of education. To this extent it was the continuation of an ongoing debate within the English-speaking community in Ireland, but a debate that would become increasingly confined to the Protestant members of that community after the establishment of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1592.\(^{22}\) Any such programme was to be concerned with the future leaders of society, and, consistent with this, Bryskett proposed to ‘discourse upon the moral virtues, yet not omitting the intellectual to the end to frame a gentleman fit for civil conversation and to set him in the direct way that leadeth him to his civil felicity’. Again, as if to suggest that the education of aspiring Irish gentlemen was foremost in his mind, he declared that his intention was ‘to give light as well to the meaner learned (whose judgements can be content to busy itself rather to learn what they know not, than to find faults) as to

\(^{20}\) For examples of this discernment in practise see Nicholas Canny, \textit{The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork, 1566–1643} (Cambridge, 1982), 77–123.

\(^{21}\) Bryskett, \textit{Discourse}, 5; this same sentiment was expressed by Philip Sidney in much the same words: ‘In our neighbour country Ireland, where truly learning goes very bare, yet are their poets held in a devout reverence,’ \textit{Defence}, 214.

\(^{22}\) For a general discussion of proposals for reform see Colm Lennon, \textit{Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest} (Dublin, 1994).
the learner critiques that spend their eyes to find a hair upon an egg'; such critics were, presumably, to be found in England.23

This summary of Bryskett's purpose reveals the modest limits to his ambition. He readily acknowledged that he was merely extending to those young men whose vernacular was English the same easy access to the wisdom of the ancients that was already available to those who had the good fortune to be born in Renaissance Italy. His work in translating and collating the Italian texts would not only save English students the 'time' that learning the classical languages (or Italian) would have required, but would also give them the benefit of the textual explication of the Italian scholars who had isolated the 'precepts' for good conduct that had been taught by the ancients but 'which Plato or Aristotle [had] confusedly or obscurely left written'. Even in offering to subjects of the English crown a short cut to the knowledge of good behaviour, Bryskett acknowledged both his own limited command of Greek and his indebtedness to Edmund Spenser who was 'perfect in the Greek tongue' and who, 'out of the love and kindness' that he bore him, had encouraged and assisted him in his effort to learn Greek.24 If Bryskett reciprocated it was by introducing Spenser to the Italian literature on which the Discourse was based, and Spenser was certainly familiar with the poetry of Torquato Tasso, which he was to acknowledge as one of the more potent models that he had before him when designing the Faerie Queene. Spenser made no mention of Bryskett as his guide to Tasso but they were both certainly admirers of his work because Bryskett's two best-known poems are but unacknowledged paraphrases of two poems by Tasso.25

All of this suggests that the association between Bryskett and Spenser was to their mutual intellectual enrichment, but Bryskett still contended that Spenser's mastery of Greek gave him the essential key to a true understanding of moral philosophy. However when Spenser, in his capacity as a discussant in A Discourse of Civill Life, was invited by the company to speak on the subject, he professed that he could, at that point, add little to what Bryskett had already said, but hoped to make a future contribution because it was 'not unknown' to them that he had:

already undertaken a work tending to the same effect, which is in heroical verse, under the title of a Faerie Queene, to represent all the moral virtues, assigning to every

23 Bryskett, Discourse, 6–7; the framing of a gentleman brings Castiglione to mind, but is an aspect also of the general debate considered in Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare (Chicago, 1980).
24 Bryskett, Discourse, 21.
25 W. P. Mustard, 'Lodowick Bryskett and Bernardo Tasso', American Journal of Philology, 35 (1914), 192–9; Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia 676, sub. Torquato Tasso; Spenser's acknowledgement of his indebtedness to Tasso was made in the course of his open letter to Raleigh of 23 Jan. 1590, and published with the first three books of the Faerie Queene; see Spenser, Faerie Queene, ed. A. C. Hamilton, 737–8; this edition of the Faerie Queene will be referred to throughout as FQ, with relevant book, canto, and page numbers; for Spenser's minor poems I have used Edmund Spenser, The Shepherd's Calendar and Other Poems, ed. Philip Henderson (London, 1932).
knight to be the patron and defender of the same: in whose actions and feats of arms
and chivalry, the operations of that virtue, whereof he is the protector, are to be
expressed, and the vices & unruly appetites that oppose themselves against the same
to be beaten down & overcome. Which work, as I have already entered into if God
shall please to spare me life that I may finish it according to my mind, your wish
(M. Bryskett) will be in some sort accomplished, though perhaps not so effectually as
you could desire. 26

The common purpose, if not method, shared in the 1580s by Bryskett
and Spenser possibly owed something to their having been close friends and
colleagues in Ireland. Each, as noted, was also interested in intellectual
discourse in Italy, and both were linked with literary and political discussion
within the Sidney circle in England. Spenser’s project was, as everybody could
see, much grander than the modest undertaking of Bryskett, and the audience
that Spenser had in mind, at least down to 1590 when the first three books
of the Faerie Queene were published, was certainly a broad literate English-
speaking public. However Spenser, as we shall see, also considered that his
endeavour had particular relevance for Ireland, and both writers still implied,
even as they made disparaging remarks about it, that that part of Ireland
which had been subject to English rule since the twelfth century was still part
of the English polity and recoverable to the standards of civility that obtained
in England itself.

1.2. POETRY AS POLITICS: THE FAERIE QUEENE

That Bryskett and Spenser did indeed share common concerns, as is stated
in the opening section of the Discourse, was confirmed by Spenser when he
himself explained what he had in mind when he undertook the composition
of the Faerie Queene in almost the same words that were attributed to him by
Bryskett in the Discourse. Spenser’s own statement of purpose was put most
forcefully in his open letter of 23 January 1590 to Sir Walter Ralegh which
was appended to the first three books of the poem, published in that year. 27
Here he made it clear that his ‘general intention and meaning’ was moral,
and that he strove, by the examples he set before his readers, ‘to fashion a
gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline’, while, at the
same time, to entertain his audience with stories from the life of King Arthur.
In thus setting out to write what he described as ‘a historical fiction’, Spenser
likened his endeavour to that of the ancient authors Homer and Virgil, and
that of the Renaissance writers Ariosto and Tasso, who all having composed
poetic works ‘for examples sake’ had chosen to teach by example rather than
‘by rule’. Education of the latter kind, described also by Bryskett as ‘teaching
by rule’, might be thought of as deriving from the Latin verb educo, educare,

26 Bryskett, Discourse, 22. 27 FQ, pp. 737–8.
meaning to pour in, while the purer form of education, favoured by the character Spenser, and described by him as ‘teaching by example’, certainly had its origin in the Latin verb *educo*, *educere*, meaning to lead forth. While there is, and was, a fundamental philosophical difference between the two concepts of education, the characters in the *Discourse* did not consider them to be necessarily incompatible. Spenser accepted Bryskett’s preoccupation with the identification and inculcation of the rules governing good behaviour, while expressing admiration for Tasso who had drawn the clearest distinction between ‘the virtues of a private man’, ‘which they in philosophy call Ethic’, and the public achievements of that same man, ‘named politic’.28

Following this model of Tasso, Spenser set out in the *Faerie Queene* to dwell upon the formation of the character of King Arthur before he became king, presenting him ‘in the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private moral virtues’, as these had been defined by Aristotle. Then when this task had been accomplished over the course of twelve books, Spenser proposed to treat, in a further series of books, of the ‘politicke virtues in his person, after that he came to be king’. What Spenser had in mind in 1590, when he published the first three books of his poem, was therefore altogether more ambitious than what he ultimately accomplished, and one of our concerns will be to suggest reasons why the grand undertaking of twelve (and possibly twenty-four) books of poetry was consciously abandoned after only six books had been completed. Such an explanation seems all the more necessary because it is clear from the remarks in both the *Discourse* and the letter to Ralegh that Spenser had, by 1590, at least blocked out the shape of the first twelve books, some of which, as we saw, were to treat of the upbringing of King Arthur. Moreover Spenser was then able to outline the details of the twelfth book, from which the action of the entire poem stemmed, and it is clear from that outline that whatever he had written then does not feature in any of the six published books.

Besides the moral or educative purpose which Spenser shared with Bryskett, he also intended the poem to serve the purely political purpose of bringing glory to ‘our sovereign the Queene, and her kingdom in Faery Land’. Here again, following Tasso, he wished to distinguish between the public persona of ‘a most royal Queen or Empress’ as she sat in state, and the private character of ‘a most virtuous and beautiful lady’. In order to make this distinction absolute, Spenser represented the private person by Belphoebe, but readers were left in no doubt that she too was the queen and that Queen Elizabeth’s public achievements were the product of her private virtues. This political dimension to the poem has, down through the years, been castigated either because it was considered to be self-serving, or because it detracted from the artistic qualities of the work; such criticism is now less frequently heard and
many scholars would now agree with the assessment of Andrew Hadfield that ‘The Faerie Queene demands to be read as an intervention into Elizabethan political thought and clearly points out ways of reading past, present, and future.’

While it does all of that we must also accept that the resulting topical and propaganda aspects both added to the popular appeal of the poem while keeping it within the prescriptions for true poetry as these were defined by Philip Sidney in his Defence of Poesy, because, following Cicero, it helped people ‘to know the force love of our country hath in us’. Significantly, one of the commendatory verses published with the first three books of the Faerie Queene remarked that ‘Sidney thought it fit’, which means either that Sidney, who had died in the Netherlands in 1586, had approved a draft of the poem, or else that its glorification of England’s national and Protestant interests was so uncompromising, at a time when Europe was perceived as increasingly hostile to both, that the author of the dedicatory verse assumed it would have enjoyed the imprimatur of one who, by his death, had become a martyr for both causes.

While Spenser stated in this letter to Ralegh (which was intended as a key to understanding the Faerie Queene) his views on what purpose his, and all, poetry should serve, he returned to these principles repeatedly throughout his writings, and sometimes in the most surprising places. For example, in A View of the Present State of Ireland, Eudoxus and Irenius engaged in a long discussion on the proper role for the poet in society, with the innocent Eudoxus proceeding from the assumption ‘that in all ages, poets have been had in special reputation, and . . . not without great cause, for besides their sweet inventions and witty lays, they are always used to set forth the praises of the good and virtuous, and to beat down and disgrace the bad and vicious’. The worldly wise Irenius conceded that this indeed was the situation in moral societies, but he was able to demonstrate from his experience in the corrupt society of Ireland that the opposite could also be true and that perverse poets, ‘far from instructing young men in moral discipline’, could choose for them ‘as an example to follow’ the man who was found ‘to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doings, most dangerous and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition’.

This discussion of the perversion of purpose that could occur was offered in the context of advancing a condemnation of Gaelic poets, but Spenser was aware that abuse of the poetic talent was not unknown in England. Thus in book V of the Faerie Queene, as Artegall and Arthur were making their way to the royal presence, they encountered one Bonfont/Malfont who, ‘adjudged so by law’, had had his tongue nailed to a post:

29 Andrew Hadfield, Spenser’s Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyl (Oxford, 1997), 125.
31 View, 73–5.
For that therewith he falsely did revile,
And foule blaspheme that Queene for forged guile
Both with bold speeches, which he blazed had,
And with lewd poems, which he did compile,
For the bold title of a poet bad
He on himself had ta’en, and raylyng rymes had spread.

This episode would have recalled for Spenser’s audience the fate of John Stubbs, a country lawyer, who in 1579 had written, or was inspired by a privy counsellor to write, a tract known popularly as The Gaping Gulf denouncing the queen’s proposed marriage with Francis, duke of Anjou and Alençon. This tract so infuriated Elizabeth that she directed that Stubbs, and his distributor William Page, should be charged under a statute of Philip and Mary against seditious writing, and both Stubbs and Page duly had had their right hands publicly chopped off with a cleaver. It is all the more likely that it was this memorable event which was being revisited, because Spenser unquestionably sympathized with the cause for which Stubbs had suffered, and he was depicting him as a ‘bad poet’ not for his opinions but because his medium—a printed tract—was inappropriate since it left him exposed to the rigour of the law for speaking out of turn. Therefore while this poetic incident would have reminded Spenser, as well as his audience, of the moral role which poets in a civil society had an obligation to serve, it would also have alerted them of the penalties that would be exacted for any ‘trespasse vyle’, and of the consequent need to make criticism obliquely rather than in blunt pamphlet form.33

For Spenser, his principal shield against the fate of Bonfont/Malfont was his proposed mode of advancing ‘doctrine by example’ which would still allow him to convey the message that his integrity demanded without running foul of the law. The allegorical mode would also, as Spenser would have learnt from Sidney, if not from a reading of The Defence of Poesy then from conversations with his young patron, arouse and hold the attention of an audience, for poetry had not only the merit of ‘words set in delightful proportion’ and ‘the well enchanting skill of music’ but also enjoyed the benefit of ‘a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner’.34

The structure of the Faerie Queene, as it was described both in the Discourse and in the open letter to Ralegh, was that Prince Arthur would personify ‘magnificence’ which was the ‘perfection’ of all the virtues. Each of the twelve moral virtues was to have a book devoted to it in the first sequence, and each was to have a particular knight as a patron or exemplar of that virtue, all stemming from the action in the unwritten (or lost) book XII describing how

33 MacCaffrey, Queen Elizabeth, 254–61; many literary scholars have detected an unease and ambiguity in Spenser’s treatment of this episode, the most recent being Hadfield, Spenser’s Irish Experience, 164–6.
34 Sidney, Defence, 227.
‘the Faery Queene kept her annual feast xii days, upon which xii several days, the occasions of the xii several adventures happened, which being undertaken by xii several knights are in these xii books severally handled and discoursed’.35

This model was adhered to with reasonable success in the six books that he wrote, and most clearly so in the first two books. However despite the high moral character of Spenser’s knights they were all in succession tempted to stray from their ‘right way’ and were eventually brought to confront their enemies, and thus fulfil their missions, only through the encouragement of their squires or the direct intervention of King Arthur who frequently became a deus ex machina to recall the knights to their assigned tasks.36 The persistent straying of the knights from their responsibilities (and also the deviations of Eudoxus and Irenius, in A View of the Present State of Ireland, from the plot they had laid down for their guidance) illustrated Spenser’s lack of confidence in the ability of any humans to attain a fixed purpose; a misgiving he shared with his patron and associate Philip Sidney who in his plea of 1579 against the possible marriage of Queen Elizabeth had enquired (employing the nautical metaphor of the ship of state) what made her ‘in such a calm to change course’.37 Nor was Spenser confident that formal education or attendance at court would necessarily steel people to follow worthy goals and to resist distractions. This was put most forcefully in the story of Sir Calepine in book VI of the Faerie Queene, dedicated to the virtue of Courtesy. In this episode Sir Calepine was about to be slain by his rival Sir Turpine (who, despite the benefits of a court education, was manifestly cruel and discourteous) only to be saved by ‘a savage man’ who was so removed from a civil condition that he could communicate only with animal gestures:38

Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground;
For other language had he none or speach.

The goodness which brought this man to take pity on Sir Calepine was seemingly innate rather than acquired, and while a creature so lacking in education could never be courteous, his subsequent behaviour so bordered on that condition that Spenser could only conclude:39

For certes he was borne of noble blood,
How ever by hard hap he hether came.

35 FQ, p. 738.
36 The phrase ‘right way’ or ‘right course’ occurs repeatedly throughout the poem, especially when knights strayed from it; see for example the case of Sir Guyon in FQ, book II, canto vi, stanza 22, p. 218.
37 See the comment of Eudoxus in View, 21; Sidney’s letter to Queen Elizabeth (1579), in Miscellaneous Prose, 47.
38 FQ, book VI, canto iv, stanza 11, p. 649.
The unreliability of Spenser’s chosen champions of the several virtues, as well as his suggestions, such as that just cited, that nature as well as nurture had a part to play in the formation of character, are evidence of Spenser’s pessimistic opinion of humanity. When therefore the Faerie Queene is considered as a moral allegory it can be seen to have much in common with Pilgrim’s Progress, but while Bunyan was clearly influenced by Spenser his poem has much more decisive conflict resolution than the Faerie Queene. Yet all knights in the Faerie Queene, despite their obvious frailties and their ultimate reliance on the assistance of King Arthur or some other metaphysical force, came, however reluctantly and after however many evasions, to confront the enemies to the virtue over which each knight had been appointed patron. Confrontation, however, implied conflict and the destruction of the agents of evil, and the most gripping and graphic passages of each book are those describing those encounters which led to victory, however partial it eventually proved to be. Some of this conflict may be accounted for by the rhetorical tradition which held that moral lessons made a more enduring impact on the minds of youths when they were allegorized with violence, and here we must also allow for the known influence of Prudentius’ Psychomachia particularly on book 1 of the Faerie Queene.

While allowing for such influence, it is important to bear in mind that Spenser subscribed to the Aristotelian ideal, expounded by his friend and patron Philip Sidney, of poetry being ‘an art of imitation’ or a ‘speaking picture—with this end to teach and delight’. To be effective the picture obviously had to come close to reality, and a close reading of the entire poem indicates that the essential ‘lesson by example’ which Spenser conveyed consistently was the belief of zealous Protestants in England (and ironically of zealous Catholics where that religion was dominant) that evil could be overcome only through confrontation, and that the moment of conflict resolution would be attained only through continuous action, guided by contemplation, which would result in the destruction of everything that lured people from the path of righteousness. The corollary to this—which was also made manifest in the Faerie Queene—was that, without this continuous activity for the attainment of godly purpose, even persons of the highest rank and most commendable education would be seduced by the evil which they had been appointed to destroy. In thus making it necessary for his virtuous knight to be engaged incessantly in virtuous action, Spenser was endorsing Philip Sidney’s belief that people must always strive for self-improvement because ‘good is not good, because better is better’. The consequence, when Sidney applied this philosophy to his own life, was that he ‘could endure at no time to be idle and void of action’, with his leisure being devoted to the composition of ‘poetry’, which corresponded to Spenser’s ‘contemplation’.

40 On Psychomachia see Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia, 570.
41 Sidney, Defence, 217; on Sidney’s commitment to action see Worden, The Sound of Virtue, 60–7;
Most commentators on the *Faerie Queene* have come to think of the fifth book, which describes in graphic detail a sequence of wars with their associated bloodletting and destruction, as especially violent, and some have suggested that this book, as also *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, were the composition of a man whose sensibilities had been coarsened by his own grim experiences with conflict in Ireland and had lost the lyrical talent which had characterized his earlier verse.\(^{42}\) To say this is, in my opinion, to miss one of Spenser’s essential points that ‘fierce wars’ were as essential as ‘faithful loves’ to ‘moralize’ his ‘song’.\(^{43}\) Indeed, as if to establish these priorities from the outset, Spenser began, in book I, with a story that reached its happy conclusion of a betrothall between Una and the Red Cross Knight only after three gruesome encounters with dragons, and the defeat in single combat of three Saracen knights. Each of these struggles is depicted in pen pictures whose shocking vividness has not been surpassed even by Hollywood at its most graphic, and it can justly be said on the basis of this witness that, as Richard McCabe has put it, ‘Spenser found violence aesthetically stimulating’. Besides the six bloody conflicts already mentioned, book I features several other violent acts such as the stripping of the witch Duessa undertaken by Arthur at the request of Una, the personification of Holiness, the virtue to which the book is dedicated. When reflecting upon this passage it is important to bear in mind that stripping, as it was practised in the wars of early modern Europe (and most notoriously, as will be detailed in Chapter 8, in the Irish insurrection of 1641), was considered more cruel than death because it not only left its victims in danger of death from exposure but deprived them of all potency either in life or death by taking away their status and dignity and exposing them to ridicule. This is brought home immediately in Spenser’s description of the stripping of Duessa:\(^{44}\)

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To do her dye (quoth Una) were despight,
And shame t’avenge so weake an enimy;
But spoile her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly.
So as she bad, that witch they disaraied,
And robd of royall robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were displaid;
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\(^{42}\) This was the position of C. S. Lewis, but his opinion, and the history of the interpretation of book V, are treated in *Spenser Encyclopedia*, 280.

\(^{43}\) *FQ*, proem to book I, and to the poem as a whole, stanza 1, p. 27.

\(^{44}\) McCabe, ‘Edmund Spenser, Poet of Exile’, 98; *FQ*, book i, canto 8, stanzas 45–7, p. 117; on stripping in Irish revolt see below pp. 542–3; on the interpretation of this passage see McCabe, ‘The Masks of Duessa’.
Ne spared they to strip her naked all.  
Then when they had despoild her tire and call,  
Such as she was, their eyes might her behold,  
That her misshaped parts did them appall,  
A loathly, wrinckled hag ill favoured, old,  
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.  

Her craftie head was altogether bald,  
And as in hate of honorable eld,  
Was overgrowne with scurfe and filthy scale;  
Her teeth out of her rotten gummies were feld,  
And her sovre breath abominably smeld;  
Her dried dugs, like bladders lacking wind,  
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;  
Her wrizled skin as rough as maple rind,  
So scabby was, that would have loathd all womankind.

The second book, dedicated to the virtue of Temperance, is happily free of dragons, but it treats of several bloody affrays between knights whenever they escape from ‘the darts of sensual delight’ and ‘stings of carnal lust’. There is also a description of an especially fearsome struggle between Prince Arthur and Malegar, the grim leader of a rabble dedicated entirely to ‘lawless lustes, corrupt envies, and covetous aspectes’.45 The essential act of violence in this book is, however, reserved for its culmination: the destruction by Sir Guyon, the patron of Temperance, of the Bower of Bliss. The violent aspect of this episode has also been noted by Stephen Greenblatt, although his invocation of Freud to provide an explanation for the destruction seems excessive since Spenser’s meaning here, as everywhere, is on the surface:46

But all those pleasant bowers and Pallace brave,  
Guyon broke down, with rigour pittless;  
Ne ought their goodly workmanship might save  
Them from the tempest of his wrathfulness,  
But that their blisse he turned to balefulness:  
Their groves he feld, their gardins did deface,  
Their arbers spoyle, their Cabinets suppresse,  
Their banket houses burne, their buildings race,  
And of the fairest late made that the foulest place.

This destruction, even as Spenser represented it, seems at first sight gratuitous, especially when we consider the beauty of the place, treated graphically in the poem, which proved so seductive that Guyon, even when he was bent on its obliteration, would have succumbed to the lustful temptations put

before him in the form of an aquatic striptease were it not that his squire,  
the Palmer, ‘Much rebuked those wandering eyes of his’.47  

Therefore the Bower of Bliss had to be destroyed not only because it was  
a parody of heaven—‘the most daintie Paradise on ground’ with ‘Angelicall  
soft trembling voices’ accompanied by ‘instruments divine’—but more partic-  
ularly because the essential lure of the place—its lugubrious idleness—was  
the polar opposite of the world of moral action which Spenser, or Sidney for  
that matter, considered necessary to the creation and survival of a moral  
order. Thus, as Spenser proceeds with his narrative, our ‘pity’ is directed  
towards those ‘barely bearded’ youths of noble birth who have been  
enchanted by the lures of sight and sound set before them by the witch, and  
their predicament is exemplified by the latest victim—‘some goodly swayne  
of honourable place’—who had succumbed to the ‘liquid joyes’ proffered by  
Acrasia:

His warlike armes, the idle instruments  
Of sleeping praise, were hong upon a tree,  
And his brave shield, full of old moniments,  
Was fowly ra’st, that none the signes might see;  
Ne for them, ne for honour cared hee,  
Ne ought, that did to his advauncement tend,  
But in lewd loves, and wastfull luxuree,  
His dayes, his goods, his bodie he did spend:  
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend.

Quite clearly, if Spenser’s ‘lesson by example’ was to have any meaning, this  
damnable place which perverted everything esteemed by righteous people  
had to be extinguished, and the seductress placed in captivity.48  

The third book, dedicated to Chastity and featuring Britomart the female  
night and patroness of that virtue, is also concerned with knightly jousting  
and fights between knights and giants, giantesses, and satyrs, as well as several  
rapes and seductions. The most ghoulish violence is however that associated  
with the punishments inflicted upon Amoret by Cupid ‘to make her him to  
love’.49 and while Britomart, in procuring Amoret’s release, could not destroy  
the place of her captivity because it belonged to Cupid who was a god, she  
did in vengeance imprison the enchanter who had been the instrument of  
Amoret’s suffering, and she dimmed the lustre of Cupid’s mansion because  
it was embellished with what had been taken from ‘Conquerors and Captaines  
strong . . . captived in their days to cruel love’.50  

The fourth book, devoted to the virtue of Friendship, also has its share  
of challenges, fights, seductions, rapes, and encounters with Amazons.

47 FQ, book II, canto xii, stanza 69, p. 294.
Ultimately, it differs from the earlier books only in that Sir Scudamore—not the patron knight it must be said—after he had undergone all the hazards to enter the Temple of Venus, did not seek to destroy it, presumably again because it belonged to a goddess. Instead his efforts were vindicated because he won the hand of Amoret and took her away with him.

The fifth book, although frequently represented as the most violent, is different from the preceding four only in the havoc wrought by Talus, who serves as squire to Sir Artegall, the patron of Justice. Talus, armed with an iron flail, is relentless in his pursuit of the unrighteous multitude on three different occasions in this book: after the killing by Artegall of a nameless giant; after the capture by Britomart, the female knight, of the Amazon city of Radegon, and after the overthrow of Grantorto in Ireland. Otherwise the book is consistent both in theme and organization with its predecessors in that it follows the story of a knight in pursuit of an evil force with a view to accomplishing its ultimate overthrow. Indeed, as Stephen Greenblatt has suggested, Talus appears ferocious only because he is employed solely to chasten the ‘lawless multitude’ whose ‘mutining’ had Artegall ‘much troubled’ since it had nothing to do with the laws governing knightly combat. It was therefore necessary for Artegall, and also Britomart, to enlist the service of Talus:

For loth he was his noble hands t’embrew
In the base blood of such a rascall crew.

The continuing theme of knightly pursuit is adhered to in the sixth and final book, devoted to the virtue of Courtesy. Here, the hero Sir Calidore eventually fulfilled his goal of putting the Blatant Beast of calumny and detraction in chains, and there is nothing in the poem to suggest that the later escape of the Beast is, in any way, a negative reflection upon Calidore.

This brief summary supports my argument that the Faerie Queene is ultimately an exemplary glorification of violence when it is employed in a worthy cause, and that the essential ‘doctrine’ which Spenser sought to enforce by ‘example’ was that the righteous must be prepared to take firm action to destroy evil influence if they themselves are to avoid perdition. The cloying descriptions of luxury, which are the best-remembered passages, are there to explain why even worthy people succumb to temptation, and the theme, invoked in book V, that ‘power’ is necessary to beat down ‘licentious lust’ might be taken as the all-embracing message of the entire poem.


52 Faerie Queene, book V, canto iv, stanzas 1 and 2, pp. 549–50; it should be borne in mind that this overarching interpretation of the poem is based on my own reading of the entire poem and I am well aware that literary scholars have devoted much labour to the explication of particular books and
In pursuing his grand political theme Spenser, as has been suggested, was teaching by example, but he was also rendering his examples applicable to ‘present time’ because many of the missions which his knights undertook were thinly disguised allegories upon the various undertakings of the government of Queen Elizabeth, and several of the giants encountered were representations of the forces that threatened the place of England in the world. The most obvious of such allegories are to be found in the topical book V, which is nothing short of a fictionalized narrative of England’s conflict with Spain and its allies during the years before and after the Armada year of 1588, but a less striking but nonetheless compelling commentary on contemporary events was pursued in all six books of the poem. Book I, for example, is a celebration of the achievements of the Protestant Reformation both in England and throughout Europe, and it would have been evident to Spenser’s English Protestant audience that the various opponents of the Red Cross Knight were either Satan himself or Satan as personified in the papal Antichrist and his human agents, most unmistakably Duessa (Mary queen of Scots) attired in ‘purple pall’ and wearing ‘triple crown set on her head full hye’.

For these political commentaries Spenser has frequently been accused of having prostituted his talents to ingratiate himself with the queen and leading political figures such as the earl of Leicester and Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton. We can be certain that the cultivation of patrons was never far from his mind, any more than it was from the mind of any poet of that time, but we must also remember that Spenser in the Faerie Queene was more concerned with criticism than with flattery, and while his barbs would have elevated him in the opinion of his patrons this was of little benefit to him after his patrons were dead or had lost their influence, and it always left him exposed to the penalty suffered by Bonfont/Malfont. To clarify his purpose on this score Spenser drew a clear distinction between fictionalized narrative and its function and the nature and purpose of narrative composed by the historian. He treated of this subject first in his letter to Ralegh when explaining that he chose to write about events in King Arthur’s rather than Queen Elizabeth’s reign because he wished to be ‘furthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time’. In that same letter he pointed to the difference between ‘a poet historical’ and ‘an historiographer’, and he suggested that it was the ‘poet historical’ who had the greater opportunity and responsibility to offer guidance that had relevance to current affairs. The ‘historiographer’, as Spenser defined his function, was essentially an antiquarian ‘who discourseth of affairs orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions’, a definition which was portrayed more graphically by Philip Sidney

passages. This vast scholarly output is admirably discussed in the summaries of each six books and of the ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’ presented in Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia, 259–89.

when he represented the historiographer as ‘a wonder of young folk and a
tyrant of table talk’, ‘better acquainted with a thousand years ago than with
the present age’, ‘laden with old mouse-eaten records, authorizing himself
for the most part upon other histories, whose greatest authorities are built
upon the notable foundation of hearsay; having much ado to accord differing
writers and to pick truth out of their partiality’. The poet, on the other hand,
according to Spenser, had the opportunity to be more selective because, in
dealing with matters historical, he was not bound by the strict sequence of
events but ‘thrusteth into the midst, even where it most concerneth him,
and there recoursing to the thinges forepast, and divining of thinges to come
maketh a pleasing analysis of all’.54

Spenser returned to this theme, and claimed special licence for himself as
a ‘poet historical’ on several occasions in his writings, but never more emphat-
ically than in the ‘proem’, or preface, to book II of the Faerie Queene. There
he anticipated the challenge of ‘some’ people that, instead of being a ‘matter
of just memory’, all ‘this antique history’ on which the Faerie Queene was based
was nothing more than ‘th’aboundance of an idle braine’ or ‘painted forgery’.
Moreover he believed that his composition was also open to the historiogra-
pher’s charge that it was irrelevant:55

Sith none that breatheth living air, doth know,
Where is that happy land of Faery
Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show,
But vouch antiquities, who no body can know.

His ingenious un-Baconian response to this was that if, in the pursuit of know-
ledge, ‘witless man’ were to confine his attention to that which he hath seen’
he would be a very limited person indeed because he would be ignoring those
‘many great regions’ which had only recently been ‘discovered’, and also
those ‘other worlds’, both on this earth and ‘within the Moones faire shining
spheare’, that might be encountered by European voyagers of the future.
This sentiment was again shared with Philip Sidney who believed the poet
to ‘far pass the historian’ because he ‘doth not learn a conceit out of a matter,
but maketh matter for a conceit’.56

Therefore Spenser, like Sidney, attached particular importance to the
licence to analyse enjoyed by a ‘poet historical’ which was not available to a
‘historiographer’, and Spenser assured his readers that they could always
divine his purpose if they followed ‘certain signs’ that he had ‘set in sundry
place’ throughout the work. Those who did so, he claimed (and he likened
their task to that of bloodhounds following a scent), would indeed come to
know ‘Faerie Land’, and he assured Queen Elizabeth, the ‘fairest Princess

55 FQ, book II, proem, stanza 1, p. 169.
56 Ibid., stanzas 2 and 3; Sidney, Defence, 232.
under sky’, that she would, as in a ‘faire mirrhour’, behold her ‘face’ and her
‘owne realmes in lond of Faery’ and would recognize her ‘great auncestry’
in this ‘antique image’. At this point he justified the employment of a mirror,
which would shroud everything in a concealing veil, on the grounds that
‘feeble eyes’ would otherwise be dazzled by the brightness of her glory, but
his real reason for his adoption of allegory was that it was only in ‘the dark
conceit’ of an ‘extended allegory’ that he could hope to engage in the criticism
of public policy.57 Thus when, in book II, Spenser comments upon the obstacles
to the progress of the Reformation, or when, in book V, he discusses the wars in France, Ireland, and the Netherlands, his purpose is not to chron-
icle events as ‘an historiographer’ would have done, but rather to construct
a plausible narrative that would enable him to point up the shortcomings of
the policies that had actually been pursued and to set objectives for the future.
Such a dangerous endeavour could only be proceeded with under the guise
of fiction, and encouragement for living rulers could be given only through
the casting of exemplary characters, whose political successes might serve as
a guide for living rulers if they chose to see the analogy. The further, and
perhaps the real, advantage of allegory was that logically the poet could not
be called to account, because as Sidney (both of whose Arcadias have been
brilliantly exposed by Blair Worden as biting allegories upon the government
of Queen Elizabeth) put it when discussing the same issue, the ‘poet . . . never
affirmeth. The poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to
conjure you to believe for true what he writes. He citeth not authorities of
other histories, but even for his entry calleth the sweet Muses to inspire into
him a good invention; in truth not labouring to tell you what is and is not,
but what should or should not be.’58

The adoption of allegory thus made it possible for Spenser to address major
issues of policy that would not have been considered appropriate concerns
for a person of humble origin to debate in public and that were dangerous
subjects for a person of any rank to raise, as Sidney had learnt to his cost
when he wrote to the queen in 1579 criticizing her proposed marriage. The
allegorical mode, and particularly his teaching by example under this guise,
also made it possible for Spenser to recommend forceful methods to achieve
political no less than moral ends. Both when discussing the origins of civil
society in general, and the particular beginnings of civil conditions in England,
Spenser made manifest his belief that ordered conditions always derived from
conquest. In the first instance, he describes how Bacchus ‘with furious might’
established justice over Asia while his son Hercules

his like ensample shewed,
Who all the West with equal conquest wanne,
And monstrous tyrants with his club subdued;
The club of Justice dread, with kingly power endued.

Within this western world England long remained
a salvage wilderness
Unpeopled, unmanured, unprov’d, unprayesed,

and was thought by merchants, who had scant interest in it, ‘By sea to have bene from the Celticke mayn-land brought’. Indeed, Spenser contended, the place was so removed from the concerns of civil people that it was not even given a name until a mariner, caught off its shores by a storm, called it Albion after the white cliffs that had offered him shelter. This encounter, according to Spenser’s narrative, attracted fishermen to the rich fishing grounds off its shores and these were tempted to ‘invade’ the land only to discover that its inland parts were occupied by ‘a salvage nation’:

Of hideous giants, and half beastly men,
That never tasted grace, nor goodness felt,
But like wild beasts lurking in loathsome den,
And flying fast as Roe bucke through the fen,
And naked without shame, or care of cold,
By hunting and by spoiling lived then.

Spenser professed himself uncertain about the origins of these giants and speculated that they were the progeny of the fifty daughters of Dioclesian who had ‘by chaunce’ been ‘driven’ on to the shores of Albion and who, ‘Through vaine illusion of their lust uncleane’, had had sexual relations with those ‘feends and filthy Sprights’ they had found there before them. The giants who resulted from this ‘companing’ held sway and polluted the land with their ‘filthiness’:

Untill that Brutus anciently deriv’d
From royal stock of old Assaracs line,
Driven by fatall error, here arriv’d,
And them of their unjust possession depriv’d.

In telling this story of how England was first drawn into a civil polity, Spenser emphasized that Brutus encountered much opposition and only gained possession after prolonged conflict and much bloodshed:

But ere he had established his throne,
And spred his empire to the utmost shore,
He fought great battles with his savage fone;
In which he them defeated evermore,
And many Giants left on groning flore.

59 FQ, book V, canto i, stanzas 1–2, p. 529; FQ, book II, canto x, stanzas 4–11, pp. 259–61; the method of Spenser as an antiquarian has been considered thoughtfully in Eiléan Ni Chuilleanáin,
These passages, dealing both with the first establishment of a civil order, and its eventual enforcement in England, provided vivid examples of the force that had been necessary in the past to achieve victory for civility over barbarism. Then Spenser’s further narrations, which made frequent mention of the continued existence of savage nations, suggested that conquests such as had been launched by Brutus against England were still necessary to bring the world’s resources into the possession of civil men who could properly exploit them. Moreover, as is evident from the pessimistic ‘proem’ to book V, Spenser did not believe that civility, once attained, would remain constant. Instead, his reading of history led him to the conclusion that, if left inactive, people immediately ‘degendered’ to the point where ‘the golden age’ that had existed when humanity was in ‘its freshest prime’ had given way to ‘a stonie one’ of his own time and place where all values had become transvalued:

For that which all men then did vertue call,
Is now cald vice; and that which vice was hight,
Is now hight virtue, and so us’d of all:
Right now is wrong, and wrong that was is right,
As all things else in time are chaunged quight.

Spenser’s further elaboration upon this theme indicates his belief that such lapsing, in civil as in moral affairs, was in the nature of things and determined by the decay of the universe from its first perfection. However, in his more sanguine moments he expressed his belief that this trend could be reversed through the exertions of his champions. When describing in book V how ‘some of the vertuous race . . . inspired with heroick heat’ could be relied upon to rescue civil achievements at moments of crisis, he likened their task to that of the gardener pruning, a metaphor that he would use again in his discussion of this same problem of degeneration which became a central theme in A View of the Present State of Ireland.

When account is taken of this dimension it again appears that the Faerie Queene was an elaborate glorification of violence whenever this was employed to promote either civil or moral goals. The distinction between these ends, which was usually in evidence when ‘the antique world’ was under discussion, became blurred when mention was made of ‘the state of present time’. There morality and civility were a single entity, and the only potential civil society was one, like England, that had accepted the truth of the Protestant Reformation. Spenser’s Hobbesian exultation of violence in pursuit of civil goals served therefore to justify both the process of conquest as an historical continuum and the


FQ, book V, canto i, stanza 1, p. 529; View, 30–1, 75, 95, 159–60; on the deployment of myth in the View see Hadfield, Spenser’s Irish Experience, 85–112.
use of forceful methods for the defence and advancement of Protestantism. At the same time Spenser was conscious of the existence of unjust wars, and one that he specifically cited was Caesar’s invasion of England. Such assaults, which derived from the ‘hideous hunger of dominion’, necessitated opposition and he held up the success of King Arthur in ousting the Romans as an example to be followed. In doing so, however, he was underlining the need for constant military preparedness in every civil society to serve defensive as well as offensive needs. Spenser’s Commonwealth if it had been achieved would therefore have been little different from Plato’s Republic.

While the political lessons that Spenser formulated on the basis of his study of real and imagined pasts made it possible for him to advance oblique criticism of government policy and to provide guidance for the future, he was simultaneously (and one might say contradictorily) concerned to boost the morale of his readers by evoking pride in England’s achievements. This was attempted most persistently when he strove to define England’s position in the world in relation to both an actual and fictional past and present. The first step in this process of definition, or perhaps redefinition, was to articulate the geographic nonsense that England was an island and Queen Elizabeth the ‘Great lady of the greatest isle’. The inferred jurisdictional claim over Scotland was consolidated by Spenser’s consistent use of the term Britain to describe the realm even when suggesting that it was inhabited only by English people, although ruled by a monarch of Welsh or Britonic ancestry. It was not only the Faerie Queene herself who was described as a British descendant of Brutus, but this nebulous nationality was also thrust upon several of Spenser’s allegorized characters. Thus Britomart, the heroine of book III, had, as her name suggests, set out from her native soyle, that is by name The greater Britaine, here to seek for praise and fame.

Artegall, who was born in Cornwall, was similarly identified as British presumably because he was preordained to be the spouse of Britomart. That this usage was not employed recklessly in error is made clear by Spenser’s 1596 dedication of his six books of the poem to Queen Elizabeth where he addressed her by the extravagant, but precise, title of ‘most High, Mighty and Magnificent Empress . . . Queen of England, France and Ireland and of Virginia’. Despite knowing what was accurate Spenser persisted with the use of the term Britain in the poetry that followed, and further claim and justification for the use of the term was put forward in the several pseudo-

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63 *FQ*, book I, proem, stanza 4, p. 28.
66 *FQ*, p. 22.
histories and genealogies that interlaced the text, all explaining how, through a process of conquest, Wales and Scotland, like the various regions of England, came to be part of a single British inheritance. These extensive passages, which occur sometimes in the most unlikely places in the text, might appear irrelevant and boring to readers of today but Spenser was, as will become clear in the next section of this chapter, articulating a particular version of Britishness, while confident that what appear to us as antiquarian digressions would help him to hold the attention of an Elizabethan audience obsessed with lineage and genealogy. Therefore it was in his interest at the very outset of the poem to liken his endeavour to that of a historian, and he called upon Clio, the muse of history, to

Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The antique rolls, which ther lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights and fairest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill.

Spenser was obviously satisfied that this invitation to his potential audience to immerse themselves in antique lore would command the attention, and in equal vein, in book III, when the beautiful Hellenore aspired to offer her favours to the wayward Sir Paridell she knew that the best means of diverting the mind of Malbecco, her jealous but unsuspecting husband, was to invite the company to tell:

Of deedes of armes, which unto them became,
And every one his kindred and his name.

The stratagem did succeed in its purpose of distracting Malbecco, and the first to respond to Hellenore’s invitation was Paridell who sought to prove his virility by tracing the ‘great Genealogy’ of Britain, and therefore of himself, to ancient Troy.

The deft manner in which Spenser, in his fictive history, described how, through a process of conquest, a single British inheritance had been fashioned out of the several dominions in England, Wales, and Scotland would therefore have been a source of interest to his contemporaries. It would have been all the more so because the question of a possible joint succession to the thrones of England and Scotland was a live issue at the time he was writing. Also, in the course of one of these antiquarian discourses, Spenser explained how one of the ancient British monarchs had given:

to fugitives of Spayne,
Whom he at sea found wandering from their wayes,

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A seat in Ireland safely to remayne
Which they should hold of him, as subject to Britayne.

This historical lore, repeated in *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, probably gave meaning to Spenser for his own involvement in that country as well as justification for his employment of the hegemonic locution ‘the British Isles’ in a literary context.⁷⁰

For Spenser therefore an essential element of defining a British nationhood involved him in a redefinition of the position of England in relation to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. In order to do this most effectively Spenser drew upon, and embroidered, the national origin myths inherited from the Middle Ages, which, as has been recently demonstrated by Colin Kidd, were falling into disfavour with writers of ‘sacred history’ whom Spenser and Sidney would obviously have castigated as boring, and therefore ineffective, ‘historiographers’. Spenser chose to be rather what Kidd would call ‘a patriotic antiquarian’, drawing upon the lore of such medieval authors as Geoffrey of Monmouth but using an altogether more potent medium than they, with a clear purpose of constructing a historic mission for England which, as Spenser described it, was not only to preserve civility and true religion within the inheritance of Queen Elizabeth but to extend that authority over its neighbouring jurisdictions, not with a view to asserting suzerainty over the existing rulers but with the purpose of shaping a unitary state, bound together by one ruler, one religion, one language, and one law. Spenser’s ‘Britain’ was therefore England writ large, which would be poised to play a more important role in world affairs once it was in a position to draw upon the resources ‘of all that beare the British Islands name’.⁷¹

Apart altogether from his desire to see England’s authority extended over Scotland and Ireland with a view to enhancing the strength of the English crown, Spenser was opposed in principle to anything less than a unitary state covering the two islands. Any arrangement that fell short of this would obviously expose England to the continued threat of local attack allied with foreign invasion. Worse still, it would place the English monarch as head of a heterogeneous state, diverse in politics, religion, and culture. This, for Spenser, would have spelled disaster because, according to the logic of his thinking, it would threaten England itself with certain degeneration. Even as matters stood in the real world, as Spenser was only too well aware from his own experience, the imprint of English civility upon Ireland was tenuous, and as he listed the Irish rivers that attended upon the espousal of the Medway

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and the Thames he confessed that he could not name ‘them all according to
their degree’: 72

nor tell their hidden race,
Nor read the salvage cuntries, through which they pace.

In Ireland therefore civil society lay contiguous to savage areas, and was
threatened by them, but worse still the civil areas that had been erected
through the course of plantations were not fully under the control of the
settlers. Thus he could refer to diversity even in the names given to places
and physical features, as for example: 73

Swift Awinduff, which of the English man
Is called Blackwater.

Still more ominous was the memory that ‘the balefull Oure’ had been ‘late
staind with English blood’. 74 Therefore when defining Britain, Spenser was
consciously alluding to England’s unfinished business in Ireland, while
encouraging English people similarly to assert their authority over Scotland
should the opportunity present itself.

Having thus identified the purposes that Spenser had in mind when com-
posing the Faerie Queene, and having monitored his progress in pursuing them,
it remains to explain why he consciously abandoned his task after he had
completed but six of the twelve (and possibly twenty-four) projected books.
The obvious explanation is his lack of time, since he died in January
1599, and his house at Kilcolman had been overthrown by rebellion the previous year.
Spenser could not, however, have anticipated either of these events, and the
question calls especially for resolution because Spenser announced his deci-
sion to write no further verse as he neared the conclusion of book VI of the
Faerie Queene. He did this after he introduced himself, under the guise of
the shepherd piper Colin Clout, as an actor in the poem. There, he was dis-
covered in his rustic retreat by the knight Sir Calidore, who disturbed Colin
when he was piping for the Graces of Venus in their dance. The Graces van-
ished (never to return) at the moment of Calidore’s intrusion and Colin: 75

for full despight
Of that displeasure, broke his bag-pipe quight,
And made great mone for that unhappy turne.

The breaking of the pipe (the symbol of his creative talent) clearly signalled
Spenser’s intention to compose no more, and it seems that the explanation
behind this decision lies within this episode itself.

72 Faerie Queene, book IV, canto xi, stanza 40, p. 516.
73 Faerie Queene, book IV, canto xi, stanza 41, p. 516; Blackwater is a literal translation of the Irish words
abha dubh.
74 Faerie Queene, book IV, canto xi, stanza 44, p. 516.
75 Faerie Queene, book VI, canto x, stanza 18, p. 691.
Calidore, the knight of Courtesy, had undertaken to capture the Blatant Beast, but allowed himself to be deflected from his task by a chance encounter with a community of shepherds which appealed to him because they seemed content with their life of frugal comfort. Once Calidore had abandoned the life of action which was necessary to the moral survival of every knight, he fell helplessly in love with Pastorella, a shepherd maiden, and had won her favours against a peasant rival. Thereafter Calidore decided to remain in that idyllic rustic world and to abandon his knightly quest, and he was able to justify his decision by contrasting the simple life of the shepherds with the contrived life at court. The rationalization employed by Calidore is identical to that employed by Spenser in several of his poems to justify his own decision (and sometimes that of Ralegh also) to make his residence in Ireland rather than at court. The reprimand that he issued to Calidore for having disregarded his responsibility to pursue the Blatant Beast therefore applied equally to himself, and it might be read as a call to himself, no less than to Calidore, to become more active at a moment of national crisis.

Who now does follow the foule Blatant Beast,
Whilst Calidore does follow that faire mayd,
Unmyndfull of his vow and high beheast,
Which by the Faery Queene was on him layd,
That he should never leave, nor be delayd
From chacing him, till he had it attchieved?
But now entrapt of love, which him betrayd,
He mindeth more, how he may be relieved
With grace from her, whose love his heart hath sore engrieved.

That Spenser did indeed see his own predicament as analogous to that of Calidore is further suggested by the readiness with which Colin endorsed the rationalizations offered him by Calidore for remaining with the shepherds. For his part, Calidore admired and even envied Colin who had been in this rustic retreat long before him, and little wonder because of the seductively innocent situation in which he found him, piping to:

An hundred naked maidens lilly white,
All raunged in a ring and dauncing in delight.

Besides the ravishment of this scene, which left Calidore ‘envious’ of his ‘eyes’, there is a further hint that Colin, and therefore Spenser, had become so immersed in his rustic world that he had allowed himself to become corrupted by it. The hint that Colin had indeed degenerated is that it was bagpipes rather than the ‘oaten reed’ of the Shepherd’s Calendar on which he played to the Graces in their dance. All previous references to bagpipes in the Faerie

76 *FQ*, book VI, canto x, stanza 2, p. 688; the story is told in book VI, canto ix, pp. 681–7.
77 See especially ‘Colin Clout’s Come Home Again’, in *Calendar*, 247–69, esp. 255.
78 *FQ*, book VI, canto x, stanza 1, p. 688.
79 *FQ*, book VI, canto x, stanza 11, p. 690.
Queene, and in all English writings on Ireland during the decades covered in this book, perceived them to be a threatening instrument associated with theft, rapine, and dissoluteness. In book III, for example, observers were drawn to the satyrs’ dance with Hellenore (which might be taken as a parody of the Graces’ dance with Colin’s beloved) by a ‘noise of many bagpipes shrill, and shrieking Hububs’. Similarly in book VI when the priest was about to plunge his knife into the breast of the fair Serena to offer her up as human sacrifice ‘then gan the bagpipes and the horns to shrill and shriek aloud’. Even in the episode of the Graces’ dance it was the ‘shriill pipe’ of Colin’s instrument rather than any melody that drew Calidore to the scene. This is in sharp contrast to the encounter between Colin and the Shepherd of the Ocean in Colin Clout’s Come Home Again, where the ‘strange shepherd’ was lured by the ‘pleasing sound’ of Colin’s ‘oaten pipe’.80 Colin’s choice of the bagpipe as his instrument seems therefore to point to his having lapsed into the barbarism of his environment. The recall of Calidore to his right course, and his answer to that call, may therefore be interpreted as a waking realization on Spenser’s part that he too needed to sever his connection with the pleasures of verse in favour of more essential action.

There is also a suggestion that Spenser had, at this time, despaired of the notion that allegorized verse would promote moral and political reform, and that he was considering a more potent instrument to serve that purpose. This comes with the unusual closing to book VI. Towards the end of the book Calidore did indeed renew his task and, after a prolonged struggle, put the Blatant Beast in chains and paraded him about the country for the edification of the multitude who ‘much admired the beast but more admired the knight’.81 However, this happy outcome which would, in any previous book, have opened the way for its successor, was negated by Spenser’s mention that ‘long after’, either through accident or decree of fate, the Beast broke loose from his chain.82

So now he raungeth through the world againe,
And rageth sore in each degree and state;
Ne any is, that may him now restraine,
He growen is so great and strong of late,
Barking and biting all that him doe bate,
Albe they worthy blame, or cleare of crime:
Ne spareth he most learned wits to rate,
Ne spareth he the gentle Poets rime,
But rends without regard of person or of time.

80 FQ, book III, canto x, stanza 43–4, p. 398; FQ, book VI, canto viii, stanza 46, p. 680; canto x, stanza 10, p. 689; Calendar, 249 and 247. There are a few instances in Spenser’s writings where reference is made to bagpipes without these negative connotations but these are in his earlier poems and before he went to Ireland, see for example Calendar, 31.
81 FQ, book VI, canto xii, stanza 37, p. 708.
82 FQ, book VI, canto xii, stanza 40, p. 708.
There is no suggestion here that the escape reflected adversely upon Calidore, and Spenser suggested rather that the power of calumny had become so great that it could not be mastered any more:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Albe that long time after } & \text{Calidore,} \\
\text{The good Sir } & \text{Pelleas him took in hand,} \\
\text{And after him Sir } & \text{Lamerack of yore,} \\
\text{And all his brethern born in Britaine land;} \\
\text{Yet none of them could ever bring him into band.}
\end{align*}
\]

The despair shown by Spenser over the cancellation of Calidore’s achievement suggests that he considered his own efforts as a poet had been proven by circumstances to be equally futile in promoting moral improvement and in directing the government towards the course of reform. Moreover his poetic achievement had left him in danger of being punished for his unwanted criticism, and he ended book VI, and as it happens the entire poem, with the cynical observation that verses of flattery would have served him better, and saved him from the backbiting of the Blatant Beast which had brought him into the ‘displeasure’ of a ‘mighty Pere’ (thought to be Burghley) whom he had not intended to ‘endite’. Spenser was obviously satisfied that none of his admirers would have considered his purpose in writing the *Faerie Queene* to be unworthy because the severity of the social and political critique that he had pursued consistently over almost twenty years of a writing career would have placed him above reproach. However, as he contemplated the fate of Calidore, he was brought to confront the cruel reality that his endeavour at expounding ‘doctrine by ensample’ had failed to steer official policy in the direction of sound principles. Moreover his allegory had become so transparent in books V and VI, as he came to treat of matters of immediate importance to himself and to all followers of true religion, that it could no longer be relied upon to provide him with the protection of deniability which was the essential prerequisite for poetic licence. Although despondent, Spenser was not cowed into silence nor, to use Elizabeth Fowler’s telling phrase, was he acknowledging the ‘failure of Moral Philosophy’. To have done so would have been to succumb to despair against which Spenser had warned in book I, canto ix; rather, as he reached the conclusion of book VI, Spenser seems already to have decided to try teaching ‘by rule’ rather than ‘by example’, in the hope that this would better inspire people to engage in the action which he believed necessary for social no less than moral redemption.

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84 *FQ*, book VI, canto xii, stanza 41, p. 709.

Therefore it is logical that his next undertaking should have been a dialogue between Eudoxus and Irenius conducted on a more limited canvas and aiming to arrive at verities through a process of argument rather than through the graphic illustration that had been his forte as a versifier. This shift from verse to prose does not mean that Spenser had to reconcile himself to the abandonment of his calling as a poet, since Philip Sidney had pronounced verse to be ‘but an ornament and no cause of poetry’, because all writing, whether in prose or verse, was true poetry provided its ‘final end [was] to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clayey lodgings, can be capable of’. We can be certain that Spenser would, at this point, have been familiar with Sidney’s definition, because The Defence of Poesy had been published posthumously in 1595, the year before Spenser was to publish his six books of the Faerie Queene and to compose A View of the Present State of Ireland. As he read the Defence in its printed form Spenser would have been immediately drawn to Sidney’s praise for the writings of Plato ‘for all standeth upon dialogues, wherein he feigneth many honest burgesses of Athens to speak of such matters, that, if they had been set upon a rack, they would never have confessed them’. This alone would have encouraged Spenser to seek to expound truth through dialogue, and A View of the Present State of Ireland can be regarded as a logical sequel to the Faerie Queene, with Spenser now pursuing his mission in a format that would permit greater directness than was possible with allegory and with better hope of evading the ‘rack’, or the fate of Bonfont/Malfont.86

1.3. SPENSER AS MORAL PHILOSOPHER IN 1596

Before proceeding to a consideration of the View and its connection with the Faerie Queene we must pause to consider Spenser’s position within the spectrum of English social and political thought in 1596, the year in which the six books of the Faerie Queene were published and the year in which Spenser probably sat down to compose the View. The Spenser who appeared as a character in Bryskett’s Discourse seemed fully in accord with all the parties to the discussion on the promotion of reform through the process of education, whether this reform was to be attempted in England or in the Anglicized areas of Ireland. The first principle on which all were agreed was that reformers should work from the top downwards and should begin by instructing the sons of the existing leaders in the rules of good behaviour. How this education was to be conducted was never spelled out but we can

86 Sidney, Defence, 218, 213; this argument proceeds from the assumption that the ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’ were verses composed by Spenser before 1596 for which he did not find a place in the narrative of the six books of the Faerie Queene rather than the beginning of a seventh book, as they were described in the 1609 folio edition published by Matthew Lownes; see Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia, 387–8; 484–5.
presume that it would have begun with formal schooling, where the principles of good conduct would have been inculcated while the pupils were mastering the basic skills of literacy in the English language. Bryskett, who valued education as an end in itself, did not anticipate any difficulty in winning the co-operation of parents of prospective pupils, who he believed (and here he might have been summarizing the pragmatic ambitions of the Old English) would be willing to ‘spend their wealth to purchase them learning and knowledge’ out of a ‘desire to make them able to be employed, and a hope to see them raised to credit and dignity in the commonwealth.’

Such formal education would have been considered ‘teaching by rule’, and we can presume that Spenser accepted that his ‘teaching by example’ could take place only after this initial process had been fulfilled, when people would be sufficiently informed to appreciate the stories that would command the attention of his audience while allegorizing his verse. There was therefore no inconsistency in the different approaches to education advocated by the different members of the company, and it is significant that Bryskett himself was attracted to ‘reading of histories’ because they were ‘as mirrors or looking glasses for every man to see the good and evil actions of all ages, the better to square his life to the rule of virtue, by the examples of others’.

Bryskett was therefore a supporter of teaching by example whenever this was appropriate, and, by his own standards, he would have recognized the appropriateness of the Faerie Queene for teaching by example because it had been designed as a historical fiction. Moreover, since several of the company had had a preview of sections of the poem and admired it, we can take it that they believed that its purpose furthered their own. What is surprising therefore, and what his audience has not been prepared for in the Discourse, is the silent endorsement by this seeming Erasmian group of the use of violence to promote reform.

Many commentators, the most recent being Richard Rambuss, have got over this difficulty by associating Spenser’s advocacy of violence with the second series of three books of the Faerie Queene, published in 1596, and by attributing his extreme views either to his experience with the wars in Ireland or to his personal disappointment at not winning the favour he believed his talents deserved when he did gain access to the queen and presented her personally with the first three books in 1590. This approach lacks credibility because it denies coherence to the six books which Spenser published together in 1596, and because it disregards Spenser’s most compelling point, which he illustrated in the examples he set before his readers from the outset, that even people of the highest rank who had enjoyed the best possible educational advantages could not be trusted to follow a fixed moral purpose. The squires

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87 Bryskett, Discourse, 9.
88 Ibid. 15-16.
assigned to the knights in the earlier books might be considered the equivalent of humanist teachers, but the fact that they had constantly to nag their charges to keep them away from false paths, and that the knights immediately strayed once they were liberated from this restraining force, suggests that Spenser, while accepting that education could prove efficacious in guiding people towards better behaviour, did not accept that it, together with grace, was sufficient to ensure correct conduct into the future. The other parties to the *Discourse* did not address this problem but it is obvious that anybody who was conscious of Christian teaching on the fall of humanity would have shared these misgivings of Spenser, and would have had to concede his further proposition that the source of temptation had always to be sought out and destroyed if people were to remain true to their moral principles. And when his allegorized message was translated into the world of reality it would have been evident that a godly government had a particular responsibility to support the educational drive for reform.

This interpretation suggests that Spenser, like most humanists in a Europe that had come to be divided by religious conflict, was forced to admit that moral reform, as this had been conceived in a secular sense by the ancients and their imitators in Italy during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, could not be divorced from politico-religious considerations. Therefore, for Spenser and his associates, reform always had to include religious reform, and they accepted that the promotion of reform through education and evangelization would prove illusory unless it was supported by the authority and rigour of the state. Again, Spenser was entirely consistent when he showed concern for the integrity and moral purpose of the state, because it was only a morally upright state that could keep its subjects on the path of righteousness. His faulting English government policy, and his criticism of life at court, should not therefore be taken as evidence of a dawning disillusionment or a nascent disloyalty on the part of one who previously had been fawning in his loyalty to the queen. Those who have argued in this fashion fail to recognize that Spenser was a consistent critic of government policy, and their contentions also lack weight because some of the evidence they cite in support of their case for a change of attitude by Spenser after his visit to court in 1590 had been written by him, although not published, before that date.

The most unambiguous of Spenser’s many denunciations of the court was contained in *Prosopopia; or, Mother Hubberd’s Tale*, presented for publication with his other Complaints in 1591. This was admittedly subsequent to the supposed watershed date of 1590, but it was mentioned in the notes accompanying the text on its publication that these particular lines had been ‘long since composed in the raw conceit of [his] youth’ and only rescued from his papers at the request of ‘others’ who ‘liked the same’ and ‘moved’ him ‘to set them forth’. Scholarly analysis by Blair Worden upholds this statement, and suggests that some, at least, of *Mother Hubberd’s Tale* was composed in
1579 when Spenser was with Philip Sidney at Leicester’s London house, and when both committed themselves to criticizing the intended marriage of the queen with Francis, duke of Anjou and Alençon. While Spenser’s disclaimer must also be taken as a judicious precaution against the vengeance of the subjects of this criticism (notably Lord Burghley), we must still take account of Spenser’s unvarnished statement on the responsibility of the poet to serve as a social and political critic. This took the form of a sonnet, presented in 1586 to his friend Gabriel Harvey, whom Spenser clearly considered a role model for himself.

Harvey, thee happy above happiest men
I rede; that sitting like a looker on
Of this world’s stage, dost note with critic pen
The sharp dislikes of each condition:
And as one careless of suspicion,
Ne fawnest for the favour of the great;
Ne fearest foolish reprehension
Of faulty men, which danger to thee threat:
But freely dost, of what thee list, entreat,
Like a great lord of peerless liberty;
Lifting the Good up to the honour’s seat,
And the Evil damning evermore to die:
For Life, and Death, is in thy doomful writing!
So thy renown lives ever by inditing.

Although Spenser did not formally articulate this role for the poet as social critic until 1586, he had been practising this part ever since he had won recognition as a literary figure with the publication, in 1579, of the *Shepherd’s Calendar*. Each of the twelve eclogues in this collection was based on a classical or Renaissance model, and Spenser acknowledged Theocritus, Virgil, and Clément Marot, among others, as the authors of the poems he was imitating. He was attracted by the eclogue as a vehicle for his ideas both because it provided him with the opportunity to demonstrate that poetry in English could match the best in the classical languages, and because it allowed him to treat of subjects that varied from the ‘plaintive’ to the ‘recreative’ to the ‘moral’. The greater number of his twelve eclogues (each called after a month in the year) fell into the moral category and these ‘for the most part [were] mixed with some satirical bitterness’. In these moral poems Spenser treated of subjects that were to remain his concern throughout his working life as a poet: these included the insatiable greed of the Church of Rome, the

91 Calendar, 366.
92 Calendar, 9–11; Annabel Patterson, ‘Re-opening the Green Cabinet: Clément Marot and Edmund Spenser’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), 44–70.
continuing corrupting influence of Catholicism even after the Reformation, the seductions put in the way of poets by tyrants who wished to be immortalized in verse, and the countervailing disrespect for those poets who remained true to their vocations. Side by side with these concerns was the eclogue for April which was devoted to Spenser’s most enduring theme, being ‘intended to the honour and praise of our most gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth’.93

Spenser was further convinced that this verse form was appropriate to his purpose because eclogues, as these had been originally invented by Theocritus, had been ‘goatherds’ tales’ and had been modified by Virgil only to the extent that the speakers were ‘more shepherds than goatherds’.94 This pastoral setting was attractive to Spenser because it enabled him to reflect on the great affairs of the world from an idealized rural setting, and through the eyes of the simple but perspicacious shepherd Colin Clout. This character had originally been created by John Skelton,95 and this association was important for Spenser because it enabled him to trace his social criticism backwards through Skelton to Langland and Chaucer. More significantly still, when asserting that the poet’s function was that of ‘inditing’, Spenser was consciously following Chaucer’s preoccupation with ‘endying’, and for Spenser, Chaucer was the English Virgil who he referred to as Tityrus (the pen name used by Virgil).96 Association with the English tradition of country criticism of life at court was equally important to him, and to achieve this Spenser deliberately introduced archaisms into the speech of the rustic savants who feature as spokesmen in the Shepherd’s Calendar. This ‘framing of his style to an old rustic language’ earned him the criticism of Philip Sidney, to whom the poem was dedicated, and this device found lesser place in Sidney’s own eclogues, ‘since neither Theocritus in Greek, Virgil in Latin, nor Sanazzaro in Italian did affect’ it.97

When account is taken of these predilections of Spenser it is logical that he should have returned briefly to his pastoral mode after the publication of the first instalment of the Faerie Queene and his visit to court, both to cash in on his enhanced reputation, and to prove that he was still the same fearless...

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93 Calendar, 13–101, esp. pp. 31–9; for an excellent commentary on the twelve eclogues and associated criticism see Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia, 645–56.
94 Calendar, 9.
96 I am grateful to Elizabeth Fowler for alerting me to the carry over of ‘endying’ from Chaucer’s writing; Calendar, 53 and 55–6.
97 The question of language, both the merits of English as opposed to the classical languages and Italian, and the appropriateness of antique usage, was discussed in Spenser’s letter to Gabriel Harvey of April 1579 which served as an introduction to the Shepherd’s Calendar, 3–8; Hamilton et al. (eds.), Spenser Encyclopedia, 645–56; Sidney, Defence, 242; Sanazzaro was Jacobo Sanazzaro, the illustrated edition of whose Arcadia (Venice, 1571) served both as a typographical model for Spenser’s Shepherd’s Calendar, and as a stylistic model for Sidney’s Old Arcadia; Worden, The Sound of Virtue, 54.
indicter. However the satire and criticism in Colin Clout’s Come Home Again is balanced by an admiration for the queen which was so effusive that one suspects its purpose may have been prophylactic. Spenser, however, seemed genuinely flattered that Queen Elizabeth had taken an interest in his verse, even if she had done so at the behest of Ralegh (the Shepherd of the Ocean), and out of affection for the memory of Philip Sidney (Astrophel) who may have apprised her of his talents. He also seemed moved by the attentions he received from the ladies at court, especially that from Sidney’s sister Mary, countess of Pembroke, and Spenser’s frequently quoted denunciation of the falseness and superficiality of the court was no more severe than what he (or Skelton for that matter) had previously stated. Indeed the satirical passages in Colin Clout may have been introduced by Spenser principally to express resentment at calumnies which had led to the destruction of his successive patrons through malice and innuendo, and to explain his decision to return to Ireland rather than to remain at court where he might have enjoyed further patronage from the queen.

This issue was raised in the poem by the character Thestylis (who is thought to be Ludowick Bryskett) when he asked why, since he had found ‘such grace with Cynthia and all her noble crew’, he should

> ever leave that happy place,  
> In which such wealth might unto thee accrue;  
> And back returnedst to this barren soil,  
> Where cold and care and penury do dwell,  
> Here to keep sheep, with hunger and with toil?  

The appropriate answer to this query had already been given by Cuddy, the voice of rustic common sense, when he had suggested that the height to which Colin had mounted was not appropriate for a ‘base shepherd’, but Colin endorsed this sentiment in his considered reply to Thestylis when he acknowledged that he, a

> silly man, whose former days  
> Had in rude fields been altogether spent,  
> Durst not adventure such unknown ways,  
> Nor trust the guile of fortunes blandishment;  
> But rather chose back to my sheep to turn,  
> Whose utmost hardness I before had tried,  
> Than, having learned repentance late, to mourn  
> Amongst those wretches which I there descried.  

This statement outweighs any countervailing evidence that Spenser then became alienated from the queen because he had not got the preferment he

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98 The entire poem appears in Calendar, 247–69.  
99 Ibid. 262.  
100 Ibid. 261, 263.
expected. It is probably true that he, like everybody else who was received into the royal presence, had hoped for a more substantial reward than pleasant words, but we must remember that Spenser had already been well rewarded with the grant of an estate in the Munster plantation. Many literary scholars have discounted or disregarded this, and Philip Henderson’s assertion (made admittedly in 1938), that Spenser’s only reward was ‘virtual exile among savages in Ireland, and a small pension that . . . was not regularly paid’, has been repeatedly reiterated even if not in the same unfortunate words. The truth is that estates in Munster were keenly competed for among those who were in favour with the queen, and Spenser was one of the very few English-born servants of the crown in Ireland who was favoured with a plantation estate. Grants such as this, initially in Munster and later throughout Ireland, were always appreciated, but especially so by English people of modest circumstances because they provided them with the opportunity to achieve a social and economic uplift for themselves and their heirs that would have never come their way in England. The fact that the benefits of that grant were soon to be lost through insurrection, and that Spenser would die a refugee in England, could not have been anticipated in 1591, and there seems no justification to treat this year as a watershed in the loyalties of Edmund Spenser.

To summarize, therefore, Spenser not only in 1591 but also in 1596 was a moralist in the traditions both of English pastoral verse and of the Renaissance. Some may look askance at his advocacy of violence in the Faerie Queene, but scholars like Brendan Bradshaw, who assert that this places him outside, and opposed to, the traditions of Renaissance humanism, are proceeding from the false premiss that humanists were so opposed to war as to be almost pacifists. It is true that the humanists of the generation of Erasmus did castigate Christian society for its devotion to war, but the issues they isolated for particular criticism were dynastic wars of aggression, the existence of a plenitude of private armies that occasioned the impoverishment of the weakest members of society, and the preoccupation of supposedly Christian rulers with such warlike pursuits as jousting and hunting, whenever they were not actually engaged in war. At the same time, however, many humanists, like Spenser, believed that Christians had an obligation to use force to defend and promote the truths of religion, to maintain order at times of popular insurrection, and (as is best exemplified in one memorable passage in More’s Utopia) to extend the boundaries of civility into ‘barbaric’

101 The evidence cited for Spenser’s disgruntlement over his treatment at court comes from Prothalamion. The reference there to his ‘fruitless stay in Prince’s court, and expectation vain of idle hope’ was a stock complaint in the pastoral tradition; Calendar, 361.
102 Calendar, introduction, p. vii.
103 Michael Mac Carthy-Morrogh, The Munster Plantation: English Migration to Southern Ireland, 1583–1641 (Oxford, 1986); Canny, The Upstart Earl; Chapters 2 and 3 below.
regions. It is also likely that Christian humanists would have accepted Spenser’s notion that civil society had first been established by force, although this was not an issue to which they gave much consideration. The humanist guidelines governing the justifications for war were rigidly adhered to in the Faerie Queene, and when we take account of such real episodes as the suppression of the Peasants’ Revolt in Germany, the Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Day, or the depredations of Parma in Flanders, it becomes clear that even the most gory episodes conjured up by Spenser in his historical fiction did not surpass the horror of actual wars in sixteenth-century Europe, even when these conformed with the principles laid down by Christian humanists.

Where Spenser departed from the earlier generations of humanists was in his pessimism about the capacity of people to achieve self-improvement, and in his conviction that moral lapse and degeneration were little short of inevitable, even in the best-ordered societies. Brendan Bradshaw has attributed such notions in the writings of Spenser and of other English officials in Ireland to their adherence to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, and he even contends that the issuance of statements to the effect that people were not amenable to reform is in itself proof that their authors were Calvinists. This supposition collapses when account is taken of contemporary Catholic opinions on the reform of primitive or depraved peoples which were as varied, and occasionally as despairing, as those articulated by Protestants. In so far as religion had anything to do with the widespread pessimism that prevailed it is probably because the evangelization endeavours of both Protestant and Catholic churches that emanated from the religious reforms of the sixteenth century made people more aware than previously of the consequences of the Fall. However a far more important influence in convincing people of the fragility of a moral and civil order would have been the experience of living through the actual conflicts of that century. This experience provided ample evidence that the optimistic notion that all social ills could be remedied simply through the schooling of future leaders was illusory. Spenser’s remedy for this problem was that leaders should be active against the corrupting influences that were pitted against the moral and civil attributes they had acquired through education. While Spenser’s poetry alerted people to the likelihood of social degeneracy and moral decay, it was still truly humanist because it showed how these pitfalls could be evaded. His concerns and preoccupations therefore complemented those of the people who had participated with Ludowick Bryskett in his Discourse.

105 Anthony Pagden, The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology (Cambridge, 1982); Pagden, European Encounters with the New World (New Haven, 1993).
Thus despite their seeming radical bent, the sentiments expressed by Spenser in his poetry were reasonably consonant with the political and social thinking of his generation, and his views remained consistent throughout his career as a poet. There were however two novel aspects to his later poetry which rendered it controversial and pointed to the equally extreme ideas that he was to expound in the View. It was controversial first because of Spenser’s close discussion, in book V of the Faerie Queene, of the politics of the 1570s and 1580s, including the execution of Mary queen of Scots whom, we might remember, he had depicted as Duessa in book I and did so more explicitly in book V. Here he made clear his identification with the rigid Protestant line then advocated by Walsingham and Leicester and which led, in 1586, to the Scottish queen being put to death. His narrative of events would obviously have been accepted and, in some circles, praised close to that time. Not so in 1596 when it was widely assumed that Mary’s son, James VI of Scotland, would succeed Elizabeth on the throne of England. Spenser, for his efforts, earned a reprimand from James, and it is likely that he would have further provoked the royal ire if the king had looked further into the poem and taken note of Spenser’s little-Englander approach to any possible Union of the Crowns. Indeed, as if to reinforce his argument, Spenser insisted, when he came to speak of the compromised authority which the monarch tolerated in Ireland, that cultural and religious diversity led inevitably to the degeneration of the central authority itself. This proposition which we noted in the Faerie Queene, pointed to what he would detail in the View, but even as these two arguments were elaborated in his verse they enable us to situate Spenser within the spectrum of English political thought of the early modern period.

Spenser’s model of what the authority of the English monarchy should be was not unique to him nor did it originate with him. On the contrary it had been clearly stated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century and became a matter of public policy when Somerset was in charge of the English government during the reign of Edward VI, as it was to become again during the rule of Oliver Cromwell; and one of its particular strengths in English eyes would have been that it was not in any way compromised by the ambiguous attitude towards a Gaelic origin displayed by even the most committed Protestant antiquarians in Scotland.106 Thus despite their apparent radicalism, the sentiments expressed by Spenser in his poetry were probably reflective of those fostered by a broad spectrum of his generation in England who had been nurtured on John Foxe’s Acts and Monuments of 1563 (popularly

known as the Book of Martyrs), even if these popular opinions were not normally articulated in formal political texts of the 1590s because this narrowly English perspective was unfashionable at the English court in 1596.\textsuperscript{107} It had become so because those who wielded influence at court would have appreciated neither folkloric reminders of the origin of Britain nor the rehearsal of the more recent events during Queen Elizabeth’s reign when war between England and Scotland had seemed imminent. Therefore, even courtiers who were cast in favourable light by Spenser did not appreciate this allegorical rehearsal of the roles they had played in the court politics of ten years previously because, in 1596, they were awaiting the imminent accession of the son of Mary of Scotland to the English throne. And in these circumstances also, as Willy Maley has established, they would not have wanted to be associated in any way with the anti-Scottish sentiment that had been expressed so explicitly in the Faerie Queene, and that was to reappear in the View.\textsuperscript{108}

This interpretation suggests that it was not Spenser who had changed in 1596 but rather the policies and the commitments of those who dominated the court of an ageing queen. The shock which Spenser expressed, after the supposed watershed year of 1596, at the extent to which pragmatism rather than principle guided the policies of the court is a stock theme in country criticism, and Spenser can hardly have been surprised at the change that had taken place since those whom he had previously relied upon to keep England on a proper course were either dead or in eclipse. What may have genuinely alarmed him, however, was the general lack of concern at court over events in Ireland, other than the concern to reduce its cost to the English exchequer. Spenser’s alarm over this benign neglect may indeed have affected a change in his attitude towards Ireland, and hints in his change of attitude are evident in his poetry written subsequent to 1596. We have already noted, in the discussion of the Faerie Queene, some of Spenser’s misgivings over the progress of England’s mission in Ireland, and these were put more emphatically in Colin Clout’s Come Home Again. Besides the suggestion that he had ‘banished’ himself:

\begin{quote}
like wight forlorn, \\
Into that waste, where I was quite forgot,
\end{quote}

there is the famous juxtaposition between social conditions in England and in Ireland which infers that Spenser felt constantly threatened in his rural retreat:\textsuperscript{109}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{107} The influence of Foxe, Bale, and other Protestants who were theologically advanced has been noted in John Breene, ‘The Faerie Queene, Book I and the Theme of Protestant Exile’, in Fogarty (ed.), Irish University Review, Special Issue, Spenser in Ireland, 1596–1996, 226–76.
\item \textsuperscript{108} On the execution and the politics associated with it see Jenny Wormald, Mary Queen of Scots: A Study in Failure (London, 1991); more generally, McCabe, ‘The Masks of Duessa’, and on anti-Scottishness in the View see Maley, Salvaging Spenser, 136–66.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Calendar, 251, 254–5.
\end{enumerate}
'Both heaven and heavenly graces do much more'
(Quoth he) ‘abound in that same land than this:
For there all happy peace and plenteous store
Conspire in one to make contented bliss.
No wailing there nor wretchedness is heard,
No bloody issues nor no leprosies,
No grisly famine, nor no raging sword,
No nightly bordrags, nor no hue and cries;
The shepherds there abroad may safely lie,
On hills and downs, withouten dread or danger:
No ravenous wolves the goodman’s hope destroy,
Nor outlaws fell affray the forest ranger.
There learned arts do flourish in great honour,
And poets’ wits are had in peerless price:
Religion hath lay power to rest upon her,
Advancing virtue and suppressing vice.
For end, all good, all grace there freely grows,
Had people grace it gratefully to use:
For God His gifts there plenteously bestows,
But graceless men them greatly do abuse.’

This passage does not hold that English society was perfect, but it does suggest that it could readily be made into an ideal pastoral world if people had the grace to make it so. In Ireland, however, the very lives, as well as the livelihoods, of shepherds were under constant threat, so that while it was rural it was not pastoral, nor could it any longer be imagined as such, quite clearly because it had been drawn into the international web of intrigue against English, and therefore universal, Protestantism. This same point was again made by Spenser in ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’, and there he offered an explanation for Ireland’s unfortunate condition. The explanation was given in the context of his retelling Ovid’s tale of the naked Diana having been spied upon at her bath by Actaeon. In Spenser’s version the event occurred in the vicinity of his own estate in Munster at the time when Ireland

flourished in fame
Of wealths and goodness, far above the rest
Of all that beare the British Islands name.

However, in this case, Diana (and there is no reason to believe that Diana was not, as always, representing Queen Elizabeth) took her revenge not only by converting the transgressor into a deer who would henceforth be followed

110 ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’, canto vi, stanza 38, in FQ, p. 720; Patricia Coughlan. ‘The Local Context of Mutabilitie’s Plea’, in Fogarty (ed.) Irish University Review, Special Issue, Spenser in Ireland, 320–41; Coughlan in this excellent piece does not posit a precise date for composition, but her argument is not inconsistent with my belief that the Cantos were composed before 1596; I also wish to record the advice of Kevin Barry, my English Department colleague, on this paragraph.
by her hounds, but out of ‘indignation’ she also abandoned the fertile hunting
ground where her honour had been besmirched, and then:

parting from the place,
There-on an heavy hapless curse did lay,
To weet, that Wolves where she was wont to space,
Should harbour’d be, and all those woods deface,
And Thieves should rob and spoile that Coast around.
Since which, those Woods and all that goodly Chase,
Doth to this day with Wolves and Thieves abound:
Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since have found.

One of the in-dwellers was, of course, Edmund Spenser in his dual capacity
as planter/official, and the pressing problem that confronted him at this time
was to explain why the careful scheme that had been designed for the planta-
tion in Munster did not bring back the perfect pastoral society that the
resources of the province made it capable of bearing. An answer to this ques-
tion was urgently required because the collapse of the plantation, which
Spenser and his associates in Munster believed to be imminent if the queen
did not give attention to their plight, would have resulted in the loss of every-
thing he had achieved during his working life as an official and a poet. It was
with the purpose of finding an answer to this question and of resolving the
problem that, in 1596, Eudoxus and Irenius entered into their discussion on
A View of the Present State of Ireland.

1.4. SPENSER’S VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND

The principal factor that occasioned political uncertainty in Ireland in 1596
was the insurrection of Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, which had been under
way in Ulster for two years and which was threatening the English and
Protestant presence in all parts of the country. The precariousness of the
government’s position required Spenser to speak plainly on matters that
closely affected himself, and he chose to do so in a prose treatise directed, as
Andrew Hadfield has put it, at ‘a coterie audience of influential figures’. It
is not certain if Spenser ever intended to have the View published, but the
long-held opinion that the text presented for publication to the Stationers’
Register in 1598 was censored because of its inflammatory content has been
challenged by Jean Brink and her case has survived subsequent objection,
although her questioning the authorship of the View has not won favour.

111 ‘Two Cantos of Mutabilitie’, canto vi, stanza 55, in FQ, p. 723.
112 The historical background has been described in general terms in Nicholas Canny, From
Reformation to Restoration: Ireland 1534–1660 (Dublin, 1987), 108–49, and more minutely in Hiram
Morgan, Tyrone’s Rebellion: The Outbreak of the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland (Woodbridge, 1993).
113 For an up-to-date statement on scholarship on the View see Hadfield, Spenser’s Irish Experience,
51–112, quotation p. 112; Jean Brink, ‘Constructing A View of the Present State of Ireland’, Spenser...
Spenser, who was the undoubted author of this text, chose dialogue as the most appropriate medium for his message because, as was mentioned, it enabled him to distance himself from what he put in the mouths of his interlocutors while, as Patricia Coughlan has explained, dialogue as a genre enjoyed a classical and a Renaissance pedigree, and its merits had recently been extolled by Philip Sidney. The line of argument that Spenser chose to pursue was indicated from the outset by the names of the two parties to the dialogue, Eudoxus and Irenius. Both, as becomes clear from their conversation, were Englishmen, and the name Eudoxus (from the Greek εὐδοξέω, to be in good repute) implies that the first speaker was a senior official in England, possibly a privy counsellor who participated in decision-making for Ireland, while the second, Irenius (from the Latin Ierne, or Hibernia or Ivernia, and the masculine form of Irena, Spenser’s allegorical name for Ireland in book V of the Faerie Queene), suggests an Englishman who had practical experience in Irish affairs; one who might have been referred to at the English court as an ‘Ireland man’.¹¹⁴

The dialogue is already under way when we are admitted as auditors and Eudoxus informs his audience that the subject under discussion is how a country such as Ireland, which is endowed with plentiful resources, can be turned from waste to ‘good uses’, and how ‘the savage nation’ that has held sway there can be reduced ‘to better government and civility’. The two speakers were critical both of those of their countrymen who accepted that the doleful condition of Ireland had been decreed by fate or ‘appointed by God’, and to those equally fatalistic ones who ‘wished . . . that all the land were a sea pool’. Such ‘kind of speech’, averred Eudoxus, in a statement which won the immediate agreement of Irenius and which placed them both in the humanist tradition, was¹¹⁵

the manner rather of desperate men far driven, to wish the utter ruin of that which they cannot redress than of grave counsellors which ought to think nothing so hard but that through wisdom may be mastered and subdued, since the poet says that the wise man shall rule even over the stars, much more over the earth.

While both characters considered themselves to be grave counsellors, it quickly emerged that what seemed reasonable in the comfort of the English court was neither wise nor practical, and Spenser deployed the dialogue to give Irenius the opportunity to demonstrate that the conventional humanist precepts, which Eudoxus took for granted, were not borne out either by Irenius’ own experience in Ireland or ‘by the consultations and actions


¹¹⁴ I am grateful to John A. Madden, my colleague in the Department of Ancient Classics, for advice on these definitions.

¹¹⁵ Spenser, View, 1–2.
of very wise governors and counsellors whom [he had] sometimes heard
treat thereof’.116

The two interlocutors agreed that they should proceed scientifically after
the manner of physicians, and the lead was taken by Irenius who, on the
basis of what he had learned and witnessed, offered a diagnosis of the ills of
the Irish body politic under the three headings of laws, customs, and religion.
Then he proceeded, in the second half of the text, to prescribe remedies for
Ireland’s condition under the same three headings.117 Eudoxus frequently
queried the observations of Irenius whenever these seemed to step beyond
the bounds set by moral philosophy, and he challenged his conclusion that
a desperate condition required desperate remedies. Ultimately, however, he
was borne along by the sheer weight of the evidence cited by Irenius and the
force of his logic, and they agreed, at the conclusion of their discourse (still
applying the medical metaphor), to ‘prescribe a diet with strait rules and
orders to be daily observed, for fear of relapse [of the body politic] into the
former disease or falling into some more dangerous than it’.118

Since the two actors were then of one mind on most issues, the dialogue
tapered off as each in turn laid out the procedures that would have to be
followed once the remedy had been effected. Some scholars, most recently
Ciaran Brady, have been persuaded by the uneven quality of the discourse
that the View is crude and perhaps unfinished, but on closer inspection it
emerges that there is a true symmetry to the text as the actors proceeded sys-
tematically (with some meandering from the point, analogous to the knights
straying from their quest in the Faerie Queene) to follow the line of investigation
they had agreed upon at the outset. The existence of pedestrian pronounce-
ments beside some of the most gripping prose passages in English Renaissance
literature does give substance to Brady’s belief that the text was completed in
a hurry, or that Spenser intended to polish the less elegant passages at some
future date, but it is clear from the text that Spenser’s interlocutors arrived at
the conclusion on which the author was determined from the outset: that if
society in Ireland was ever to be brought to a civil condition it would have to
be broken down into its constituent parts and then be reassembled after the
defective parts had been removed and some new elements added. Therefore,
when Irenius had persuaded Eudoxus that revolutionary principles rather than
conventional reform methods were necessary to effect a comprehensive and
lasting remedy, it was appropriate that they should together proceed to teach
‘by rule’ with little dialogue in the later section of the text because, at this point,
there were no differences between them.119

116 Spencer, View, 170.
117 The division in the text between the diagnostic and the prescriptive sections comes at p. 93.
118 Spencer, View, 3.
The first of the controversial measures recommended by Irenius concerned the deployment of English common law as a vehicle for drawing the population in the Irish provinces to a civil condition. This issue came to the fore when Irenius questioned the conventional wisdom on how Ireland should be reformed. This received opinion held that the reform of the country should proceed outwards from the bridgehead of the English Pale (in the river valleys of the Liffey and the Boyne) which was controlled and inhabited by a population descended from the original Anglo-Norman conquerors of the country. The leaders of this community, who dominated the Irish parliament, had in 1541–2 voluntarily sponsored an Act of Kingship which had conferred the title King of Ireland on Henry VIII and his successors where previous English monarchs had been styled Lords of Ireland. The presumed implication of this change in title was that all the inhabitants of the country, and not only those resident within the confines of a circumscribed lordship, were subjects of the crown. The mechanism then devised for giving those previously regarded as enemies of the crown an opportunity to profess their allegiance to the monarch is that known to historians as Surrender and Regrant. This scheme, which was pursued fairly systematically by the government during the 1540s and 1550s, and intermittently thereafter, committed the government to enter into negotiations with the existing Irish provincial lords and offer them full legal rights under the common law provided they professed loyalty to the crown and agreed to become agents of crown interests within their lordships. There was also an educational dimension to the scheme, not mentioned in the View, which catered for the upbringing within the households of the gentry in the Pale (or within England itself) of the heirs presumptive of those lords who did surrender.

This innovation of the 1540s, which has been presented by Brendan Bradshaw as it was interpreted by the Palesmen of the sixteenth century, was rehearsed by Irenius in the View and met with the enthusiastic endorsement of Eudoxus because it seemed to conform with the requirement of moral philosophy that people who lived outside civil society should be made fit for admission to it through education and persuasion. Thus Eudoxus was especially impressed because King Henry had seen fit rather ‘to bring them by their own accord to his obedience and to plant a peaceable government among them, than by . . . violent means to pluck them under’. Irenius conceded the plausibility of this, and he was forced to explain its shortcomings in

120 Brendan Bradshaw, The Irish Constitutional Revolution of the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge, 1979); S. G. Ellis, Tudor Ireland: Crown, Community and the Conflict of Cultures, 1470–1603 (London, 1985), 137–42; Lennon, Sixteenth-Century Ireland, 152–75; the quotation of Eudoxus is from Spenser, View, 10; Brady, in ‘Spenser’s Irish Crisis’, and Edwards in ‘Ideology and Experience’ contend that the denunciation of English common law as a vehicle for reform and the extolling of the virtues of martial law were the most controversial arguments being enunciated; it is my opinion that these were indeed controversial but that they were but elements in the grand purpose of discrediting the Old English and the policies they advocated.
considerable detail when he set out to discredit it. One fundamental flaw, he
asserted, derived from the Act of Kingship itself because it inferred that royal
authority in the Irish provinces had had its origin in the surrenders then made,
whereas in fact the English crown had previously enjoyed ‘absolute power of
principality . . . from many former kings, his famous progenitors and worthy
conquerors of that land’. All that the Act had given to Henry, claimed Irenius,
was ‘the bare name of a king’ which the monarch might have assumed at any
time if he had so wished because it was ‘in the power of the conqueror to take
upon himself what title he [would] over his dominions conquered’. Thus, con-
tended Irenius, the Act of Kingship of which the leaders of the Old English
community ‘boasted’ and for which they claimed credit as a ‘great and
meritorious . . . service’, had in effect done ‘great hurt to his title’ because it
had convinced the lords in the provinces that they were ‘tied’ to the crown
‘but with terms’, whereas previously ‘their lives, their lands, and their liberties
were in his free power to appoint what tenures, what laws, what conditions he
would over them, which were all his, against which there could be no rightful
resistance’.121

The second defect in the arrangement, according to Irenius, related to the
submissions themselves, because while the lords had indeed ‘acknowledged
King Henry for their sovereign lord’, they had reserved ‘(as some say) unto
themselves all their own former privileges and seignories inviolate’.122 Worse
still, contended Irenius, several of the heirs to the lords who had made submis-
sions refused to acknowledge that they were bound by these arrangements
because the ownership of property under Gaelic brehon law was vested in
the sept, and lords had but a life interest in those lands ‘by election of the
country’.123 Therefore, as Irenius was able to point out, a scheme which had
held out the hope of making provincial Ireland more orderly and predictable
had instead introduced another occasion of contention into the already trou-
bled lordships.

The third deficiency that Irenius identified in the scheme concerned the
use to which the common law had been put in the provinces after these
submissions had been negotiated. It was generally accepted that the common
law could operate effectively only where jurors, who were bound by oath,
were willing to make objective decisions independently of those who wielded
political and social influence. This precondition, according to Irenius, could
never be met in Ireland where the power of the lords was such that each
demanded the unqualified loyalty of the inhabitants within his lordship. The
introduction of the common law into these areas therefore placed yet another
instrument of power in the hands of lords who were already over-powerful,
because it enabled them to cover their acts of tyranny with the semblance of legality. The use of common law in Ireland was, according to Irenius,

121 Spenser, View, 9.  
122 Ibid. 6.  
123 Ibid. 6–7.
especially prejudicial when the interests of Englishmen and the crown were subjected to trial by jury because Irish jurors made 'no more scruple to pass against the Englishman or the Queen though it be to strain their oaths, than to drink milk unstrained'.

These three propositions brought Irenius to his first grand conclusion that the entire surrender and regrant scheme was based on the false premiss that law could be instrumental in effecting reform. The evidence he cited was sufficient to convince Eudoxus that no legal system was absolutely just in itself, and that none could be used as an instrument of reform. Eudoxus and Irenius were further agreed that the common law could be effective in preventing people from falling into evil ways only where people already respected the philosophy from which this legal system proceeded. However they concluded that whenever the common law was put into operation where the population was not sufficiently educated to respect its principles, 'instead of good' it would 'work ill, and pervert justice to extreme injustice'. Therefore the remedy on which they could agree and which they formulated in the second part of the text was that:

since we cannot now apply laws fit to the people, as in the first institution of commonwealths it ought to be, we will apply the people and fit them to the laws, as it most conveniently may be.

The clear implication of this conclusion was that what Ireland ultimately required was to be refashioned into a perfect commonwealth, and this was the second radical proposal that was arrived at in the View through the process of debate. This proposal emerged surprisingly from a discussion on the evil customs of the Irish which was the second heading under which Irenius had agreed to offer his diagnosis. The account of Irish customs given by Irenius at first seems limited because he discoursed principally on the customs of the Gaelic Irish, and because many of the observations he made were derived from the descriptions which had been offered, as long ago as the twelfth century, by Giralbus Cambrensis. Spenser however allowed his interlocutors to break new ground when Eudoxus suggested to Irenius, in an intervention reminiscent of the premiss on which the Faerie Queene was based, that his 'discourse' on customs should lead him to 'many sweet remembrances of antiquities, from

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124 Ibid. 22.
125 Ibid. 21.
126 Ibid. 11.
127 Ibid. 141–2.
whence it seemeth that the customs of that nation proceeded’. Irenius was quick to agree that the customs practised by any particular people provided evidence ‘from which they first sprung’, but the genealogical stemma which he could trace for the Irish provided Eudoxus with scant opportunity for the ‘sweet remembrances’ that would have come to mind if he (like Sir Paridell in the *Faerie Queene*) had been tracing the ancestry of a civil people.

The investigation into Irish customs conducted by Irenius led first to the conclusion that ‘that people which are now called Irish’ were descended from ‘sundry manners’ of nations rather than from a single stock, but that the most potent of the succession of invaders who went to making this bastard people were the Scythians, the most barbaric people known to the ancient world.¹²⁹ These, he contended, had settled principally in Ulster, and their presence was complemented by two separate settlements of Gauls, in the southern and western parts of the country. The Scythians and Gauls, as Eudoxus put it, ‘were two as mighty nations as ever the world brought forth’, and he was able to make a plausible case from linguistic survivals that the province of Leinster was further settled by Britons, the same people who had settled Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany. To these ancient invasions had been added:¹³⁰

the last and the greatest which was by the English, when the Earl Strongbow, having conquered that land, delivered up the same unto the hands of Henry the Second, then King, who sent over thither great store of gentlemen and other warlike people amongst whom he distributed the land and settled such a strong colony therein as never since could with all the subtle practices of the Irish be routed out but abide still a mighty people of so many as remain English of them.

This pronouncement by Irenius at first gave Eudoxus occasion for pride and celebration, but no longer so when he queried what Irenius had meant by his closing remark: ‘of so many as remain English of them’. Then Eudoxus learned to his horror that the original English settlers and their posterity were ‘for the most part . . . degenerated and become Irish, yea and more malicious to the English than the Irish themselves’.¹³¹

There was particular as well as universal significance to this assertion, which was debated and elaborated upon until it was accepted as valid by Eudoxus. Its particular significance was that Old English descendants of Anglo-Norman conquerors could no longer serve as instruments for the reform of Ireland. Their alleged lapse from civility also meant that their preferred policy of surrender and regrant as a means of reforming the country was no longer viable. The compelling reason for this, as was announced stentorially by Irenius, was that.¹³²

¹²⁹ Spenser, *View*, 37.
¹³⁰ Ibid. 41–5; 47–8.
¹³¹ Ibid. 48.
¹³² Ibid. 63; this same point had already been made by Irenius on p. 48.
the chiefest abuses which are now in that realm are grown from the English, and the English that were are now much more lawless and licentious than the wild Irish, so that as much care as was then by them had to reform the wild Irish, so much and more must now be used to reform them so much time doth alter the manners of men.

The universal significance was again contained in the closing phrase of this passage because the invocation of time implied that degeneration, such as had beset the Anglo-Norman colony in Ireland, was inevitable unless there were virtuous, vigorous men available to arrest the decay at its first manifestation. Further pointers to the inevitability of degeneration were given when Irenius drew attention to the onset of degeneracy among English people of his own generation, particularly soldiers, who had been engaged with him in Ireland. Spenser, as was noted, had previously pondered this problem in general terms in the Faerie Queene, and had then satisfied himself that the process could be halted only through the forceful actions of committed champions of a moral order who through their continuous action would themselves be preserved from degeneration. More particularly on the Irish situation, Eudoxus and Irenius concluded that degeneration had occurred, and was still proceeding at an alarming rate, because of ‘the first evil ordinance and institution of that commonwealth’. Therefore, as with the law, the remedy required that the counsel and involvement of the Old English in Irish affairs be cast aside, that the existing commonwealth be destroyed, and that a new and perfect one be erected on its foundations.

All of this was made to sound plausible because it was being advanced thoughtfully through the medium of dialogue, but both participants in the debate realized that what they proposed was revolutionary because it was calling on the crown to become a conscious promoter of innovation where the accepted role of government was to uphold existing authority against innovation. The revolutionary aspect of the proposal became more evident when they together explained the steps necessary to achieve the desired innovation. The programme that they detailed involved the pursuit of five sequential steps before the Irish population would attain a level of education sufficient to enable them to appreciate the benefits of English common law, the application of which would then serve to halt their slide backward to their former condition.

The first step was the military one when the state would become the champion of virtue against the vice that held sway everywhere in Ireland. The crown would employ a force of 10,000 foot and 1,000 horse which would wage relentless war against all lords in Ireland who were actively engaged in rebellion, or who were suspected of disloyalty. It was recommended that the rebel leaders should first be given the opportunity to submit, and it was agreed

133 Ibid. 48.
that no clemency would be shown to those who spurned the opportunity to make an unconditional surrender.\textsuperscript{134} Those remaining in arms would be those who would ‘never be made dutiful and obedient, nor brought to labour or civil conversation’, and such incorrigible miscreants addicted to ‘a licentious life’ would obviously have to be summarily executed.\textsuperscript{135} As an inducement to the senior officials in England, and possibly the queen herself (who were the intended readers of this manuscript text), Irenius emphasized repeatedly, from his experience with Lord Grey, that relatively few of the English army would be killed in battle, and that, on the enemy side, there would be far more casualties from famine than from military action because the army would destroy the crops and livestock that sustained the forces of the recalcitrant Irish lords in persisting perversely with a hopeless struggle rather than surrender to a clement monarch. Irenius, and presumably his creator, was moved to pity by the terrible scenes of starvation and devastation (the most graphic and most frequently quoted passage from the \textit{View}) that he had witnessed in Munster, and that he believed would have to be repeated because Grey had been recalled before the surrender of all Irish lords remaining in arms had been achieved following upon this exemplary tragedy. As for the efficacy of this scorched-earth policy in bringing particular rebels to surrender (and thus by example all others) Irenius had no doubt:\textsuperscript{136}

The proof whereof I saw sufficiently ensampled in Munster, for notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought they would have been able to stand long, yet ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the woods and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them. They looked anatomies of death, they spake like ghosts crying out of their graves, they did eat of the dead carrion, happy were they could find them, yea and one another soon after in so much as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves, and if they could find a plot of watercress or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not able long to continue therewithal, that in short space there was none almost left and a most populous country suddenly left void of man or beast.

Here in a work which set out to teach ‘by rule’ Spenser incorporated a word picture, culled from the campaigns of Lord Grey (the living Artegall) in Munster, to explain how Grey’s policies had moved the rebels to surrender. He sought also, by the ‘ensample’ he put before them, to make officials in England, and possibly the queen herself, understand that their pusillanimity meant that the harrowing scene had been rendered nugatory, and would

\textsuperscript{134} Spenser, \textit{View}, 98–101.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. 102.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid. 104; it will be clear from this that the argument being pursued was in favour of measures more draconian than the restoration of martial law to crown officials; see Edwards, ‘Ideology and Experience’.
have to be re-enacted, once a new Artegaill was appointed to confront Tyrone, because Grey had been recalled at the moment when his strategy was about to produce results. Thus, by deploying example as well as rule, Spenser, through his intermediaries, could make the case that there was no point in the crown undertaking any further military action in Ireland unless there was a firm determination to proceed with it, through winter as well as summer, until all opponents had been cowed into submission. Once this had been achieved, the subdued country would be placed under military government, with the people obliged to pay rents for the maintenance of soldiers, and this military authority would facilitate the settlement of English colonies on the confiscated property of the erstwhile rebels.

The purpose behind this second step in the programme was to establish a new focus of authority in place of the defeated lords whose tyranny had corrupted the environment within which the Irish population had previously lived. Existing septs and kinship groups were now to be dissolved, and the Irish population was to be resettled on property assigned to the new proprietors, or in towns to be erected close to the garrisons. In either situation they would be intermingled with English settlers who would instruct them, by word and example, in the ways of civil living, and acquaint them with manufacturing skills and improved agricultural methods. In this way an apparently military arrangement, to which Eudoxus voiced reservations, would lead to the erection of ‘that perfect establishment and new commonwealth’ which was the end purpose of the innovation.

There were still several stages to be passed through before this end-result would be achieved, and each was designed to promote individualism and economic self-sufficiency among the population. Successive steps were to be enforced by a superior military force, and all who proved recalcitrant or idle were to be cut off by martial law. Here again Eudoxus challenged Irenius to justify the summary execution of people—stubborn lords with their idle followers, notably soldiers, poets, storytellers, and gamblers—who were to be killed ‘by the halter’, and in doing so he provided him with the opportunity of defending himself against the charge that he was recommending the merciless slaughter of the queen’s subjects. Irenius did so by drawing a clear distinction between the use of the halter, which meant summary execution of those who were incorrigible, and the use of the sword, which meant using ‘the royal power of the prince’ to ‘cut off’ evil practices that prevailed everywhere in

137 Spenser, *View*, 104–6.
138 Ibid. 125–9.
139 Ibid. 121.
140 The charge would have come from highly politicized members of the Pale community whom Spenser clearly had in mind when he invented the Blatant Beast, but the charge continues to be made using even anachronistic references to genocide, as for example in Brendan Bradshaw, ‘The Beginnings of Modern Ireland’, in Brian Farrell (ed.), *The Irish Parliamentary Tradition* (Dublin, 1973), 83; Brady, ‘Spenser’s Irish Crisis’, 32.
Ireland but ‘not the people’ who had been made ‘evil’ by these practices, ‘for evil people by good ordinance and government may be made good, but the evil which is of itself evil will never become good’. The halter therefore was the flail of Talus of the *Faerie Queene*, while the sword was the instrument of Artegall, and was to be employed to subject people to discipline rather than to execute them. Therefore the scheme which Irenius favoured (and this was to be upheld by most English people who, like Spenser, became involved with plantation schemes for Ireland during the early modern centuries) proceeded from the assumption that the bulk of the Irish population would become amenable subjects of the crown, and would be available to be integrated as workers within a plantation community, once they had been liberated from the tyranny of their lords which diverted them towards wicked ways. Irenius—and Eudoxus came to endorse this opinion—therefore sought to enable every individual to become a subject of the crown, each with a particular surname as well as ‘a certain trade of life’, and, once military victory was achieved, they intended that regular musters of the population be conducted to ensure that every Irishman would ‘not only not depend upon the head of [his] sept as now they do but also [would] in short time learn quite to forget his Irish nation’.

While they emphasized the rapidity with which the ‘fashioning’ of a new person (to use the words of the *Faerie Queene*) would proceed with its psychological as well as its social ramifications, the discussants were in reality speaking of a generational interval of transformation before the Irish would identify totally with their English mentors, thus effecting ‘an union of manners and conformity of minds, to bring them to be one people’. Formal education was also to have a role in this process and Bryskett’s *Discourse* comes to mind when we learn that the first generation born into this new dispensation would receive instruction in school:

> in grammar and the principles of sciences . . . whereby they will in short time grow up to that civil conversation that both the children will loathe the former rudeness in which they were bred, and also their parents will, even by the ensample of their young children, perceive the foulness of their brutish behaviour compared to theirs, for learning hath that wonderful power of itself that it can soften and temper the most stern and savage nature.

Thus, in the final analysis, the humanist belief in the efficacy of education in promoting moral behaviour was invoked, and the text also bears the mark of humanistic influence because this educational advance was especially

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141 Spenser, *View*, 95.
142 Ibid. 153–6; this is to place emphasis on the happy outcome; the bloody means was not disguised in the text; the practical impact of the use of martial law in Ireland is spelled out more graphically in Edwards, ‘Ideology and Experience’; on Spenser’s confidence that those to be put in charge of the military operation would not themselves become corrupt see Chapter 3 below, pp. 160–2.
143 Spenser, *View*, 153.
144 Ibid. 148–9.
valued by the discussants since it would pave the way for the promotion of true religion. This task, it was argued, should be left to ‘some discreet ministers of their countrymen’ who ‘by their mild persuasions and instructions as also by their sober life and conversation, may draw them first to understand and afterwards to embrace the doctrine of their salvation’.\(^{145}\)

Not even these invocations could disguise the radicalism of the methods being advocated to bring about the desired social transformation of the Irish people. The most obviously radical recommendation was, as David Edwards has also emphasized, that English governors in Ireland were to have virtually untrammelled power and should have the right to move militarily against those they suspected of disloyalty simply because the necessity of the occasion demanded it.\(^{146}\) It was radical also in the low priority which religion was accorded in the scheme, suggesting that the work of evangelization would not even begin until the existing social institutions in Ireland (although not the people who resided within them) had been destroyed and a new social order fashioned to take their place. On the question of religion, the two discussants were agreed that their entire scheme would ultimately be justified only if Protestantism—the ultimate good which would stem from and justify everything being recommended—was firmly established in Ireland. Despite this, however, they devoted little space to a consideration of religious reform and how it might be proceeded with. Here Irenius, like Ludowick Bryskett in his Discourse, explained that he did not dwell further on the subject because he had ‘not been much conversant in that calling, but as lightly passing by I have seen and heard’.\(^{147}\)

One purpose behind that disclaimer may, as in the case of Bryskett, have been to avoid conflict with the authorities of the Irish Protestant Church who were powerfully entrenched in government if not in society. Another good reason would have been that the few proposals that they did have to offer cut across existing policy for the promotion of Protestantism in Ireland, and advanced a severe criticism of the steps that had been taken to advance the religious reform of the Irish people. The most glaring criticism was implicit in the suggestion that the reformation in Ireland should begin ab initio because it seemed to Irenius that ‘the most of the Irish are so far from understanding of the popish religion as they are of the protestants’ profession’.\(^{148}\)

This conclusion may not have appeared as shocking a pronouncement as it seems today because, as Helga Robinson-Hammerstein has reminded us, it had become a topos in the rhetoric of Protestants to deny the status of a religion to Catholicism and to assert, as Irenius did in relation to the plurality of religions, that ‘that which is true only is and the rest are not at

\(^{145}\) Ibid. 161.

\(^{146}\) Ibid. 168; Edwards, ‘Ideology and Experience’.

\(^{147}\) Spenser, View, 84; the same point is made in the prescriptive section on religion p. 161.

\(^{148}\) Ibid. 161.
all’. Moreover the contention that the Gaelic Irish were no better informed in the principles of religion than ‘atheists or infidels’ was made by Irenius to lend support to his further proposition that it was easier to win over those who had no knowledge of any religion than it was to convert the Old English who had been catechized in false doctrines by seminary priests who had put their lives at risk to ‘draw the people to the church of Rome’. Irenius was more explicit when he denounced both the methods and the personnel of the Protestant Church in Ireland. The method was at fault because it was utterly reliant upon ‘terror and sharp penalties’ which made Protestantism ‘hated before it be understood’, and the personnel were at fault both because they were English, and therefore ignorant of the Irish language, and because most ministers in Ireland were only interested in the livings of the Church and were otherwise idle and ‘could not be brought forth from their warm nests and their sweet love’s side to look out into God’s harvest which is even ready for the sickle, and all the fields yellow long ago’. Furthermore, Irenius saw no possibility of improving upon this position while his reform programme was proceeding, first because they still lacked a committed clergy who could preach to people in their own language, and second because:

instruction in religion needeth quiet times, and ere we seek to settle a sound discipline in the clergy, we must purchase peace unto the laity; for it is ill time to preach among swords, and most hard or rather impossible it is to settle a good opinion in the minds of men . . . which have a doubtless evil opinion of ourselves: for ere a new be brought in, the old must be removed.

Then, proceeding from there, it was logical to conclude that the attempt to reform the Irish in religion would necessarily be deferred until after the civil and educational reforms had been implemented, by which time the task would become the responsibility of specially trained Irish-born clergy.

This conclusion would certainly have sounded radical to the English establishment of the 1590s, and the assertion by Irenius that, with few exceptions, the existing Protestant clergy in Ireland were ‘generally bad, licentious and most disordered’ would have aroused hostility among church circles in both England and Ireland. What would have been most shocking would have been the general supposition that everything had to be cast down in Ireland before the perfect commonwealth to which Eudoxus and Irenius aspired could be established. This assumption conflicted with every received idea on the duties and responsibilities of government, and sounded suspiciously like what educated people of the time believed Machiavelli had said. What was being recommended in the View, however, went far beyond anything

150 Spenser, View, 84, 162.
151 Ibid. 161–2, 86.
152 Ibid. 88–9.
enunciated there because Machiavelli in *The Prince* was offering advice on how order might be restored to a polity that had been destabilized by the innovatory—and hence immoral—action of a ruler who, as Quentin Skinner has made clear, had come to power ‘by Fortune and foreign armies’.

The propositions being advanced in the *View* were altogether more fundamental than this, because they proceeded to detail how an existing socio-political order might be destroyed, and another erected in its place. The experiment in social engineering that was being described was justified simply on the grounds that the original polity had become corrupt, and the ideas in this work, and others of its kind, were to be invoked by many English and (at a later date) Scottish people who over the next several decades engaged in the endeavour to make Ireland British.

1.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has involved a study of the intellectual progression of Edmund Spenser from 1579, when he first came to prominence as a poet, to 1598 when permission was sought by his printer to have the *View* published. The early Spenser identified himself as an English social critic after the manner of Geoffrey Chaucer or John Skelton, and it was only Spenser’s invocation of classical and continental authorities and models that made it clear that he wished to be considered as an English representative of the Renaissance while remaining within the tradition of pastoral criticism. He made this point most effectively in the *Shepherd’s Calendar*, and the appearance in the early 1590s of his *Complaints* and *Colin Clout’s Come Home Again* indicates that he remained consciously loyal to that tradition throughout his working career despite his achievements in Ireland and despite the fame that came to him as the author of the *Faerie Queene*. The involvement of Spenser with Ireland would seem to have placed him in an ideal location from which to criticize the life and politics of the court, and the insights into his thinking that are provided both in the *Faerie Queene*, and in Spenser’s brief appearance as an interlocutor in Bryskett’s *Discourse*, make it clear that he successfully married the roles of pastoral critic in the English tradition and that of Renaissance reformer in the classical sense. Spenser’s role in the *Discourse* is especially important because it makes clear his endorsement of the Renaissance notion that society would best be reformed through the formal education of the sons of the elite, and his acceptance of the idea that the particular reform that was required in Ireland should be proceeded with outwards from the already partially reformed base of the English Pale to the provincial society beyond. Moreover the comments that are attributed to him in the *Discourse* indicate how he expected that the *Faerie Queene* would further the education in moral

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philosophy to which young men had already been exposed through formal schooling.

This analysis of the *Faerie Queene* has shown that Spenser remained attached to these beliefs and principles down to 1596 even when his allegorized narration of events, and his depiction of the violence that was necessary to achieve reform, imply that his belief in the efficacy of education was being stretched to the limit. What was especially troublesome for Spenser was his keen consciousness (derived undoubtedly from experience as well as from reflection) of the potency of the degenerative force in cancelling the moral gains achieved through education. However, he did cling to the notion that a proper schooling in moral philosophy was an essential aid to moral behaviour, although he qualified this by suggesting that education alone, even when aided by grace, did not provide an assurance that an individual would never be diverted from the correct path. Spenser’s other important qualification to the optimistic outlook of the humanists was his assertion that civil standards could first be introduced in a barbaric society only through a process of conquest such as Brutus had imposed on Britain. Even in this he did not come into conflict with the opinions of the early humanists, and differed from them only in matters of emphasis and in his realistic portrayal of the violence necessary to attain and retain a civil order. In these respects Spenser might be considered the literary equivalent of Hieronymus Bosch or Pieter Bruegel the elder, but if we are to persist with the artistic analogy we must also credit him with the talent of Tintoretto in recreating the excitement and tense drama associated with the events he describes.

While such attributes enhance Spenser’s reputation as a poet they also add to his standing as an innovative political thinker, because Spenser considered poetry a particularly useful vehicle for conveying the political message of advanced Protestantism first in the hope that the ‘examples’ he fabricated would inspire real political actors to follow his exhortations, and second because he hoped, under the guise of allegory, to ventilate ideas which might not otherwise be committed to print. There were, as was noted, good reasons for him to abandon this mode in 1596, and to compose instead his dialogue *A View of the Present State of Ireland*. This was, again, an advanced political statement which, like Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, addressed the problems of a particular place at a particular time, and recycled ideas which the author and others had rehearsed elsewhere. However, again like *The Prince*, it broke new ground in articulating novel solutions for apparently intractable problems which, whatever might have been said of their particularity, also had, or came to have, wider implications.154

David Edwards has argued that the *View* may have been in draft as early as 1590, but the better-known manuscript copies were probably written in

154 My understanding of *The Prince* has been shaped by my reading of Skinner, *Machiavelli*.
1596, and the text in the Bodleian Library was certainly available to the printer in 1598. Attention has been drawn to those proposals of Irenius which Spenser knew would prove disturbing for English people educated in the humanist tradition, but the significant point is that Eudoxus, who represented that tradition, was won over by the evidence and the arguments of Irenius to the point where he himself became an advocate of radical solutions to the critical problems that were identified by Irenius. While unsettling, the novel ideas being expounded came to be entertained by people in England because it was clear that they had relevance only in colonial situations and did not threaten properly ordered societies such as England. The specificity of these ideas rendered them all the more threatening for leaders in Irish society because it was being stated explicitly by Spenser (and this was endorsed by several of his contemporaries and associates) that the first responsibility of government in Ireland was to curtail or eliminate the power of existing leaders. It was obvious that what was being said of Ireland was equally valid for all lands, whether in Europe or further afield, that had not been subjected to the rule of a civil people, and also to those lands, like the previously Anglicized areas of Ireland, that had lapsed from a once civil condition. Here Spenser was touching upon the subject of decline that was of concern to many Europeans at that time, and the most extreme sentiment that he expressed on this issue was that any society which lapsed or degenerated from a civil condition was more difficult to recover than those that had never been rescued through the act of conquest. This contention was further elaborated upon by Richard Beacon, a colleague of Spenser on the Munster council, and while Beacon employed allegory to shroud his trenchant criticism of government policy in Ireland he made clear the general thrust of his argument by the subtitle to Solon his Follie which read A Politique Discourse Touching the Reformation of Common-weales Conquered, Declined, or Corrupted.155

The precise impact of any one, or several, of these texts on the government’s conduct is something that can never be measured. Solon his Follie was published in 1594, but in Oxford rather than in London, which was the centre of England’s publishing business at the close of the sixteenth century. Spenser’s View was not published in the author’s lifetime, possibly because he never intended it for publication, but more likely because he did not have the opportunity, before his death, to see it through the press. Herbert’s Croftus survived into the nineteenth century only in manuscript form and in Latin, although a manuscript translation into English of part of the text dates from the early seventeenth century.156 Despite this apparent neglect, these texts, and particularly Spenser’s View, did exert an influence over the course of events long after his death. The survival of about twenty manuscript copies

156 See the introduction to Croftus, ed. Keaveney and Madden.
of the View, some of which were read and echoed by people directly involved with Irish affairs ranging from Fynes Moryson, Sir Arthur Chichester, Sir John Davies to Sir Francis Bacon and Sir George Carew, later earl of Totnes, indicate that it must have exerted some influence over the formulation of policy during the decades immediately following upon its publication.\(^\text{157}\) The fact that the text was published in a somewhat truncated version by Sir James Ware in 1633, and was dedicated to Thomas Wentworth, indicates that it was then still considered relevant to the formulation of policy for governing Ireland, and its influence persisted beyond that because we know that it was admired by Oliver Cromwell, while John Milton was inspired by this treatise of Spenser for his own compositions in prose just as he emulated the Faerie Queene when he set to composing Paradise Lost.\(^\text{158}\) The immediate importance of a formal text such as this was, however, that it elaborated upon ideas, prejudices, and responses that were widespread among those thousands of Englishmen who were involved in government service in Ireland at the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and encouraged many of these, in the plats, projects, and simple letters they addressed to the government, to articulate sentiments that would otherwise have gone unrecorded.\(^\text{159}\) These in turn enhanced the authority of the texts and encouraged senior officials, and perhaps the queen herself, to contemplate policies for the government of Ireland that would never previously have been admitted on moral grounds. The most potent of these recommendations was that Ireland would only be brought to good order in the aftermath of a military conquest and a comprehensive programme of plantation. This idea was clutched at by the government when its remaining influence over Ireland was threatened in the 1590s. However, once the government undertook that policy it was certain that its success would be measured against the standards that had been agreed upon by Eudoxus and Irenius, and, whatever scruples might have been raised in the minds of officials about their procedures these would have been eased by the assurance given by Philip Sidney concerning the virtuous poet that ‘since neither his description nor end containeth any evil, the thing described cannot be evil; since his effects be so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners’.\(^\text{160}\)

\(^{157}\) An identification of the then known copies was undertaken by Rudolf Gottfried in 1949 in his introduction to A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland, in Spenser’s Prose Works, ed. Rudolf Gottfried (Baltimore, 1949).

\(^{158}\) A Vewe of the Present State of Ireland Written Dialogue Wise between Eudoxus and Irenaeus, ed. James Ware (Dublin, 1633); for a modern edition of this text see Edmund Spenser, A View of the State of Ireland, ed. Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (Oxford, 1997); on the reception of this edition in the decades after 1633 see Maley, Salvaging Spenser, 118–35.

\(^{159}\) For some of these see Nicholas Canny, ‘Edmund Spenser and the Development of an Anglo-Irish Identity’, Yearbook of English Studies: Colonial and Imperial Themes, Special Number 13 (1989), 1–19, and Chapter 2 below.

\(^{160}\) Sidney, Defence, 232.
CHAPTER TWO

The English Presence in Spenser’s Ireland

2.1. THE BACKGROUND

It was noted in the previous chapter that many of the concerns voiced by Spenser, in both the View and the Faerie Queene, can only be comprehended when they are considered in the context of England’s experience with Ireland during Spenser’s own lifetime. The most striking dimensions to the English presence in Ireland at the time of the composition of the View, compared to what it had been but twenty years previously, were its size and its ubiquity. These features alone would not have satisfied Spenser that Ireland was set on a right course, and what ensues will show that there were indeed considerations concerning both the personnel and the preoccupations of the English who served and settled in Ireland that occasioned unease for commentators who were altogether less sensitive than Edmund Spenser. The nature of those problems will become clear once account is taken of how English authority in Ireland had been increased over the preceding decades.

Previous to the middle of the sixteenth century, direct continuing English influence was felt only in the city of Dublin, in the counties of the English Pale, which corresponded roughly to the river valleys of the Liffey and the Boyne, and in the Gaelic lordships that abutted the Pale on three sides. The most visible English presence then was in Dublin itself where the English governor, representing the person of the monarch, presided over a replica in miniature of the royal court. This included the personal servants of the governor; the principal officers in Church and state (whether of English or Old English origin); whatever captains of the royal army happened to be in Dublin on any given occasion; those Irish landowners, both from the Pale or further afield, who were conducting official business in the city; and the principal merchants of the city. Governors wishing to enhance their local reputations were, of necessity, liberal entertainers, and their tables were more crowded whenever Council was in session and even more so on those rare occasions when a Great Council or a parliament was convened. The most numerous element at these assemblies would again have been the leaders of Pale society, so these had every reason to be most aware of an English influence in Ireland, and they would have considered themselves part of that influence.
All people in the Pale, regardless of rank, would have been conscious of an English presence in Ireland, not least because they were called upon, in several different ways, to provide and transport victuals to the English soldiers garrisoned along the frontiers of the Pale. These troops were sent from England, primarily to enhance the standing of the governor and also to protect the Pale from the possibility of attack from the surrounding Gaelic lordships. In this latter capacity the crown forces were conceived of as augmenting the rising out of the Pale, and as supplemental also to the Queen’s gallowglass (gallóglaigh, foreign fighting men)—mercenary soldiers of Scottish ancestry who had been kept in pay to counter the gallowglass forces traditionally maintained by Irish provincial lords. However successive governors had come to rely increasingly upon the crown forces, and most would have agreed with the appraisal made in 1585 by Lord Deputy Perrott of the rising out of the Pale. Apart from the gentlemen, whom he considered ‘reasonable good horsemen’, Perrott dismissed the Palesmen as ‘generally all a weak, clownish and unserviceable kind of people’.

Perrott, like all governors since the mid-century, placed his trust in the standing army which was being used for offensive as well as defensive purposes. Defence involved protecting the Pale from the raids of Gaelic bands from the surrounding mountainous or boggy terrain, while offensive action was directed principally against those Gaelic lords who lived within close distance of, and who were traditionally hostile to, the Pale. Repeated efforts had resulted in their lordships being made subject to, or completely subverted by, the forces of the crown. The subversion was most evident in the midlands area where the O’Connors, the O’Moores, and their adherents had been ousted from their ancestral lands to make way for a plantation of soldier settlers which was then established. This scheme involved the lands being parcelled out among English captains who were placed in charge of a chain of fortified positions situated strategically throughout these former Gaelic territories. Each captain had command of a garrison of soldiers in government pay but each also was the beneficiary of a grant of land on which the soldiers would be established as tenants. It was thus hoped that soldiers acting as cultivators as well as defenders of the land would effect the gradual absorption of these midland areas into the English Pale. This expansion of the frontiers of the Pale, which was the achievement principally of Sussex, came to be regarded as sacrosanct, and whenever the settlement was threatened by those who had been dispo-

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2 Perrott to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1583, London, Public Record Office, State Papers Ireland, SP 63, vol. 114, no. 29 (this series will be referred to henceforth as SP 63, followed by vol. and document number, as SP 63/114/29).
sessed the government believed itself justified in using the most extreme measures to uphold it. The most notorious of such actions was the massacre at Mullaghmast of 1578 which Vincent Carey has suggested enjoyed the tacit support of Sir Henry Sidney who then served as governor.\(^3\)

Those Gaelic lords in the eastern sector of the country who seemed more amenable to government control were left in charge of their lordships, but were forced to accept resident English captains as seneschals within their territories. These seneschals were perceived as the equivalent of sheriffs, but they retained command of soldiers in government pay and exercised power of martial law, ostensibly because they were upholders of crown authority within areas which had not yet become shire ground, or where government authority had lapsed. Seneschals also enjoyed official sanction to raise money or provisions in the lordships in which they held jurisdiction, and they seem to have been guided in their adjudication of disputes as much by principles that derived from Gaelic brehon law as by the precedents known in common law. English authority was thus spread into the mountainous areas of Dublin, Wicklow, and north Wexford, while part of County Carlow was also brought under this scheme of indirect English rule.\(^4\)

Further efforts were made to situate a line of English soldier settlers along the northern frontier of the Pale to protect it from invasion from Gaelic Ulster, and the settlement made at Newry by Nicholas Bagenal endured to the end of the sixteenth century. Even more ambitious were the attempts to maintain military garrisons along the coastline of north-east Ulster and to convert these into military colonies analogous to those erected in the Irish midlands. These coastal settlements were intended specifically to halt the incursion of Scots mercenary forces into Ulster.

While these various efforts might be considered offensive in that they were designed to increase English authority in Ireland, what occurred was with the ultimate purpose of achieving a more secure frontier for the English Pale, which continued to be regarded as the heartland of English influence in the country. Beyond these areas, governors were principally concerned with promoting stability by negotiating agreements with existing lords, and the governors extended the military arm of the state into the outlying lordships only when such agreements were being negotiated or being flagrantly cast aside. The most aggressive and most expensive of these government forays were those conducted by the Lord Lieutenant Thomas, earl of Sussex, against Shane O’Neill. Sussex asserted that the Pale would never be secure as long


\(^4\) For a general discussion of seneschals and the identification of many holders of the post see Nicholas Canny, The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565–76 (Hassocks, 1976), 33–44.
as Shane O’Neill was in the ascendant, and the further naval onslaught conducted by Sussex into the Scottish islands was with a view to destroying the galleys that were being used by the Scots to convey reinforcements to O’Neill.\textsuperscript{5} Thus, despite the argument of Ciaran Brady to the contrary, the thrust of English government policy for Ireland, down to the end of the governorship of Sussex in 1564, was clearly to consolidate its position in that part of the country where it was historically most secure.\textsuperscript{6}

The defence of the English Pale continued to be a high priority of all successive governors to the end of the sixteenth century, and Sir Henry Sidney, who had been accused of neglecting that responsibility, sagely cautioned Lord Grey in 1580, when he assumed the position of lord deputy, that when it came to pursuing the war in Munster he should always ‘leave a strong guard upon the Pale behind you: for a cottage burnt there will be made more here [at court] than a town burnt in Munster’.\textsuperscript{7} However, experience brought officials, and particularly Sir Henry Sidney, to the conclusion that since the Pale could not be insulated from the lordships that lay beyond its frontiers the only way by which its security could be guaranteed was to establish effective English authority in all parts of the country. It was also agreed that the best means of achieving this was through a combination of military endeavour, planned settlement, and the erection of an English locus of authority in the remote areas through the instrument of provincial presidencies. It was accepted that those chosen as presidents would be English-born people rather than lords from within the province to be governed.\textsuperscript{8}

Historians are not of one mind when this shift in attitude occurred, but it was clear to the 23-year-old Philip Sidney when he put pen to paper in 1577 to defend his father’s mode of government, and, probably, to solicit the post of governor of Ireland for himself, that if the queen wished to be saved ‘excessive expense to keep a realm, of which scarcely she hath the acknowledgement of sovereignty’, she had but three modes of governing Ireland to choose from. The first was that of conquest, which Philip Sidney recognized would not be countenanced by the queen, the second was that of military disengagement which he also considered was not an option because it would lead to the loss of the kingdom, and the third, which his father had been experimenting with up to 1577, was that of raising revenue within Ireland itself, ‘by force and gentleness’, so that there would be sufficient income to meet the costs of an


\textsuperscript{6} For the differences between the present author and Ciaran Brady over the interpretation of the evidence concerning the rule of Sussex and Sidney as governors in Ireland see Nicholas Canny, ‘Review Article: Revising the Revisionist’, \textit{Irish Historical Studies}, 30 (1996), 242–54.


\textsuperscript{8} This is the general argument of Canny, \textit{Elizabethan Conquest}; see pp. 93–116 where the two differing concepts of a presidency are discussed.
extended government. In formulating these propositions, Philip Sidney made it clear from the outset that the people of Ireland, including those of the English Pale, ‘in no case are to be equalled to this realm [England]’, and he instanced particularly ‘the rebellions of [Shane] O’Neill, and all the Earl of Ormond’s brethren’ as well as the ‘ignorant obstinacy in papistry’ of the whole population in support of his conviction that the people of Ireland possessed ‘the general nature of all countries not fully conquered’, who would never forget ‘the fresh remembrance of their lost liberty’, ‘until by time they find the sweetness of due subjection’. Thus, while recommending a middle course, Philip Sidney knew, as his father had done since the 1560s and as Spenser was to recommend in the 1590s, that the best course of action for the queen was ‘by direct conquest to make the country hers, and so by one great heap of charges to purchase that which indeed afterwards would well countervail the principal’.9

It is likely that many English officials then serving in Ireland shared this view, and this opinion gained further credibility in 1579, when the earl of Desmond in Munster and James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass, in the Pale each burst forth in rebellions which were partly justified on the grounds that Queen Elizabeth was not a legitimate ruler because she had been excommunicated by the Pope. These two insurrections, each led by a nobleman of Old English lineage and one drawing upon significant support from within the Pale, made it possible for some of the English in Ireland to suggest that the problem confronting the government in Ireland was that of establishing firm control where none existed rather than securing the foothold it already held. At this point the more extreme English observers, usually people on the margins of the administration, articulated the argument—later to be taken up by Spenser in the View—that England’s difficulties in Ireland stemmed not so much from the Gaelic Irish, who had never been subjects of the crown, but from the lapse from their previous civility of the Old English population. One early advocate of this view was Ludowick Bryskett whom we previously encountered in gentlemanly discourse in suburban Dublin. Writing in 1581 when the two rebellions were still raging and when the queen was considering a compromise settlement, Bryskett encouraged Secretary Walsingham, who, he expected, would be receptive to his recommendation, to go through with a thorough reformation of the country:10

the state whereof me thinketh I may well like to an old cloak or garment of ten times mended and patched up, wherein now so great a rend or gash being made by violence,

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10 Bryskett to Walsingham, 2 Mar. 1581, SP 63/81/5.
as of late all the world doth know, there is now no remedy but to make a new; for
to piece the old again will be labour lost.

Senior officials in Ireland did not yet dare countenance an argument which
led logically to the frightening conclusion that the task facing the government
in Ireland was that of destroying the existing society and erecting a new one
to replace it. Officials did, however, point to the need for the appointment
of English by birth rather than English by blood to senior positions in the
Dublin administration. This was justified by Lord Chancellor Gerrard on the
grounds that people from the narrow confines of the Pale were incapable,
because of their kinship connections, of adjudicating fairly between the inter-
ests of the crown and of the local community whenever these came into
conflict.11 More commonly objection was raised on religious grounds to
people of Irish birth holding positions under the crown and these English
critics called for the strict enforcement of the oath of supremacy upon all
who aspired to hold office in Ireland.

All such proposals were plausible in the light of experience in England,
and they held particular appeal for advanced Protestants in England who
were concerned at the possibility of a still-Catholic Ireland becoming a
strategic threat to the security of England. These views also proved attrac-
tive for those in England who decided on policy for Ireland because the
carefully costed statements emanating from the projectors suggested that a
reformed Ireland would be a source of profit to the crown whereas Ireland
in its unreformed condition had been a continual drain on the resources of
the English exchequer. Even the cautious and parsimonious Queen Elizabeth
was attracted by such arguments in moments of crisis, although she never
did countenance the suggestion that her subjects of Irish birth should, as a
matter of principle, be debarred from holding office. Even as late as 1591,
when anti-Catholicism was at its peak in England, she directed that the
leaders of the Pale community should not be ‘strained in matters of religion
and conscience, without manifest and outward notes of disobedience and
violating of allegiances’.12

Despite her concern to apply different standards to the Palesmen from
those being applied to Catholics in England, the queen did give her approval
to a succession of initiatives which involved the crown ever more deeply in
the affairs of the Irish provinces. Approval did not necessarily mean royal
commitment to radical social experimentation, and the queen quickly
relented either when she was persuaded by such trusted Irish advisers as her
Protestant cousin Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond, that the schemes she had

12 On English domestic considerations see Wallace T. MacCaffrey, Queen Elizabeth and the Making
of Policy, 1572–88 (Princeton, 1981); MacCaffrey, Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588–1603 (Princeton,
1992); more particularly William Palmer, The Problem of Ireland in Tudor Foreign Policy, 1485–1603
(Woodbridge, 1994), 89–143; Queen to Fitzwilliam, 26 July 1591, SP 69/159/22.
endorsed were unjust, or when she became aware of the mounting costs associated with any fresh undertaking. Such changes of mind did sometimes result in a reversal of the advances made; for example in the years 1579–81 when the queen contemplated a return to rule by a local magnate (which had been the norm in Ireland previous to the 1530s). Then, among other options for governing Ireland, she successively considered Ormond and the earl of Kildare (whom some suspected of having been a covert supporter of the Baltinglass revolt) for the post of governor. Considerations of cost, as much as a concern to placate previously loyal subjects who had gone into rebellion for reasons of conscience, explain why the queen gave consideration to ‘a platt to bring the government to the lords of this country [because] in so doing her Majesty [would] be at no charge but have some yearly revenue’. In the event, because rebellion was rampant in Ireland, she opted for the militarily experienced, but also the religiously radical, Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, to serve as governor. Significantly however the queen soon despaired of the time, cost, and methods that Grey was taking to restore her authority, and his military functions in Munster, but not the governorship of Ireland, were eventually entrusted to Ormond.

This level of royal involvement with Irish affairs was exceptional, and the queen intervened most frequently not to reverse policy but to demand that the costs of innovation should be met either from private subscription in England or from fresh revenues raised in Ireland. Substantial voluntary investment was made by Englishmen in various Irish projects during the sixteenth, and again in the seventeenth, century, but this alone was never sufficient to underpin major undertakings. However, the demand that extra finances be raised locally was an innovation in itself, which required the appointment of prying officials at the very local level, and immediately involved the governors of Ireland in continuing squabbles with Irish landowners over prerogative claims to financial support for military endeavours which were undertaken for their defence. In this haphazard way, major projects were undertaken but usually without the resources which their proposers considered necessary. However the advances made invariably involved a significant increase in the number of English Protestants scattered throughout the country. Some of these held positions in the central administration in Dublin, others were appointed to the entirely new provincial councils in Munster and Connacht, more were associated with the Protestant state Church that now had a visible presence everywhere that government authority asserted itself, and still more were involved with the various plantation schemes (the greatest being that eventually proceeded with on the estates of the earl of Desmond and his confederates in Munster) which were

14 Wallop to Walsingham, 3 Jan. 1580, SP 63/71/1; same to same, 14 Mar. 1581, SP 63/81/28.
designed to establish model colonies of English settlers in areas remote from
direct government supervision.

Far more significant than the sum total of all of these groups were the
English soldiers and their officers who were now to be seen in every part of
the country, and not only on the borders of the Pale. The increase in their
influence can be gathered from the dramatic increase in the numbers on the
government payroll from a few hundred men in the 1530s, to 1,500 in
the 1560s, to 2,500 in the 1570s, to 8,000 in the 1580s, and to a massive 21,000
men at the end of the sixteenth century for the final push of the Nine Years
War which, according to the calculations of John Mc Gurk, cost the crown
a massive £1,845,696. Thus despite all the grand reform schemes that had
been devised, and the optimistic paens on the immediate uplift of the native
population that would follow from the adoption of these schemes, the English
presence in Ireland in 1596 was essentially a military one and suffered from
all the shortcomings and costs associated with armies that undertake civilian
as well as military functions.

Because they were the most numerous element of the English population
in Ireland consideration will first be given to the soldiers who served the
crown, then to their officers, and finally to the civil and ecclesiastical admin-
istration of Ireland during the years when Spenser was associated with the
country. Then, in the light of this overview, we will have a clearer under-
standing of the concerns and frustrations which provoked Spenser and his
associates in Ireland to give vent to political pronouncements that would
appear radical and exceptional if considered in any context other than that
of the English experience in Ireland.

2.2. Soldiers

Criticism of the English soldiers in Ireland was already widespread during
the governorship of Sussex (1556–64) when the numbers first exceeded the
figure of 2,000 men. Then, when not in the field, most of these soldiers were
garrisoned in close proximity to the Pale, but some also were billeted upon
the population of the Pale. In both instances, as has been detailed by Ciaran
Brady and others, the demands made by the government for the mainte-
nance of these men and for the governor’s household occasioned bitter
disputes between Sussex and his successors on one side and the various
elements of society in the Pale, on the other. Some of the communal criti-
cism was based on constitutional argument, but some also stemmed from the
belief that the provisions being collected went towards the enrichment of the
soldiers and their officers rather than towards the defence of the Pale. Close
investigation showed that some of these accusations were justified, and efforts

were made to eradicate the corruption where it could be proven. Generally, governors gave little countenance to these arguments and it was one of the principal responsibilities of all viceroy to defend claims based on the royal prerogative from communal challenge. These continuing grievances were exacerbated by more short-term ones when billeted soldiers were dishonest or misbehaved, and the problem of maintaining discipline over the men was particularly acute when there were delays in transmitting pay from England. On these occasions those in authority strove to maintain order, but they frequently sympathized with the predicament of both soldiers and community, and sought to direct the complaints against the paymasters in England. Thus in 1566 the then governor, Sir Henry Sidney, protested that shortfalls in pay had brought both the soldiers and the husbandmen in the Pale to ruin. The husbandmen, he claimed, had been so long left unpaid that the soldiers with whom they had originally entered into contracts to provide for their maintenance had been replaced by others, and so having ‘lost their scores made with their guests’ many once ‘wealthy husbandmen’ had become ‘beggars from door to door’. Complaints against captains who had inflated the numbers kept by them in garrison were now investigated, and it was widely recognized that many captains made up their numbers by employing Irishmen to replace the English soldiers who had died or deserted. Despite such criticism it was accepted at mid-century that the English army in Ireland was a competent fighting force and that any insufficiencies that occurred stemmed from the lack of adequate support.

This picture had changed considerably by the 1580s when the numbers of soldiers had jumped to 8,000 men. These were then dispersed into all provinces but were most numerous in Munster where they were engaged in the war against Desmond. Nonetheless it was still held that the Pale was carrying an unfair burden because most of the fresh troops arrived in Dublin and left a path of destruction in their wake as they travelled westward through the Pale towards their stations in Munster. The caustic critic Barnaby Riche bewailed the deterioration of morals in Dublin as a consequence of the tavern entertainment demanded by, and provided for, soldiers in transit. Then also the usually cautious and compliant Justice Robert Dillon complained of the demands made by soldiers-on-the-march upon the rural population of the Pale. This was a double burden because landowners and farmers had previously been granted a legal exemption from military levies through their payment of a composition rent to the government. Direct payment was nonetheless demanded by the soldiers, and the man was counted a ‘reasonable soldier’, claimed Dillon, who took but 12 pence for himself and 4 pence or 6 pence for his boy ‘over and above her Majesty’s pay’. Dillon also indicated that the old practice of captains falsifying the numbers of men was still

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16 Brady, *Chief Governors*, 209–44; Sidney to Privy Council, 12 Dec. 1566, SP 63/19/71.
rampant, and he alleged that where the queen was bearing the cost of 6,000 men ‘many report and affirm in private speeches there is not above three thousand . . . bodies’. Even then he complained that many in the ranks were ‘men of the mere Irish and rascals’ which was ‘no credit to the English soldiers here, [and] a hindrance to service’. 17

Complaints on this score were more numerous, in the 1580s, and the presence in the ranks of men from the Pale as well as Gaelic kerne (ceatharnaigh, foot soldiers) was now frowned upon. Previously, Palesmen seem to have been accepted as legitimate substitutes for English-born soldiers, and there was nothing unusual about the claim for a pension made in 1582 by William Kelly of Dublin, surgeon, who had served in the colours for twenty-four years: at New Haven under Warwick, then at Leith under Lord Grey, and latterly in Ireland under Captain Randolph at Derry, before accepting employment under Sidney and Essex. Kelly seemingly saw further service in the Netherlands since, in 1586, a surgeon of that name attended Philip Sidney on his deathbed and was awarded £10 for his pains. 18

By the 1580s, however, objections were being raised to the employment, as Henry Wallop put it, of any ‘of this country men’, whether from the Pale or Gaelic Ireland, because ‘being trained to be soldiers when time of discharge cometh, or otherwise that they come away, they go to the rebels . . . which kind of men heretofore so trained are now the worst enemies we find amongst the rebels’. His recommendation on Irish soldiers was that ‘the training of which nation were altogether forbidden; these are our strongest enemies in all rebellions that by ourselves are made soldiers’. He contended that, with the emergence of religion as an issue of conflict in both the Desmond and Baltinglass revolts, no person of Irish birth could be considered a reliable soldier, and so the English Privy Council in 1581 expressed the vain hope that the ranks be purged of all Irishmen because ‘it is not thought good that bands to be continued in entertainment there should be other than mere English’. 19

Even if this had been feasible, the bands would not have been purely English because, as with all armies of the early modern centuries, there were people besides soldiers in the ranks. English horse soldiers tended to employ Irish rather than English people to attend their mounts, and a disproportionate number of non-combatants seem to have been incorporated into the English army in Ireland because many soldiers with long service in Ireland

17 Dillon to Walsingham, 29 Oct. 1581, SP 63/86/27; on these same points see Gerrard to Walsingham, 5 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/12.
18 Kelly to Privy Council, 16 May 1582, SP 63/92/48; for an official endorsement of Kelly’s claim see letter of Edward Waterhouse, SP 63/92/47; Sidney, Miscellanea Prose, 152.
19 Wallop to Burghley, 1 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/1; same to Walsingham, 23 Apr. 1581, SP 63/82/47; for a more specific condemnation of the employment of Palesmen see SP 63/75/82; and see also Perrott to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1585, SP 63/114/29; Privy Council to Lord Deputy and Council, 11 Oct. 1581, SP 63/86/22.
had acquired Irish wives or mistresses who frequently resided with them in garrison or even accompanied them on the march. Thus, as one complainant put it, ‘the horseman must have his horse, his hackney, and his great Irish boy, a devil to that Commonwealth, he must have his harlot much to the great displeasure of God’. If the same ratio prevailed in the infantry then the crown forces in Ireland included a non-combatant ‘tail’ which far exceeded the norm for armies on the European continent.20

Another new development of the 1580s was the erosion in the confidence of the government officials in the capability of the soldiers provided from England. Whatever might have been said in previous decades by English and Old English commentators of the dishonesty of the army personnel, they all had confidence in their ability and willingness to fight. Some continued to express admiration for the bravery and morale of the soldiers, as for example Henry Wallop who gave unqualified praise for the soldiers who fought a winter campaign in Munster under the command of Ormond: ‘no soldier deserveth better pay than those that serve truly here . . . Berwick men are no ways able to follow them.’21 If such favourable remarks could be made of the veterans in the army there was altogether more circumspection about recent arrivals from England. Thus while, in 1583, Captains Bowrchier and Barkley could wax lyrical about the quality of the soldiers they had been sent from north Devon and Somerset their good fortune as captains was exceptional. Already in 1580 Sir Nicholas Malby had to advise against the use of red and blue coats for new recruits, because ‘the rebels . . . in any fight they will avoid the old soldiers and pick out the others by their coloured coats’, well realizing that ‘the new come ignorant men’ would not stand their ground in the face of battle.22

It was not only the experience of the fresh troops that was called in question. Lord Grey complained in 1581 that the bands sent to him were not only deficient in numbers, but that many of them were ‘old and impotent and divers of them badly furnished’. A similar problem was reported nine years later when Sir William Fitzwilliam was governor. The troops then sent under Captains Turner and Woodhouse from Warwickshire and Shropshire were, he averred, well furnished, but not so the 300 who had no captains nominated before their arrival. ‘There were never’, he said, ‘the like sent to a place and service of so dangerous expectation, with old steel caps, older jacks, whereof some stuffed with hay, and unserviceable bows and shieves of arrows.’ Even worse was the fact that those who were deficient as soldiers

20 ‘A Brief Note of the Abuse in Ireland, and the Mean to Reform the Same’ (25 May 1573), SP 63/49, fo. 146; for comparison see Geoffrey Parker, The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659 (Cambridge, 1972), 288–9.
21 Wallop to Burghley, 29 Dec. 1579, SP 63/70/70.
22 Bowrchier to Walsingham, 6 Jan. 1583, SP 63/99/4; Barkley to Burghley, 8 Jan. 1583, SP 63/99/13; Malby to Walsingham, 31 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/82.
took advantage of every opportunity to escape from military service. Some took to begging in England when on their way to the ports of embarkation, others engaged in riotous behaviour even before they left England, and still others deserted their posts in Ireland and made their way back to England, but not before they had sold their weapons to the enemy. The reality was, as John Mc Gurk has made clear for the 1590s, that military needs of Ireland were usually met from levies imposed on Wales and the western counties of England. This meant that whenever war escalated in Ireland the demand for troops quickly exceeded the capacity of rural counties to supply suitable fighting men.23

A classic experience was that of Sir William Morgan in the summer of 1580. He had responsibility for conveying a shipload of recruits to Ireland when he was beset by a storm. His better judgement told him that he should have sought shelter in port but he ‘knew the inconvenience that would grow thereof they [being] such light persons, for that divers of them were taken out of gaols, and strangers being not of the countries [counties] from whence they were sent hither’. Moreover, he had ‘small help to govern them’ since there were 300 men with ‘no officers appointed for them’ and ‘only one poor gentleman’, hired by Morgan himself, ‘to keep the register of their names and to take the charge of their armour and furniture’. However the persistence of the storm and the outbreak of disease on board forced him to go ashore in Bristol where his worst fears were realized. The soldiers, ‘being put in the head by some ill disposed people’, began to demand money for their coats and ‘conduct money’ which should have been theirs according to custom and practice, and they also called for the payment of 2 pence a day while they were still in England ‘which made them almost mad’. Then ‘great speeches’ were made ‘both among the soldiers and the country’, and when one of the leaders was put in the stocks for injuring a fellow soldier ‘they came and broke up the stocks’. Order was restored only when the mayor intervened and erected a gibbet, and the soldiers were duly got on their way with the exception of two delinquents who were retained in custody; one who had broken the stocks and the other who had offended the mayor. The problem, as Morgan saw it, clearly derived from the lack of adequate preparation, but ultimately from the poor quality of the recruits. Even as he got the men to Ireland he believed the whole effort had been ‘a deceit for the

23 Grey to Privy Council, 10 June 1581, SP 63/83/45; Fitzwilliam to Privy Council, 5 May 1590, SP 63/152/9; Stanley to Walsingham, 2 Oct. 1580, SP 63/77/4; Cruce to Walsingham, 18 Feb. 1581, SP 63/80/62; suggested enquiry into return of soldiers from Irish service, 1581?, SP 12/151/14; for details on the origin of a cross-section of the troops sent to Ireland at intervals between 1579 and 1590 see SP 63/81/54; SP 63/128/38; SP 12/217/42; SP 63/153/36; on the unsuitability of many recruits, the impact of their passage on the embarkation ports, and the regional bias in recruitment see Mc Gurk, Elizabethan Conquest 108–88; Richard W. Stewart, ‘The “Irish Road”: Military Supply and Arms for the Elizabethan Army during the O’Neill Rebellion in Ireland’, in Mark Charles Fissel (ed.), War and Government in Britain, 1598–1650 (Manchester, 1991), 16–37.
service, for these were the meanest for ableness of body that ever I saw go out of England, for many were lame, divers impotent, some burst, some above sixty, and some in such case they had not shoes on their feet’.24

Morgan, in his report, identified another problem which was to undermine the capability of the English army in Ireland, that is the question of disease. The ranks of this force, like all European armies of this time, were regularly thinned out by contagion, and military service in Ireland had become associated with particular ailments, notably bloody fluxes, that were attributed to the dampness of the climate and the wetness of the countryside over which the soldiers had to traverse. The problem of disease was greatly increased with the extension of the war effort because soldiers were more frequently called upon to remain in the field, even through the winter months, where they were poorly fed and housed. In these circumstances, captains and officials were driven to despair by the uncertainty caused by high mortality among the troops, and Edward Waterhouse announced triumphantly in 1581 that he had found rice to be ‘a good preservative against the disease of this country’.25

Sir William Morgan’s triumph was short lived because another explanation for the poor survival rates of English soldiers in Ireland was just then being diagnosed: this time it was that soldiers drawn from English gaols and from the poorest elements of society were likely to be malnourished, and therefore more susceptible to contagion, and that many of them were carriers of disease before they ever reached Ireland. Already in 1579 Lord Justice Pelham, in reporting the death of Captain William Norris in Newry from a ‘violent fever’, remarked how ‘of late years’ ‘this place’—by which we can take him to have meant Newry rather than Ireland—had become the ‘sepulchre of many worthy men’. The problem had spread to Leinster by June 1580 where two companies were ‘consumed at Ferns with a kind of plague or infection’, and the same malady had affected three other companies. In July, Lord Deputy Grey complained that ‘God’s hand’ was ‘still heavily upon us with sickness’, and he reported that ‘the most part of our men newly supplied’ were ‘falling daily sick in their garrisons’. By August no service was being done in Leinster because of ‘a pestilent fever’ of which ‘more than half of the numbers were laid and many [had] died’. Disease spread southwards to Munster as the fresh troops moved into that province, and the condition had become rampant there by early 1582. Warham St Leger reported the spread of disease from the soldiers to the civilian population which had succumbed easily because many people were undernourished due to the dislocations associated with the war. He wrote on 24 March 1582 of the death in

24 Morgan to Walsingham, 4 Aug. 1580, SP 69/75/10; more generally on the impact of the war effort on Bristol, Mc Gurk, Elizabethan Conquest, 165–74.
Cork in one day of sixty-two people, and he contended that a daily mortality rate, ranging from a high of seventy-two to a low of twenty, had wrought havoc in the city of Cork—"being but one street not half a quarter of a mile in length"—for eight or ten weeks. He testified that "the like death [was prevalent] ... throughout all the countries [counties] in this province as well in towns as elsewhere saving among the traitors who neither be touched with these diseases nor yet taste of any famine, all true men's goods being preys for them" while they enjoyed "continually the wholesome air of the fields". It would seem to the modern observer, as it did initially to St Leger, that he was witnessing the ravages of the dreaded Black Death that had been brought into the country by the soldiers. On closer examination he concluded that, despite an incubation period of six or seven days, similar to that associated with the bubonic plague, the disease was 'not the plague of pestilence' because those who succumbed had 'neither ... God’s mark nor yet sores when they be dead'. Whatever of St Leger's skill as a pathologist, the military consequences of such an excess of mortality, which was probably provoked by a spectrum of infections ranging from gaol fever to the influenza that had affected much of England in 1579–80, were clear.26

The first consequence was that the strength of the army was dwindling to the point where even such rigid disciplinarians as Lord Grey were forced to make up their numbers by again taking on Irish recruits—including kerne—in place of those who had died or deserted: "a thing yet I cannot deny as very perilous". It may have been the acceleration of this practice which created the situation, complained of by Perrott in 1585, that there were of 'the Irish that be of any training too many in every band'. Perrott's futile proposal then was that the Irish should be purged from the ranks and sent to fight for the Protestant cause in Flanders.27

Another problem associated with the dramatic increase in the number of the English troops in time of war was that the government sought to make ends meet either by delaying payment of the troops or by reducing the pay of the soldiers. Such expedients provoked mutiny or desertion especially among the more seasoned soldiers. Reports of mutiny and indiscipline, deriving from the soldiers' acute sense of injustice, are as numerous almost as in the Spanish army in Flanders.28 The most dramatic episode was that which occurred, in 1590, among the 'old bands' stationed in Limerick under the command of Thomas Norris. Seventy-six of these, despairing that they

26 Pelham to Burghley, 29 Dec. 1579, SP 63/70/68; Grey to Privy Council, 10 June 1581, SP 63/83/45; Grey to Walsingham, 10 July 1581, SP 63/84/26; Grey to Queen, 10 Aug. 1581, SP 63/85/75; St Leger to Fenton, 24 Mar. 1582, SP 63/91/29; Paul Slack, The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England (Oxford, 1990), 69–70.
27 Wallop to Walsingham, 23 July 1582, SP 63/94/41; Perrott to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1585, SP 69/114/29.
28 See for example Johnes to Walsingham, 13 Apr. 1585, SP 63/116/11; Parker, The Army of Flanders, 185–206.
would ever be paid what was due to them, deserted their post and ‘without officers or colours marched armed and weaponed’ from Limerick to the gates of Dublin Castle where the Court of Castle Chamber was in session at the time of their arrival. The government, because of the uncertainty of the times and their fear that the soldiers in Dublin might make common cause with the Limerick deserters, considered it unwise to have the deserters court-martialled, and instead appointed Sir Edward Waterhouse to negotiate over the pay that was due them. They explained that ‘they would not have left their colours but upon great extremity’ and that they had ‘the occasions set down in writing’. However, as was reported by a hostile witness, ‘they used [in negotiation] such confusion of voices as in such mutinies is accustomed’. Waterhouse, for his part, stuck by the principle that the government would not grant concessions to mutineers, but he did provide them with lodging in the city for the night. On the following day, the disgruntled soldiers assaulted the gates of the castle, and, having failed to gain entry, they awaited their opportunity to accost the governor, Sir William Fitzwilliam, as he was on his way to a sermon at Christ Church. This provided the government with the pretext to arrest and disarm the soldiers as mutineers.29

This episode is interesting because it shows the extremes to which loyal, seasoned troops would go to get what was due to them before they would consider deserting to the enemy. However, many raw recruits were less patient and sold their services to the Irish, or fled back to England, although other options were open to them by the 1590s, as Norris had already learnt from experience. He had reported to the government in 1585 that his unpaid soldiers were so disgruntled that ‘many of them hoping to better their estate’ had ‘fled from him into Flanders’. Those who had not done so, claimed Norris, were ‘daily forced to sell their furniture and apparel’ so the soldiers who remained with him had no weapons. Efforts to reduce the pay of the soldiers occasioned even greater offence than defaults in payment, and Nicholas Malby warned that the soldiers under his command took ‘stomach rather to leave their leaders in the field than to follow them’ for the reduced pay they were being offered. If normal pay was not immediately restored, he predicted, the soldiers would ‘rather adventure danger in running away than tarry the service’.30

Yet another problem which the increase in the size of the army created for the officials in Dublin was that the queen and her advisers were insistent that the extra men be demobilized as soon as the moment of crisis was past. Those given responsibility for this task soon discovered that, in the apt words of Geoffrey Parker, ‘the actual mechanics of demobilizing an army resembled

29 Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 27 May 1590, SP 63/152/45; same to same, 28 May 1590, SP 63/152/49.
30 Wallop to Burghley, Oct. 1585, SP 63/120/19; Norris to Lord Deputy, 30 Dec. 1585, SP 63/121/47; Malby to Burghley, 25 June 1582, SP 63/93/55.
the settlement of a mutiny’ because the disbanded men were penniless with considerable back payments due to them and the government had no arrangements in place either to convey them back to England or to bring them to serve elsewhere. Auditor Jenyson bewailed the lack of advance planning on all of these scores, when he despaired of the poverty of the discharged soldiers, some of whom did ‘beg in the streets [while] other some [did] sell their weapons and furniture with their garments’.31 In the circumstances, officials in London as well as in Dublin gave thought to employing the veterans in various plantation projects or assigning them to the service of apparently loyal Gaelic lords, ‘lest otherwise being destitute of entertainment they should revolt to the rebels’. While assigning soldiers to Irish lords could ‘purge the Pale’ of immediate troublemakers it stored up trouble for the government in the long term, and contributed significantly to the militarization of Gaelic Irish society that was to challenge the very existence of an English presence in Ireland during the closing decade of the sixteenth century. The auguries of what was in the making were already present in the 1580s for those who wished to read them. For example, Sir William Stanley in describing an Irish battle-charge noted that ‘divers of them had served amongst Englishmen under the leading of Captain Green that had served in Connacht, and was carried by one Garrett, a captain, to the rebels’.32 These renegades were some of the Irish troops trained in the ranks of the English, but equally formidable were the English soldiers serving both officially and unofficially with Irish lords, and particularly those under the command of Hugh O’Neill who later, as earl of Tyrone, was to become the crown’s most formidable opponent in Ireland.

When account is taken of these factors it appears that the conflagration of the 1590s was not so much a straightforward conflict between English Protestant and Irish Catholic forces, as a civil conflict both within the fledgling English community in Ireland, and within the Irish community. This description is justified not only because of the appearance of such Irish lords as the earls of Thomond and Clanricard on the government side on the field of Kinsale in 1601, but because significant numbers of men in the ranks refused the allegiances that were chosen for them by their betters. Thus at any given time in every conflict in sixteenth-century Ireland, significant numbers of English soldiers played a critical role in the war effort of the rebels, while every band in the government army contained Irish soldiers who sold their services to the highest bidder.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the difficulties encountered in creating and maintaining an English army in Ireland stemmed, in many ways,

31 Jenyson to Burghley, 20 Feb. 1582, SP 69/89/38; Parker, The Army of Flanders, 222.
from the greed and peculation of the captains. All investigations into the army, since that of 1563 which had brought about the downfall of Sussex, corroborated the conclusion of that investigation which revealed that captains were systematic abusers of their customary entitlement to enjoy short-term benefit from ‘dead pays’; that is the wages provided for the payment of soldiers who were recently deceased. The purge of the officers which had followed upon the 1563 investigation had done little to stem this, and fresh opportunities to defraud the crown arose as garrisons were established ever further from the eye of the government in Dublin. There was little that officials could do to check fraud, confessed Henry Wallop, because the captains ‘being dispersed in sundry garrisons [had] partly through their own negligence and lack of care decayed the numbers against the muster day’. He implied however that some improvement might come if captains of more elevated status were drawn to the Irish service, when he complained of ‘the choice of so many . . . captains that have nothing but their entertainment to live on’.33 This observation, from the usually astute Wallop, reveals more of his social prejudice than of human character and was incorrect on two scores. First, it ignored the fact that many of the captains who had served in Ireland when Sussex was governor were of relatively high social rank and included even a brother of the earl, and second it disregarded the reality that one of the principal attractions of Ireland as place of service was that it provided captains with various sources of income besides their pay.

2.3. OFFICERS

Few career officers in sixteenth-century England have left information on their order of preference among the various postings open to them. Therefore, what can be known of their ambitions comes more from their patterns of behaviour than from their reflections. One thing that is evident is that life as an English captain was always precarious and that, through the full course of the sixteenth century, service in Ireland was more permanent and more lucrative than in any other theatre of war. This was one reason why the earl of Leicester moved so swiftly, in 1563, to bring Sussex and his officers in Ireland into disrepute, presumably in the hope that the ensuing vacancies would fall to officers who had served at Newhaven under the command of the earl of Warwick (brother to Leicester), or who were otherwise identified with the Dudley interest. Having gained control of this patronage in Ireland the Dudley faction guarded it jealously, and the Dudley line of succession to captaincies in Ireland was not really broken until the governorships of Robert, earl of Essex, and of Lord Mountjoy at the very end of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. It is true, as Wallop had observed, that most of those who served out

33 Wallop to Walsingham, 23 Apr. 1581, SP 63/82/47.
their careers in Ireland came from modest circumstances, and this fact is especially apparent from the list, drawn up in 1589, of 167 ‘knights, captains, officers who have commanded in Ireland, Netherlands or Portugal, are able to command and are now unemployed’. Of the twenty of these who were designated knights only three had served in Ireland, and of these two, Sir William Knowles and Sir Francis Knowles, had spent only a brief sojourn there in association with the ill-fated plantation effort undertaken in the 1570s by Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex. However, a great number of the eighty-three captains and sixty-four lieutenants listed had seen service in Ireland.34

The reality was that normal service in Ireland, associated with monotonous garrison duty and an occasional skirmish with cattle raiders, held little appeal for English gallants whose principal ambition in taking up arms was to cover themselves with glory on the field of battle. Such men were drawn to Ireland in considerable numbers only when war was in prospect, as it was when Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, took up the governorship in 1599, or when, in the 1570s, his father Walter, first earl of Essex, became involved with what proved to be a disastrous private-enterprise plantation scheme in north-east Ulster. This venture of the elder Essex enjoyed fulsome royal support at the outset and, therefore, for a brief interval, it attracted the financial and military involvement of the sons of some of England’s most influential families. In so taking up arms, these young courtiers were responding to the queen’s call to them ‘to live in action and to make proof of [their] virtue and . . . not unprofitably or rather reproachfully to fester in the delights of English Egypt . . . holding their noses over the beef pots’. Similarly in 1599 Sir Francis Bacon assured the younger Essex, and those who accompanied him to Ireland, that honour would be their reward, especially considering ‘the cause; the goodness and justice whereof is such as can hardly be matched in any example; it being no ambitious war against foreigners, but a recovery of subjects, and that after lenity of conditions often tried, and a recovery of them not only to obedience, but to humanity and policy, from more than Indian barbarism’.35

Such prospects of immediate honour linked with the possibility of gain were seldom associated with Ireland and when they were so associated they proved, as in the two Essex cases, to be illusory. Those few of gentle birth who persisted in Ireland soon, like Edward Denny (a close associate of Philip Sidney), who had accompanied Lord Grey to that country, had reason to complain how ‘this kind of service [was] so graceless, so devoid of reputation in respect of other services’, and concluded that the task assigned him to track

34 List of knights etc., 31 Mar. 1589, SP 12/223/35.
down rebels ‘in hidden places as bogs, glens and woods . . . might better fit mastiffs than brave gentle men that desire to win favour’.  

If service in Ireland was regarded with disdain by young men of gentle birth it was beneficial to men of lowly background who strove to make a living from soldiering, and to provide for their families into the future. That is not to suggest that these too were not concerned with reputation, or with service outside Ireland. On the contrary, what emerges from such disparate sources as *Churchyarde’s Choise* or Lord Grey’s account of the military career of his father is that many officers had served in several theatres before taking up appointment in Ireland, and many of those posted in Ireland volunteered for service further afield when the opportunity arose. For example, in 1581, Captains Bingham, York, and the two Captains Ward had prepared themselves for a voyage to Portugal with Sir Francis Drake and, when he spurned their offer, they took it to mean that he was not recognizing their past services. Then, in 1587, Sir Richard Bingham did negotiate his way onto the expedition led by Leicester to assist the Protestants of the Netherlands in their struggle against the king of Spain.

If they wished for involvement with glamorous undertakings, these volunteers for international conflicts did not contemplate abandoning their positions or acquisitions in Ireland. On the contrary, as is suggested by the case of Sir Richard Bingham, they did everything possible to freeze their assets, positions, and influence in Ireland until they were ready to return. In that instance Bingham had the Privy Council address a directive to the lord deputy concerning his position and private affairs in Connacht. This was so specific that it has to have been dictated by Bingham himself and then relayed to Ireland by the Privy Council, presumably acting under direction from Leicester. Then two years later Bingham contemplated how he might realize his Irish assets, and, without informing the lord deputy, he entered into an agreement with Sir Edward Denny to sell him for £1,500 his office as president of Connacht. He then thought better of his proposed venality and later returned to Connacht where his interests had been guarded by his brother and his associates, both Irish and English. Bingham can hardly be taken as a typical captain because, as lord president of Connacht, he had been elevated considerably higher than most who made their careers in Ireland. However, regardless of rank, all captains who acquired land and position in Ireland quickly came to regard it as a home as well as a place of employment.

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38 Fenton to Walsingham, 15 Aug. 1581, SP 69/85/19; Privy Council to Lord Deputy, July 1587, SP 69/130/57; Sir Edward Denny’s declaration, 9 Jan. 1589/90, SP 69/140/10.
Although many contemporaries criticized the captains in Ireland for their profiteering, it is difficult to establish precisely what profits came within their grasp. There were, as was mentioned, the licit and illicit emoluments that came to them from the government paymaster, and those who were associated with the plantation in the Irish midlands enjoyed an additional recognized source of income in the form of rent. What profit they enjoyed from their lands and whether they populated their estates with English or Irish tenants is something that we cannot know because no relevant rental accounts have endured from that time, but the ferocity shown by Robert Hartpole and Francis Cosby at Mullaghmast in 1578 is an indication of their determination to hold what they had got. Moreover the fact that a great number of these estates were still owned by the families of the original beneficiaries into the seventeenth century is in itself proof that Irish land was worth retaining even through the turbulent years of war, although we cannot assume that these estates were then the focus of English settlement that they were to become in later years. It is likely that there were, from the outset, some English tenants retained on these lands but hardly significantly more than the soldiers who were granted tenancies by their officers. Indeed it was remarked by Edmund Tremayne, on the basis of his inspection of what had been happening in Leinster and the Irish midlands, that an English beneficiary of crown grants would ‘rather inhabit his lands with the Irish of whom he may exact, than with the English by whom he may be strengthened’. Most of those who farmed the lands and paid rents are therefore likely to have been natives, and it seems that all English captains (whether in the midlands plantation or elsewhere) who controlled land in the vicinity of forts were particularly successful in attracting native tenants because of the relative security they offered in generally disturbed regions. Thus Lord Grey, who was a newcomer to Ireland, must have been following established practice or sage advice when, during the course of his 1581 military campaign in Leinster, he directed that 300 labourers be recruited in the English Pale to construct castles with bawns in the Wicklow area ‘to lure the country people to live near the garrisons’. This indicates that any English officer who controlled a fort was in a position to become a collector of rents. Therefore seneschals, as well as captains of forts in the midlands plantations, were in fact landlords, and all officers who held appointments close to the Pale were alert for opportunities to gain official grants of land that came into crown possession. Such opportunities were plentiful in the aftermath of the Baltinglass revolt and those strategically placed to the confiscated properties made bids for favourable terms. Thus, in 1583, the long-serving Henry Harrington, now Sir Henry Harrington ‘nephew and godson’ to Sir Henry Sidney, spurned an offer of

39 Carey, ‘John Derricke’s Image of Ireland’.
40 Ed. Tremayne, ‘Advice on Ireland’, no date, BL Add. MS 48,015; Grey to Privy Council, 10 June 1581, SP 69/83/45.
a twenty-one-year lease, at 2 shillings an acre, of the manor of Baltinglass, and sought instead an eighty-year lease at a lower rent. He was in a position to negotiate a better bargain not only because he was well connected, but because he was an experienced military man who had previously ‘settled in troublesome places’ and had devised a ‘plat’ for pacifying the mountains that overshadowed and threatened Dublin.41

We get some impression of what it was like to live in such an outpost, and of what profits could be gleaned from living on the frontier, not from any of the seneschals in Leinster or the captains in the midlands plantation, but from the settlement established by Sir Nicholas Bagenal at Newry on the southern fringes of east Ulster. Bagenal, who had had long, but interrupted, service as marshal of the army, had been a consistent lessee of the church lands at Newry, at an annual rent of £30 11s. 8d., since 1550. At the same time, he commanded the garrison stationed at the castle of Newry, and the rental of his property taken in 1575 shows that he enjoyed additional income from the lordship of Newry, from the lordship of Mourne about Green Castle, and from the lordship of Carlingford and Cooley dominated by Carlingford. The only settlement of consequence was the town of Newry, for which the rent was collected by Randolph Brereton, constable of the castle. The rental showed that there were sixty-three people on the High Street of the town each of whom paid rent for the use of a house with an attached strip of land, known as a backside. The vast majority of these tenants seem from their names to have been of Gaelic origin, and the standard annual rent was 15 shillings. A relatively small number of the High Street tenants bore English names and a few, such as Brereton himself, paid considerably higher rents indicating that they occupied more substantial properties. Besides these there were fourteen freemen listed who paid annual rents of 42s. 4d. for High Street properties. Most of these were English or perhaps Old English, although a few, such as John Duffe, could have been of Gaelic background and Raymond Handlyn almost certainly was so. These fourteen were probably the merchants of the town, and most of the eighty-three people who paid more modest rents are likely to have been artisans or itinerant traders. The thirteen tenants within the forts who bore English names and paid modest rents were probably soldiers, while the twelve tenants living on ‘the Irish Street without the fort’ all had Gaelic surnames. These Irish may also have been English army personnel or may have worked in the bakehouse and brewhouse located on High Street.

Thus the town of Newry, despite being an English outpost, was populated mostly by Irish people although the principal residences were in the hands of English people. The rental from the town, which amounted to £274, seems

to have been due in coin, whereas that for the three lordships was stated in kind or in labour, and a monetary equivalent was then placed on each payment due. The unit of division used for all three lordships was that of the town, by which we can understand townland, and those renting individual or multiple townlands all had recognizably Irish or Old English names except for the two constables of Green Castle and Carlingford, Hugh Lewes and Richard Aphew, who were obviously Welsh. The total rent due from the three lordships was £629, £484, and £538 respectively and when these figures are placed beside the £274 from the town of Newry we can recognize just how rural the settlement was and how little the traditional occupancy of the area had been affected by a quarter-century of Bagenal dominance. There is no certainty that the rents claimed were actually collected or were collectable in times of war, and the religious life of the people seems to have been minimally disturbed if we are to judge from the town of Shenoo in the lordship of Newry being ‘set to the priest of Rous’, and the New Town in the lordship of Carlingford and Cooley being ‘set to the priest of Obull’. Returns for Carlingford and Cooley also listed ‘a house called the friars house with a park called the friars park’, although no mention was made of any friars in residence.

This rental suggests, on first reading, that Bagenal had acquired for himself a status and income such as was enjoyed by a Gaelic overlord. On closer inspection it appears that living on the Bagenal estate would have been a very different experience from being tenant to a Gaelic lord. First, while rents for the three Bagenal lordships were quoted in service or kind, which were then translated into monetary equivalents, it was specifically stated for each of the lordships that the landlord always had the option to collect in money. Furthermore, it appears from the services demanded that these principal tenants had agreed to mobilize their subordinates to uphold an English and Anglicizing outpost. Thus the tenants of some towns were obliged to supply six workmen to labour for twelve days at Newry Castle, while those of other towns had to have a garran (gearrán, pony) with a leader in readiness at all times ‘for carriage and returning out of the English Pale’.\(^{42}\) In political matters, Bagenal never forgot his allegiance to the Dudley faction, with the result that he was duly dismissed from his position as marshal of the army when Sussex was governor only to receive it back from Sidney. His particular responsibility at Newry was to have his settlement act as a buffer to the English Pale and in this he succeeded. It was also expected of him that he would act as the eyes and ears of the government in a particularly strategic area, and in this too he served the crown interests, particularly when these coincided with his own. Thus throughout the 1560s and 1570s he was a consistent supporter of Hugh O’Neill, then baron of Dungannon, against all Gaelic

\(^{42}\) Oxford, Bodleian Library, University College MS 103, fos. 114–42; Brady, Chief Governors, 257–60.
rivals for power in Ulster, but later assisted Turlough Luineach in resisting the advancing power of the baron.

There is no evidence that sheds light on Bagenal’s facility in the Irish language, nor does anything emerge in this source on his adjudication role in whatever disputes occurred on his estate or beyond. Neither do we know much on how Bagenal interacted with those Gaelic Irish people with whom he had to deal either as tenants or as co-participants in the political life of Ulster. What is clear however is that he came to be known to the government as a man of sound judgement, and began in his later years to make an input into the formulation of policy for Ulster. At this point he set himself against the further advancement of Hugh O’Neill possibly because this would have conflicted with his own ambition to become the first lord president of Ulster. Hugh O’Neill, for his part, recognized that the Bagenals were the principal block to his own ambition to become the dominant force in Ulster and it was seemingly to merge their interest with his own that he eloped with Bagenal’s daughter Mabel in 1591 and married her before Thomas Jones, the Protestant bishop of Meath. This was celebrated without the knowledge of Henry Bagenal, who had succeeded his father as marshal of the army, and instead of cementing the relationship with the Bagenals this marriage only earned O’Neill the lasting enmity of his reluctant brother-in-law.43

The Ulster war, when it came, was, therefore, in its early stages, something of a trial of strength between the conflicting ambitions of Hugh O’Neill and Henry Bagenal. The former, as earl of Tyrone, aspired to be the queen’s man in Ulster, while Sir Henry Bagenal, ‘being of special account in the realm, and a Councillor’ requested ‘to be by her Majesty confirmed chief commissioner of the province of Ulster as Sir Richard Bingham is in Connacht’ with authority to be collector of ‘the revenues and other casualties in Ulster to the payment of himself and company as others the governors of Connacht and Munster have’. At this point Henry Bagenal seemed altogether more specifically a reformer than his father ever had been, and his tract of 1586, ‘The Description and Present State of Ulster’, came to be accepted as the most authoritative statement on that subject. At the same time he was promoting a ‘project for Ulster’ that would not only have made him president of Ulster, but would also have curbed ‘the two great barbarous governments’ of both Hugh O’Neill and Turlough Luineach O’Neill. Part of his project was his offer that, in return for certain favours, he would wall the town of Newry 1 mile in circuit, and would erect a schoolhouse ‘where all the youth of the province may be taught civility and learning whereby they may be taught their duty to their prince and country’, and he would, out of the tithes of the lordship—estimated at £100—endow the school and a preacher ‘to plant religion’.44 Nicholas Bagenal had

44 Reasons proffered by Sir Henry Bagenal, [1591], SP 63/161/62; Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 26
never been such a strident advocate of reform, but we must remember that the conditions under which he operated were very different from those which his son Henry had to contend with in the 1590s. However, the evidence suggests that Nicholas Bagenal was something more than ‘a self-interested, but extremely useful, go-between, occupying a twilight zone between Gaelic and English polities’, as he has been represented by Ciaran Brady.15 It is true that he seems not to have done much to promote English civility on his estates, but he did maintain an English presence at Newry, he refrained from excessively close contact with the native population, and he educated his son to the point where he could stake out a religious and cultural agenda that had not been conceivable, much less attainable, in his own time.

All of these profits and advances in status that the Bagenals gained through their service in Ireland appear, from the crown’s perspective, to have been legitimately acquired, and all officers who served close to the Pale enjoyed similar if not equal opportunities to make good. It is such opportunities which made service in Ireland so attractive for English officers with slim purses but they also provided newcomers to Ireland with a yardstick for their expectations. Then as the scale of English activity in Ireland increased and as officers were posted in areas that were ever more remote from Dublin they expected that similar opportunities would be available to them. Thus, in going to Ireland in 1582 Barnaby Goge, a well-known English projector, admitted that ‘the only reason’ behind his going ‘into Connacht’ was to seek by ‘honest means’ to augment his existing living which was insufficient to maintain his wife and ‘great sort’ of children. The experience of others would seem to have convinced Goge that the odds were in his favour because, as he put it in gambling terms to Burghley: ‘I look not to be any great gainer, so lose I not my head I trust to be no great loser.’46

Many officers who had been but a brief interval in Ireland but who had spent long years in crown service in other theatres believed that they had finally discovered an appropriate resting place. Sir Valentine Browne who had been brought to Ireland from Berwick to conduct a survey of the lands of the earl of Desmond, even as the war in Munster was still raging, assumed that the fruits of victory would go ultimately to deserving officers like himself. In the course of reporting on the survey of Munster he reminded Walsingham of the thirty-five years he had spent in the service of the queen and of his three

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45 Brady, Chief Governors, 258.
sons to whom he had no lands to leave. Therefore, he petitioned for land in Ireland to the value of 300 marks a year. One-third of this grant, he expected, would come from the existing stock of crown property, by which he probably meant land in the Pale, but he expected the remaining two-thirds to come out of the escheated land in Munster, "which to re-inhabit, re-edify and manure being now unpeopled [would] cost [him] twenty years purchase that [he] would willingly part with in convenient time towards the living of [his] said younger children." 47

One who had had no previous experience in Ireland but who nonetheless petitioned for land and preferment in Munster was Ralph Lane, better known to history for his Atlantic adventuring. Lane’s initial overture, with associates, was to have a grant of some vacant land in Munster to which he personally would escort and settle the O’Moores from the Irish midlands, thus assuring the greater security of the English Pale. This ‘offer’ quickly became a ‘demand’, this time to be made colonel of Kerry and Clanmorris, with responsibility for guarding the coast and for supervising the transfer and settlement of the O’Moores. Next he sought the command of thirty horse and forty foot with officers and a minister to guard Kerry and Clanmorris. To facilitate this he requested a grant of Desmond’s two houses in Kerry with attached demesnes, and whatever other lands in their vicinity as would be shown by survey to have belonged to Desmond. Then finally, in a petition to Burghley, he pleaded for some compensation in Ireland for his twenty years’ service about the queen’s person, and he hoped that his previous employment would ‘in some way privilege [him] from the common sort of captains[ships] or seneschalships given in ordinary in that realm to base persons’. It probably was the favour he enjoyed with the queen rather than his appeal to snobbery which accounts for Lane’s eventual appointment to govern Kerry and Clanmorris, but when the authorization came it was with the recommendation that a substitute be found because he had already departed for Virginia in the service of Sir Walter Raleigh. 48

Those officers who had fought in Munster were even more anxious than Lane to benefit from the anticipated forfeiture, and they too advanced claims to land even as the war was being fought. John Norris, who did have a record of service in Ireland and who was, at this time, president in Munster, submitted a particularly extravagant claim both for himself and for the use of the president. Moreover he implied that he would abandon the service if this and a further demand for greater autonomy as president were not met,

47 Browne to Walsingham, 11 Dec. 1584, SP 69/119/19.
48 Offer of Lane, James Moore, and Thomas Myagh, SP 69/107/61; 61 i; and 62; demands of Lane to Privy Council, 20 Feb. 1584, SP 69/107/100; Lane to Privy Council, 12 Mar. 1584, SP 69/108/17; Queen to Lord Deputy Perrott, 8 Feb. 1585, SP 69/114/71; for Lane’s venture to Roanoke Island with the associated correspondence see D. B. Quinn et al. (eds.), *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612*, 5 vols. (London, 1979), iii. 265–332, esp. pp. 288–94.
by stating a preference for service in the Low Countries and elaborating a scheme for warfare there.49 In similar fashion, William Stanley was no sooner appointed constable of Castlemaine than he was seeking permission ‘to make a town and to place as many English there as I can get’. He further believed that ‘preferment’ should go to activists like himself, and in mentioning that he already held a lease of the manor of Lismore from the bishop of Waterford he asked that this be augmented with a lease of the adjoining Desmond property of Lisfinny.50

At this point the government was so inundated by petitions from officers for grants from the Desmond estates that it almost seemed that the war had been engaged upon to procure livings for destitute captains. The officers’ demands caused grave offence to Ormond who, as military governor in the latter stages of the conflict, believed that he, and other Irish lords who had remained loyal to the crown, should be prime beneficiaries in any confiscation that would take place, thus ensuring that the outcome would be a change of lords for the existing tenants on the Desmond estates rather than a change in the society of the province. It may have been their knowledge of the irreconcilable opinions of Ormond and the English captains which persuaded some senior officials in London to intervene directly in Munster and promote the first state-sponsored plantation on scientific lines attempted by the English government; a proposal that neither Ormond nor the officers approved of but a proposal which neither party could reasonably oppose, and certainly not Ormond, who was to procure the estates held by Desmond in County Tipperary. The disappointment of the officers at this turn of events was palpable since it was only the exceptional few, like Norris, who commanded the resources necessary to meet the government’s requirements to become planters in Munster. Although dejected, the officers did not lose hope and fostered the notion that other actions in other parts of Ireland would bring them the benefits they believed were their due. It was only a short step from there to recommending war as desirable in itself, and many observers in the seventeenth as well as in the sixteenth century accused officers of goading Irish lords into action so that they themselves could benefit from their inevitable downfall.

While thus hoping to secure a permanent niche for themselves officers also sought to augment their incomes in their provincial postings. The well-connected Ralph Lane, once his venture to Roanoke Island was over, looked again to Ireland, this time to Connacht where he drew upon the support of his ‘ancient good friend’ Sir Richard Bingham to advance a claim for himself and his nephew William Lane to take over the part of the lordship of

49 Note of escheated land sought for by John Norris; Norris to Walsingham, 3 Mar. 1585, SP 69/115/43.
50 Stanley to Walsingham, 2 Mar. 1583, SP 63/100/1; same to Burghley, 25 Dec. 1583, SP 69/106/33.
O’Connor Sligo that abutted the O'Donnell lordship to the north. This came to nothing, presumably because Lane did not pursue his claim, while those decried by Lane as the common sort of captain had to be more modest in their demands. Some of these looked to the natural resources of the country for their enrichment, and they strove, in conjunction with private financiers in England, to promote ventures in remote areas in Ireland that extended from the establishment of settlements that would enable them to exploit timber or fish to those who would facilitate experiments with crops such as woad or hemp associated in England with what Joan Thirsk has called the ‘alternative agriculture’ of the ‘projectors’. Among those was Captain Greene in Connacht who had aroused the interest of Thomas Toser, the admiral of the fishing fleet in Dartmouth, and others associated with fishing in that port, in a scheme to establish a fishing base on the Atlantic coast. This proposal, of which we have only the sketchiest details, came to nothing because the Devon men were unwilling to invest their money without a government assurance that they would provide a ward and a couple of galleys at Burrishoole to protect them from the attack of Scots and Irish rebels ‘which pass up and down here from island to island with skarves and other small boats in calm weather’.

Propositions of this kind also had a long lineage among captains in Ireland, and were particularly associated with William Piers who was in almost continuous command of Carrickfergus Castle on the north-east coast of Ulster from the late 1550s forward to 1580. This was considered a remote posting when Sussex was governor, and was maintained because the government considered it essential to prevent Scottish mercenaries from going to the assistance of the Ulster lords who threatened the security of the Pale. In so far as there was any consistency in the opinions or actions of Piers down through the years it was in his hostility to the Scottish presence in Ulster. Thus, while fulfilling his official duties, Piers was closely associated with all major enterprises, particularly those undertaken by Sir Thomas Smith and the earl of Essex, to establish English settlements along that section of the Ulster coast, while he was himself a prime mover in a less ambitious plantation project, known as the Ulster Project, designed to serve the same end. These interests were to persist and, despite their bringing him into conflict with Essex and Sir William Fitzwilliam, Piers, as late as 1580, reported that he had recently been associated in Ulster with William Smith, presumably a grandson of Sir Thomas, who had come over to renew his claim to the Ards peninsula.

51 Lane to Burghley, 28 Sept. 1592, SP 69/166/70; Bingham to Lane, 3 Aug. 1592, SP 69/166/70 i.
53 Toser et al. to Malby, 13 Apr. 1580, SP 63/72/45.
54 Canny, Elizabethan Conquest, 70–3; Brady, Chief Governors, 258–9.
and ‘partly for solemnising a marriage’ with a daughter of Piers that had been ‘contracted’ before the bishop of Down. Smith, as it transpired, refused to proceed with the wedding and he defaulted ‘also upon an enterprise there to be achieved, concluded between him and certain other gentlemen’ of whom Piers was one. Instead, Smith ‘by his indirect proceedings went about to set the country in an uproar’, spent all the provision that had been assigned for ‘the pretended enterprise’, and ‘abused the adventurers’ agent’. The consequence of this disaster was, claimed Piers, a further drive by the Ulster lords to defend themselves against an anticipated conquest, and he warned the government in England that Turlough Luineach O’Neill, then lord of Tyrone, and his Scottish wife were ‘wholly bent to make a new Scotland in the north part of Ireland’.

There was considerable substance to this claim but the alarmist tone, of which Piers was a practised master, was with a view to elevating the importance of his own posting and whatever project he then happened to have in hand. Now that his venture with Smith had proved a disaster, the resourceful Piers immediately devised a fresh ‘offer’. He insisted that this proposed ‘enterprise’ had won the support of certain ‘gentlemen of the north’ who waited only on the sanction of government to proceed with it. Again, in characteristic fashion, Piers asserted that if ‘this action . . . at the first had been put in execution, and that course which [he] set down had been followed, the north parts’ would have been long since settled. The co-operation he was confident of enlisting was that of the Gaelic lords of Clandeboy whom he now described as ‘very tractable’ and ‘ready to be made good instruments in the advancement of her highness’ service’. By this he seems to have meant that they could be persuaded to join in an onslaught against the Scots, but this was not to be without benefit for Piers himself.

Piers unquestionably stood to gain from the expulsion of the Scots because he had, since 1573, combined his position of constable of Carrickfergus Castle with that of mayor of the town, and in 1580, when his term as constable of Carrickfergus had just come to an end, he attempted with some other English members of the corporation to negotiate some privileges for themselves. These wanted rid of the Scots to ensure the prosperity of the town, and to this end they demanded that the soldiers at Carrickfergus be continued in government pay and they requested a loan of a pinnace, *The Merlin*. This latter would also be used against the Scots but was required specifically to clear the waters in that area of pirates, and especially of John Ball, ‘supposedly a merchant of Bristol’, who was buying up beeves, hides, and tallow from the Gaelic Irish and supplying them with wine without paying custom to the corporation. Should his request be granted and a stop be put to that

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55 Piers to Walsingham, 18 Aug. 1580, SP 69/75/58; same to same, 21 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/65.
56 Brady, *Chief Governors*, 257–60; Piers to Walsingham, 18 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/58; same to same, 21 Aug. 1580, SP 69/75/65.
 illicit trade, Piers was confident that the commercial development of his area of Ulster east of the Bann would draw the people of Clandeboy from being supporters of their lords and make the area ‘a piece of the English Pale’. Others were less optimistic and voiced concern that the ‘quality’ of those being attracted to the corporation at Carrickfergus were ‘bankrowtes and such as for their offences cannot drink the water of England’.57 Piers was not to be discouraged and as he looked forward to the realization of the happy prospect of a prosperous north-east, he believed it would become possible to play off O’Donnell against Turlough Luineach O’Neill and thus create the situation where government authority would be asserted everywhere throughout Ulster.

A more elaborate scheme for the manipulation of the Gaelic lords of Ulster (including Hugh O’Neill, baron of Dungannon) earned Piers the official rebuke that it was no part of ‘a private person’ to be a government negotiator. This did not mean that the officials had lost faith in Piers’s usefulness in a more limited capacity and Lord Grey professed to ‘love’ the man and wished him ‘to be used in trust in those services wherewith he is acquainted either in the Ards or Clandeboy’ and ‘to be holpen in his particular’.58 By the last was meant the various commercial ventures in which he was involved and which concerned, as they always had, the exploitation of the natural resources of that area. In his early career Piers had been alert to the commercial use that could be made of Irish timber for English mining, and in 1586 he indicated that he still had an interest in these matters and that he ‘among others [had] been drawn into an action by Mr Fowle for minerals’. The others included ‘one Mr Morley, a gentleman of Sussex’ who had been involved for twenty years with ironworks, and also William Walton of Galway described by Piers as a ‘servant’ to Walsingham.59 The final account rendered by Piers as constable of Carrickfergus shows that his enterprises over the years, in conjunction with Richard Bethall and as assignees for Sir John Travers, had included customs collection, the farming of the impost on wines, and the licensing of fishing on the Bann. When challenged for money that was claimed due to the state, Piers asserted that he had himself ‘never fished or took any profit in the Bann’, but he tacitly admitted that he had taken advantage of economic opportunity accruing from the course of political events. Thus he acknowledged in 1580 that he had received payment for his ‘demand for one thousand marks claimed by him for Shane O’Neill’s head’, and also for the supply of victuals to the Essex expedition in Ulster. Piers continued to turn

57 Belfast, PRONI, Class T. 707, records of Carrickfergus as transcribed, 1783, by Richard Dobbs, p. 5; arrearages due by Captain William Piers, late constable of Carrickfergus, 21 Feb. 1580, SP 63/71/53; Privy Council to Lord Deputy, 19 Apr. 1581, SP 63/82/30; Piers, Mayor of Carrickfergus, et al. to Lords Justice, 10 Dec. 1582, SP 63/168/49 i; Fenton to Walsingham, 22 Mar. 1581, SP 63/81/41; Piers’s draft for holding Turlough Luineach in obedience, Dec. 1581, SP 63/87/79.
58 Articles by Piers, 10 Aug. 1581, SP 63/85/7; Grey to Privy Council, 12 Aug. 1581, SP 63/85/13.
59 Piers to Walsingham, 26 Feb. 1586, SP 63/122/83.
changing political circumstances to his advantage, and obtained special
permission in 1580 to bring grain from England into Ulster to cater for the
shortfall that had resulted from the crop destruction associated with the Irish
resistance to the plantation projects. Advancing years meant that Piers ulti-
mately had to let go his position at Carrickfergus, but that does not mean
that his life’s work went unrewarded or unrecognized. On the contrary, the
last reference to him that appears in the official record relates that, after he
had lost the use of his limbs, ‘old Captain William Piers of Carrickfergus’
was granted some land in County Westmeath and became a justice of the
peace of that county, ‘he being the only Englishman whom her Majesty of
her goodness hath planted there’. It would have given Piers satisfaction to
know that his family name would endure in Westmeath, and would be forever
associated with the economic improvement of that area advocated by a
descendant, Sir Henry Piers, at the close of the seventeenth century. Also it
might not have surprised him to know that another of his family, James Piers,
would make his reputation as a Catholic theologian advocating the cause of
the Blessed Virgin.

The modest success of William Piers, and others like him, would certainly
have been in the minds of those English captains who penetrated those parts
of Ireland most remote from Dublin during the 1580s and 1590s. His name
would certainly have been known to those who held appointments in
Connacht, because Sir Nicholas Malby, who had preceded Bingham as pres-
ident of that province, had begun his career as partner with Piers in his
adventures at Carrickfergus. Moreover his experiences would have seemed
particularly apposite to those active in Connacht because they too would
have believed themselves to be dealing with a technologically retarded people
who had not yet discovered, much less exploited, the economic potential of
the region in which they lived. In this respect, it is significant that among
those with whom Piers associated towards the end of his career were one
Fowle, who was probably Robert Fowle, provost marshal of Connacht, and
William Walton of Galway. Walton’s surname suggests he was English
and the reference made to him by Piers indicates that he was engaged in
prospecting for minerals. His presence in Connacht might therefore be related
to the request made by Nicholas Malby to the government in 1581 for a
commission for mines in Connacht and Thomond. The Fowle association
may have been in connection with the petition made by Robert Fowle and
John Browne in Connacht for a licence to transport iron, steel, copper, wood,

60 Arrearages due by Captain William Piers, 21 Feb. 1580, SP 69/71/53; Privy Council to Burghley,
29 May 1580, HMC, Salisbury MSS ii. 325.
61 Loftus to Burghley, 29 Aug. 1591, SP 69/159/66; Sir Henry Piers, ‘A Choriographical
Description of the County of West-Meath, Written A.D. 1682’, in Charles Vallancey (ed.), Collectanea
de rebus Hibernicis, i (Dublin, 1770); James Piers, Ad majorem Dei gloriam Beataeque Virginiis Mariae brevis, in
logicam introduction (Bordeaux, 1631).
timber, woad, hops, oil, and salt out of the province, and ‘all things else which
the country will afford that will set men a work and draw inhabitants’. 62

Besides the economic lessons to be learned from Piers’s career, there was
much to be admired about his achievements. His various plots and proposals
came to the attention of those at the very highest levels in English govern-
ment, and he twice visited the court: first in 1565 to solicit support for the
Ulster Project and then in 1580 when he was seeking special privileges for
Carrickfergus corporation. 63 Something else that would have made Piers an
attractive figure for adventurers in the remote regions of Connacht was his
proven ability to endure, and make a profit, in what was almost a purely
Gaelic environment. The true nature of his relationship with the various
Gaelic chieftains in Ulster, and even with the Scots, with whom he had estab-
lished contact is not at all clear. In his correspondence with officials, Piers
always implied that he had the upper hand over the Gaelic chieftains of Ulster
and that he could manipulate them at will. This however could not have
formed the basis for the enduring associations that Piers maintained with a
variety of Gaelic chieftains, and these assertions must be balanced against
the fact that his loyalty was considered doubtful by both Lord Deputy
Fitzwilliam and Walter, earl of Essex. Indeed Essex arrived at the conclusion
that Piers was a spy for one of the O’Neills and it was on this suspicion that
he was forced to endure a period in prison. 64 Again, while Piers emerges in
the official correspondence as an implacable opponent of the Scots, he
nonetheless played an important role in persuading the Mac Donnells to
assassinate Shane O’Neill, since they brought him the severed head which
he transmitted to Dublin, and from thence to Queen Elizabeth. Moreover,
in his grand proposal of 1581 for the settlement of Ulster, Piers recommended
that the Mac Donnells should be allowed to retain their foothold in County
Antrim, and while he was technically opposed to any Scottish presence Piers
mentioned that he had been in conversation with Agnes Campbell, the
Scottish wife of Turlough Luineach O’Neill. Also, probably with an eye to
the future, he was satisfied with the logic of her argument that if God ‘should
call the Queen’s Majesty that England and Ireland were and should be both
the King of Scotland’s own’. 65

And what about Piers’s cultural values, his language of work and the lan-
guage of his household in his remote fastness of Carrickfergus? At all times he
professed a commitment ‘to the reducing of this wild Irishry to the knowledge
of God and their duty to your Majesty’, and his wife also appears to have been
English and presumably Protestant. Although sometimes harassed by her

62 Malby to Walsingham, 6 Apr. 1581, SP 63/82/12; Fowle and Browne, ‘Desire to Transport out
of Connacht’, SP 63/115/19.
63 Piers to Walsingham, 12 June 1580, SP 63/73/54.
64 Brady, Chief Governors, 259; arrearages of Piers, SP 63/71/53.
65 Piers to Walsingham, 18 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/58.
Gaelic neighbours, particularly when her husband was absent, she was also in receipt of occasional gifts from Gaelic lords, including Turlough Luineach O’Neill.66 The sources do not reveal what form the required reciprocation took or if the bearers of gifts were entertained at Carrickfergus Castle. Despite his professed allegiance to the promotion of English civility, the town of which Piers was mayor was, until 1593, composed of ‘rotten and ruinous clay houses and cottages’.67 It seems impossible that Piers and his family would not have acquired a speaking knowledge of the Irish language to facilitate their dealings with both their Gaelic and Scottish neighbours. However, they must also have done something to promote a knowledge of English among those with whom they associated. Thus, in 1571, Piers boasted that ‘the right heir of O’ Cane’s country [was] with [him] and by [him] brought up as well in England as in this realm’, and the corporation records for that year show that one ‘Cornelius O’Cahan Vicecont’ was indeed resident in ‘le townhouse de Knockfergus’. Arrangements such as this, which amounted to fostering, could not have been undertaken by Piers solely with a view to promoting a knowledge of English ways in a prospective heir to a strategic Irish lordship since, by his own admission, he was aware that ‘the order of Ireland’ was to have ‘the lord’s son fostered with the best in the country’.68

Perhaps William Piers considered that he met this requirement because he was strategically located between the four worlds of England, Scotland, Gaelic Ulster, and the English Pale and he strove to exploit all four to his own best advantage; and to the benefit of the English crown whenever this did not come into conflict with the interest of himself and his family. This reality would have been apparent to other officers commencing service in previously Gaelic areas and this is why the relative success of Piers would have seemed relevant to them. The tenuous character of their hold in Ulster would have been apparent also to senior officials in the Dublin administration, and, in the 1590s, as they pinned their hopes on Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, to be the most potent influence for the Anglicization of Ulster, they were anxious that the earl should be monitored and controlled by Dublin officials rather than through the medium of a remote captain whose allegiance would always be in doubt. Thus, in 1590, when the name of Captain William Warren was proposed as constable of Carrickfergus it was opposed by the governor of Ireland, William Fitzwilliam, on two grounds. The first objection was that Warren was a kinsman of Sir Edward Moore who was in turn allied to Tyrone, and the second was that the nominee was ‘needy and poor’ and therefore would not, ‘where he may’, desist ‘to make his commodity within

66 Piers to Queen, 6 July 1571, SP 63/32/1; Piers to Walsingham, 12 June 1580, SP 63/73/54; same to same, 16 Jan. 1581, SP 63/80/13.
67 Belfast, PRONI, Class T. 707, p. 20.
68 Piers to Queen, 6 July 1571, SP 63/32/1; Belfast, PRONI, Class T. 707, p. 3; articles by Captain Piers, to Aug. 1581, SP 63/85/7.
that remote part far from the state . . . to the undoing of those parts’. The memory of William Piers must have come before Fitzwilliam’s mind as he vetoed the appointment of William Warren.

Another means by which needy captains had frequently made a living in Ireland was by their flagrant misuse of office, particularly in the matter of putting justice up for sale, either in their capacity as sheriffs or as seneschals. The charges brought against captains during the middle decades of the sixteenth century for their misuse of the law have been detailed by Ciaran Brady, but these practices became even more widespread as government authority penetrated ever more deeply into the provinces. Thus, in 1590, when Mr Justice Robert Gardener was listing ‘the diseases of that commonwealth’ which alienated potentially loyal people in Ireland from the government, he gave particular prominence to the corruption of sheriffs and to abuses associated with the use of martial law. He was especially critical of those sheriffs who, at the end of their term of office, procured pardons not only for themselves but for as many as forty or fifty of their followers ‘supposing them assistants to them sheriffs’. This procedure ensured that they could never subsequently be held responsible for any misdeeds perpetrated by them under the guise of the law while they held the position of sheriff. On the related abuse of martial law he alluded to the ‘common allowance [given] for head silver to such as bring heads, never examining or knowing whose heads, whether of the best or worst so no safety for any man to travel; a strange course in a Christian Commonwealth’. The ambition of Gardener, who was then a relative newcomer to Ireland, was to have common law procedures, as they were known in England, substituted for the proliferation of malpractices that had brought all English law into disrepute in Ireland. Even as he made his recommendations, Gardener may well have been thinking of proceedings in Connacht and in the southern counties of Ulster, where captains who were the most visible and active representatives of crown authority were far removed from the supervision of senior officials and were the constant subject of controversy as they exceeded what Hiram Morgan has aptly described as ‘an acceptable level of constitutional corruption’.

One of the first achievements of the presidency in Connacht was the shirring of that province, and that gave presidents the opportunity to nominate sheriffs and sub-sheriffs. Those appointed in the early years tended to be drawn

69 Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 27 July 1590, SP 69/153/53.
70 Brady, *Chief Governors*; Brady, ‘The Captains’ Games’.
from the collateral branches of the ruling family, and these were resented by
the lords because they were perceived as symbols and instruments of a gov-
ernment design to subvert existing authority and to disperse power within each
lordship. Later, however, as title to supposed crown property was promoted
within each area, and as these lands were assigned to nominees of the provin-
cial presidents, it became possible to have these newly established landowners
appointed as sheriffs and sub-sheriffs and to endow them with power of mar-
tial law. These people were sometimes English captains, and sometimes even
captains who were close relatives of the provincial presidents, but they could
also be Old English adventurers from the Pale who accompanied the presi-
dent into these remote regions, or people of relatively humble background
from within the province who were agreeable to become instruments of
the president. The principal responsibility of these officers was to advance
the authority of the president and to raise composition money that provided
the finance necessary for the support of provincial institutions. They also had
a duty to maintain order and to adjudicate upon disputes that might arise, but
they were particularly active in reviving crown titles to property that could be
employed to promote their own enrichment and that of their associates.73

Because the opportunities for self-advancement in the relatively unsuper-
vised environment of Connacht were plentiful, the presidency there was, from
the outset, beset by controversy and local opposition, and there were persist-
tent charges being made that the rapacity of successive presidents was
responsible for the disturbances. Sir Nicholas Malby found himself embroiled
from the outset with the earl of Clanricard, and to a lesser degree with the
earl of Thomond, while Sir Richard Bingham, who succeeded Malby as presi-
dent, was involved in apparently interminable conflict with the Burkes of
County Mayo and with Sir Brian O’Rourke of County Leitrim who was
married to a daughter of the earl of Clanricard. The charges brought against
both presidents were similar and were often corroborated by the same people,
and they would possibly have led to a dismissal of the presidents were it not
that Malby died unexpectedly in 1584, and that Bingham held office when
rumours of an imminent Spanish invasion were persistent. Both presidents
were also fortunate that their years of government coincided with distur-
bances elsewhere in the country, and both had undoubted credit with the
government because their military forays were generally successful and
because the presidency met its costs, even during years of insurrection, from
revenues raised within the province. Malby and Bingham were also able to
call upon powerful backers in Dublin and London, and those who supported
them were officials and courtiers who were advanced Protestants. The local
opposition which Malby and Bingham encountered could, therefore, be cited

73 Bernadette Cunningham, ‘Political and Social Change in the Lordships of Clanricard and
Thomond, 1569–1641’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1979), 21–51.
by them as proof of an inveterate Irish opposition to all government, and of the malignant conspiring of the papacy against all English influence; Malby, writing in 1580, asserted that it was ‘not the hard dealing of the government that hath moved this insolent people to rebel against her Majesty, but only a cankered heart against God’s true religion, and an hatred to their dear and natural sovereign, mixed with a Devilish affection they bear to that Anti-Christ of Rome’. Bingham, reporting nine years later, endorsed these sentiments of Malby, and concluded that all in Connacht were united against him, ‘for assuredly they believe this is their time’.74

While this interpretation might have seemed convincing to the audience to which it was addressed, it does not bear up against scrutiny of what actually transpired in Connacht. Those who rejected the authority of the presidency emphasized their loyalty to the queen, and religious issues featured in the complaints against the Presidency only to the extent that the property of the Church, which previously had been leased from the crown by the provincial lords, had now been taken into the direct possession of the presidency. More fundamental was the complaint over the seizure of property that had previously belonged to the local lords, and over the tyrannical behaviour of the presidents and their agents, and the lack of deference and respect shown by them towards existing authority. This becomes clear from the list of complaints against Malby drawn up by the earl of Clanricard. His initial grievances were over the loss to Malby both of monastic lands that he had previously leased from the crown, and of five of his fifteen manors. Then he mentioned the seizure and abuse of his followers by extra-legal means, and the release by Malby of malefactors who were known opponents of the earl’s authority, and of the general impoverishment of the inhabitants of his lordship through the illegal exactions of Malby’s followers. Clanricard was also obviously outraged at the lack of respect shown towards himself and his family, and the first of his complaints concerned the seizure by Malby of his daughter, Lady Mary Burke, and her incarceration in darkness for ten weeks at Loughrea with only one maid and ‘none of her own’ to attend upon her. Equally offensive was the request made by Malby to the lord deputy to arrest and imprison Clanicard’s youngest son William Burke ‘being at school in Her Majesty’s city of Waterford’.

In 1589, Richard Burke of Mayo professed a similar revulsion at the lack of deference shown him and he cried in desperation that he ‘desired no longer to live but that he might have liberty for one hour to declare to Her Majesty the abuses of Sir Richard and his tyranny over Her Majesty’s people of that province, and at the hours end to be hacked to pieces’. The Mayo Burkes were also aggrieved over the ‘great scope of land’ taken by John Browne at the Neale, and that taken by Bingham at Castlebar for the use of the

74 Malby to Walsingham, 24 Oct. 1580, SP 63/77/52; Bingham to Gardener, 10 June 1589, SP 63/145/6.
presidency, but the more general complaint was (as they described it to the Irish-speaking John Garvey, bishop of Kilmore) ‘that it was the cruel and hard part of sheriffs, sub sheriffs, bailiffs and . . . the daily exaction of soldiers and soldier’s boys that provoked them thus to fall from their loyalty’. Such abuse was all the more galling coming from people of lowly status because the Burkes were still conscious their progenitors were ‘come out of England and . . . out of the best houses there and [were] now used worse than any other inhabitants of this province whether English or Irish’. 75

The earl of Thomond was able to make no claims to English ancestry but he did hold a title from the crown, and expected that appropriate respect would be shown to that title by commoners. His patience was therefore stretched to the limit when some Gaelic poets from Ulster to whom he had offered patronage within his lordship were arrested by Captain Woodhouse as they passed through Connacht, and were imprisoned by Woodhouse on the charge that they had ‘made rhymes against Her Majesty as other rhymers had done’. When questioned by Thomond, Woodhouse drew his sword and challenged him to a duel, ‘saying that he was as good a gentleman as the earl [and] that he cared not for him a fly’. This led to the intervention of Sir John Perrott, then governor, who adjudged that Woodhouse had been in no position to comment on the poems since ‘he could not understand Irish’, and the governor placed Woodhouse in prison for his misconduct and out of the belief that his initial interference with the poets was motivated more by ‘his greedy desire to use his wonted rapine and spoils upon the poor than any matter of truth’.76

The question of status had also featured among the objections raised against Malby, and the earl of Ormond was particularly offended at the thought that people of such lowly rank as Malby’s followers should enjoy authority over Irish noblemen. Ormond, who was a consistent supporter of both Thomond and Clanricard, denied Malby’s charge that ‘he had looked into his government’ in Connacht, but he pronounced, on the basis of what was generally known, that Malby’s government would not stand up to scrutiny. Moreover in speaking of Malby’s followers, Ormond considered, ‘it [was] not for an honest man to live among such Machevilles, as can seek to cut a man’s throat if they might’.77

Even when conceding the prejudice in all such remarks, they do suggest that the oppressions of successive presidents in Connacht and the behaviour of their adherents played at least some part in driving into open revolt subjects

75 Note of abuses done by Malby in Connacht since 5 July 1576, SP 63/72/24; report by Bishop of Meath et al. 14 May 1589, SP 63/144/34 i; John Garvey, Bishop of Kilmore to Burghley, 10 May 1589, SP 63/144/8; Foxe to Walsingham, 26 Feb. 1589, SP 63/141/41; the hostility of the Burkes to Bingham is discussed in Edwards, ‘Ideology and Experience’ but they obviously objected to much more than the martial law which is the principal subject of Edwards’s paper.


77 Ormond to Burghley, 12 Nov. 1581, SP 63/86/63.
who previously owed at least residual loyalty to the crown. This is also suggested by the fact that the targets of the rebel attacks in Connacht were recent English settlers like John Browne who was murdered, and various functionaries of the presidency, of English, Old English, and Gaelic background, who had acquired land in the province. Taken together the evidence casts doubt on Bingham’s boast, which would have been endorsed by Malby, that he would ‘not justly be found guilty in the least degree as causer of the Burkes rising out in rebellion’.78

Another ground on which the presidents’ representation of opposition to their rule in Connacht collapses is in their portrayal of the conflict there as a straightforward collision between English upholders of crown authority and Irish adherents to the papal cause. The obvious flaw in this argument is that the most persistent critics of the two presidents were themselves officials of the presidency; during Malby’s presidency his leading detractor was Edward White, while Bingham was pursued relentlessly by Captain Robert Fowle. White may not be regarded as an entirely disinterested party in that he began his career in Connacht as clerk to the earl of Clanricard, and from there moved to become clerk of the provincial council from which position he was dismissed by Malby because he had remarked to one Coleman, chief remembrancer in Dublin, that the people in Connacht were ‘oppressed’. He had however shown himself to be a committed Protestant during his days with Clanricard, and when he did file charges against Malby he listed English, Old English, and Gaelic Irish among his witnesses: these, among others, included Thomas Dillon, chief justice of the province; Anthony Fitton, brother to Sir Edward Fitton the first president; Edward Mostion and Robert Damport, both English captains; Nathaniel Smyth, lieutenant to Malby; Francis Shane; Robert Dillon of Athlone; and Owen O’Connor, brother to O’Connor Sligo.

The charges made against Bingham by Fowle, who was provost marshal of the province, related to the excessive cost of the military expeditions led by Bingham, and to his boasts of military achievements. Excessive charge had, according to Fowle, led to the impoverishment of the people while the actions themselves were likely to have even more adverse economic consequences because, said Fowle, there were ‘none but women, children and curles destroyed which will breed desolation to the country and decay to her Majesty’s revenues’.79 It is not clear whom Fowle would have been able

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78 Bingham to Queen Elizabeth, 17 Sept. 1590, SP 63/154/30; spoils committed by the rebels in Connacht, 1589, SP 69/146/35 i; this extensive list identifies the victims of attack. Many of these, such as those appearing on the list of sheriffs considered in the next paragraph, are immediately recognizable as aiders of the presidency but we learn through more casual reference who the more obscure people were; Terence O. Ranger, ‘Richard Boyle and the Making of an Irish Fortune, 1588–1641’, Irish Historical Studies, 10 (1957), 237–97.

79 Fowle to Burghley, 23 Oct. 1590, SP 63/155/12; see also Fowle’s answer to Bingham’s account for half-yearly receipts, 27 May 1592, SP 69/164/44.
to call upon to substantiate his charges against Bingham, but we have it on
Bingham’s own admission that some of the English who had come into the
province with the presidency had been, in 1586, among his most bitter
enemies. Among his opponents in Connacht listed by Bingham were William
Clifford, ‘my enemy of that time’, and John Ball who, as Bingham put it, ‘was not my friend neither, for he was bedfellow to Mr Barkley . . . a servant
to Sir John Perrott my mortal enemy’. The animosity between Fowle and
Bingham related to the fact that Fowle also was a Perrott man and was
associated with the attempt of Sir John Perrott, as governor, to negotiate
a revised composition rent that would be acceptable to the principal lords
of the province. Thus Bingham had reason on occasion to contradict his
global explanation of opposition in Connacht, and attribute it instead to the
machinations of ‘men English and Englished such as were . . . badly affected
towards me’.

While Bingham had English enemies in the province, those on whom he
most relied were not exclusively English. His most prominent supporters
included his brothers George and John, settled respectively in Sligo and
Roscommon, his personal servant John King, and his leading propagandist
Captain John Merbury. However they also included the Palesman William
Taafe, his ‘brother’s undersheriff in the county of Sligo’, and Bingham, unlike
Malby, could count on the loyalty of Edward White, who had been restored
to the office of clerk of council. The price that White was to pay for his new
allegiance was to be charged by the Englishman Captain Woodhouse with
being ‘a common witness’ in Bingham’s causes who ‘did not stick to lend
[him] twenty oaths’. One of the less onerous services that White rendered
Bingham was, with ‘his boy Morrish Curcy’, to translate some Gaelic verse
for him. And another ‘servant to Sir Richard’ (and incidentally another victim
of rebel assault) was Patrick Morgan, who ‘expounded in Irish to such as
could not speak English’ the terms of the composition of Connacht.80

This identification of some of the friends and enemies of Bingham suggests
that issues of faction and personal loyalty were more important than national
origin in determining which side was taken by contenders for power in
Connacht during the 1580s and 1590s. A list of those assigned to the office
of sheriff and sub-sheriff in the various counties of Connacht from the time
of Bingham’s appointment to the year 1589 again shows that these were as
likely to be Old English or Gaelic Irish as they were to be Englishmen.
Moreover in this document compiled by Bingham, he specifically mentioned
that most of those appointed had been chosen by the governors Sir John
Perrott and Sir William Fitzwilliam rather than by himself. However there

80 Declaration by Bingham to prove his innocence, 21 July 1591, SP 63/159/18; White to Bingham,
21 Feb. 1590/1, SP 63/157/20; Bingham to Burghley, May 1586, SP 63/124/58; examination of
Bingham before the Lord Chancellor, 26 Feb. 1590/1, SP 63/157/24; on Patrick Morgan see resolu-
tion of the Council of Ireland acquitting Bingham, 4 Dec. 1589, SP 63/149/10, and SP 63/146/35, i.
are two further points worth mentioning about this list; first, the Irish-born sheriffs listed (with the sole exception of Sir Brian O’Rourke in Leitrim) were not people who would have been favoured by the principal lords and many were newcomers to the county, and second, several individuals held office in different counties in different years. Thus, for example, Sir George Bingham and William Taaffe first made their appearance as sheriff and sub-sheriff in County Clare, and later received appointment in County Sligo. In similar fashion Thomas Mostine (or Mostian), who first appeared as sheriff of Galway, subsequently held that same office in Roscommon, and two other Mostians, Edward and William, served as sheriffs in Clare and Galway. Those who were moved about were likely to have been those most loyal to Bingham, and perhaps also those most favoured by him for the various emoluments that accrued to those who held such a critical office in uncertain times. Several of those appointed as sheriff were army captains and these included Grene O’Molloy who was Bingham’s own nominee as sheriff in County Clare. None of these captains was given his military title when mentioned in this civilian capacity except Captain Richard Beatagh who held office ‘in manner of bailiff’ over Iar Connacht (corresponding roughly to Connemara). However it is possible to identify those captains who served in Connacht from financial accounts and from miscellaneous correspondence, and identification reveals surprisingly that several of them were Irishmen and that others had Irish associations.

This comes as a surprise only because the English army in sixteenth-century Ireland has been usually represented as an intrusive and alien presence in provincial society. It may have been intrusive, and even aggressive, but the army was not alien since it is now apparent that some officers as well as many soldiers in every regiment were Irish. The number of Irish who served the crown was greater in Connacht than elsewhere because no fresh English recruits would have been on hand in that province to make good the loss through casualty or natural wastage. Therefore the bands of captains such as William Mostian, Nicholas Mordant, Nicholas Merriman, George Bingham, Henry Weeks, Hugh Mostian, Richard Mapother, and Humphrey Willis, who were normally posted in Connacht, would have been heavily Irish in composition, and the bands commanded by Irish captains in crown service, such as Grene O’Molloy, Henry Reynolds, and Richard Beatagh, would have been almost entirely made up of Irish troopers.\textsuperscript{81} It did prove possible in times of emergency for the president of Connacht to draw on supplemental help from the more orthodox companies of such as Sir Thomas Norris, Sir George Borchier, or Sir Edward Denny, but at such times assistance also

\textsuperscript{81} Declaration of extraordinary charges dispensed by Sir Richard Bingham in 1586, SP 69/155/2; charges dispensed by Bingham, 1588, 1589, SP 69/155/7; Mc Gurk, Elizabethan Conquest, acknowledges the presence of Irish soldiers in the ranks but he does not seem to appreciate the extent of the practice.
came from those described as 'extraordinary bands' led by such as Captain Tyrrell and Captain Hovingdon. Tyrrell was Irish and, like Grene O’Molloy, from the midlands, but Hovingdon, although the son of an English soldier planter in the Irish midlands, was also foster brother to Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, ‘for Hovingdon’s mother brought up the baron [of Dungannon] as a child’. Two of these Hovingdons, Richard and Henry, were among O’Neill’s most trusted companions and agents throughout his career, and one of the duties assigned one of them by O’Neill was to assist Bingham in Connacht. Thus in January 1590 as the governor, Sir William Fitzwilliam, was on his return journey to Dublin from Galway he encountered ‘Hovenden, a captain of the earl of Tyrone with his band who assured me that he would be with Sir Richard within six days after’. And sure enough as the troops available to Bingham were mustered at Galway the following month they included sixty men under Hovingdon’s command. All of these captains so far mentioned were counted as being in charge of bands of soldiers, but the more revealing aspect of the Galway muster of February 1590 is that for the 809 soldiers mustered there were also 228 kerne present, and the bands of kerne were led by such obviously Gaelic captains as Hugh Boy and Jeffrey Fitzpatrick and Redmond Keaton. Nor was this exceptional because the Connacht accounts show that the president regularly employed the services of kerne, gallowglass, and even the notorious ‘sea queen’ Gráinne, or Grace, O’Malley, and also called upon the principal landowners of the province to assist him with a rising out.82 To some degree this reliance on native forces was forced upon the presidents by the emergencies they encountered or provoked, but Bingham made it clear that it was his practice always to employ Irish officers to be ‘collectors or bailiffs in disorderly areas’ because ‘if we send English officers amongst them, they will never leave prosecuting of them by complaints swearing and forswearing till they shall displace them or else they will kill them’.83

All of this points to the motley character of those who served in the cause of the provincial council in Connacht. Their official purposes were to maintain order and to raise revenue for the crown through composition rent. These functions were performed ruthlessly and efficiently while Malby and Bingham held office, but all those associated with the presidency, from highest to lowest, also strove to become property owners and establish a permanent

82 It has not proved possible to trace the precise origins of Captain Grene O’Molloy but it is probable that he was a brother of another Irish captain, Hugh O’Molloy, who served the queen ‘in the low countries as in Ireland’; Hugh O’Molloy came from the family that had been standard-bearers to the O’Farrells, see Hugh O’Molloy to Burghley, Dec. 1585, SP 63/121/34; Fitzwilliam to Privy Council, 27 Jan. 1586/90, SP 63/150/23; Loftus and Wallop to Privy Council, 23 Aug. 1583, SP 63/103/28; view of soldiers assigned for prosecution of the Burkes, 1 Feb. 1589/90, SP 63/151/4 ii; Bingham to Fitzwilliam, 12 June 1591, SP 63/158/37; on Hugh O’Neill’s connections with the Hovingdons or Hovendens see Morgan, Tyrone’s Rebellion, 97.
83 Bingham to Burghley, 26 May 1591, SP 63/158/22.
position for themselves within western society. Property could be acquired by brute force as in the cases of the Bingham at Castlebar and Ballymote and John Browne at the Neale, but acquisitions of this kind had always to be rationalized as serving the interest of the crown. Thus when Bingham wanted also to seize and refurbish Boyle Abbey in County Roscommon for the use of the presidency and as a living for his brother, he pleaded for the right to acquire lands in excess of those which customarily belonged to the abbey lest the maintenance of this outpost would become a charge upon the crown. Then, to justify the total seizure, he pronounced that ‘the chiefest cause of the building of it is for the great good of the Commonwealth of the whole province and not for any particular (as God he knoweth), for by setting down there we shall reform that dangerous deserts and the mountains of the Curlews of woods and wastes which do divide the counties of Roscommon and Sligo where all the most dangerous and worse intended haunt and ever will do until it be inhabited’.84

Another means of gaining a position in the province was through intermarriage with the existing landowners there. The example here was set by Sir Nicholas Malby who not only established himself at Roscommon Castle but married his ‘eldest daughter to as sufficient a young gentleman as any in this land, to a son of Sir William Brabazon’.85 The attraction of the alliance was that the Brabazons were among the group of English Protestants who had earlier transferred their interests from the most westerly military outpost at Athlone across the Shannon into neighbouring County Roscommon. Another who had done so was Thomas Le Strange and we learn that Francis Shane, one of the obscure men associated with the presidency, was ‘son-in-law to Sir Thomas Le Strange and brother-in-law to Mr Justice Dillon chief justice of Connacht’. These strategic alliances may have made it possible for Shane, apparently of Gaelic background, to acquire land in Connacht, and he was listed among the victims of the rebellions of the 1580s. But if a victim, Shane was also cited by Tadhg O’Kelly ‘as cause of his rebellion’.86

In the years to come, many other landowners in Connacht cited Francis Shane, and also the Kentish-born Richard Boyle (the future earl of Cork), as responsible for their resort to arms because these two, and a host of other minor officials in Connacht and in Dublin, worked systematically under the shadow of the presidency to exploit any weaknesses they could identify in the title which landowners in Connacht had to their property. This sordid scheme of the perversion of the English common law to serve private ends has been detailed by Terence Ranger, although it has now been established that well-connected lords, notably the earls of Clanricard and Thomond,

84 Bingham to Burghley, 26 May 1591, SP 63/158/22.
85 Malby to Walsingham, 6 Apr. 1581, SP 63/82/12.
86 Answer of John Perrott on rhymers, 17 Dec. 1590 [SP 12/234/58]; Bingham to Burghley, 8 Sept. 1589, SP 63/146/32.
were able to defend themselves from such incursions, and that the scheme had its greatest impact where landowners were unable to draw upon outside political support. Mary O’Dowd has shown, in her case-study of County Sligo, just how effective this campaign of the presidency could be in bringing about a transformation both in the ownership of land and in the composition of the ruling elite, and it is likely that the collapse of the existing order was even more rapid and more total in County Roscommon which was closest to the source of government influence at Athlone. Every loss by the indigenous landowners, and every gain by those associated with the presidency, was hailed by Malby, Bingham, or Captain John Merbury as an advance for Christianity and civilization.87

However, as will be clear from the evidence cited, the principal beneficiaries from the changes that were promoted were neither equipped nor concerned to advance such lofty motives. The truth of this is further proven by what happened in practice. Every local study has shown that existing merchants from the towns of Galway and Sligo were significant gainers from the changes being unleashed, but these were generally Catholic and many were more interested in reaping a capital gain from the lands they acquired, or in collecting rent from the dispossessed owners, than in promoting civility through improvement. Others who benefited were the petty opportunists of Irish birth like Francis Shane or William Taaffe, but these again were unlikely to be committed to the Protestant cause and they were certainly more interested in turning a quick profit than in the painstaking promotion of model settlements. Bingham welcomed their presence not only because they were his own clients, but because they added substance to his boast that the province was so ordered that ‘they came from all parts of the realm to inhabit in Connacht, even out of the county of Dublin itself’.88

Any contribution towards the systematic development of their properties which these Irish opportunists and their English associates might have made was also hampered by the fact that they were active in selling, reselling, and exchanging the land they had acquired, sometimes with a view to rounding off an estate, but sometimes also to obscure the dubious means by which they had made their initial gains. This left the responsibility for setting an example in civil living entirely to the more senior figures in the presidency and to the captains who served the presidential cause. Some of the senior figures did symbolize their commitment to reform by constructing impressive houses

87 Merbury to Walsingham, 1 Aug. 1589, SP 63/146/1; causes of rebellion in Connacht by Captain John Merbury, 1 Aug. 1589, SP 63/146/2; Captain John Merbury proving the necessity to make war in Connacht, 27 Sept. 1589, SP 63/146/57; petition by John Merbury to Privy Council, [27 Sept. 1589], SP 63/146/61; Ranger, ‘Richard Boyle’; Mary O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land: Early Modern Sligo, 1568–1688 (Belfast, 1991), esp. pp. 89–104.
and came forward as upholders of a Protestant interest in Connacht, but, according to Mary O’Dowd, some also became absentee proprietors or were unscrupulous asset strippers of their lands while yet others intermarried with existing landed families. Collectively they can be said to have failed in the matter of promoting fundamental social change through the introduction of a cohort of improving tenants on their properties. Since most senior figures in the presidency were of a military background the most obvious source of new tenants would have been their own bands, but since the majority of soldiers in their bands were Irish these would have blended indiscernibly with the existing population whenever they were granted tenancies. The lack of estate records for Connacht for these years makes it difficult to reach any certain conclusions, but English proprietors in the province appear to have been less innovative than the Bagenals at Newry if for no other reason than that none of them developed an urban settlement. Neither did the manufacturing experiments in Connacht produce anything significant during the sixteenth century, and, as in Ulster, these appear to have always had a military dimension. Thus, as was noted, Captain Greene requested a ward and two galleys to support his nascent fishing base on the coast of Mayo. Similarly when Captain Woodhouse sought favours for two entrepreneurs, George Long and Ralph Pilling, to erect a glass-making enterprise in Connacht, which seemed appropriate there because of the province’s ‘superfluity of timber’, he envisaged employment for himself as a captain of twenty men serving day and night to defend the infant manufactory from the rebellious Burkes.  

The English presence in Connacht was principally facilitated by the provincial presidency which was primarily an exploitative military institution superimposed upon the very society it was seeking to destroy. Moreover it is clear that those associated with the presidency would have fallen apart into warring factions were it not for the forceful personalities and military prowess of Malby and Bingham. For all their forcefulness, they never won the respect of all their fellow officers, and, for all their rhetoric, neither they nor their critics were much concerned about any grander purpose provided they and their dependents benefited from the wreckage they were creating. Since most of the officers were actual or former captains, their most immediate dependents, after kin, would have been the men in their bands, because a captain counted for nothing in that tumultuous world unless he was in command of trained fighting men. The dependence of the captains on their men meant they were in no position to be strict disciplinarians, and on his first arrival in Ireland, Captain Christopher Carleill commented on the ‘rudeness and insolence’ of the soldiers there and the need for ‘some sharper punishment than belike is used by captains brought up only in the Irish service’.  

89 ‘Reasons for Captain Woodhouse’s Suit for a Privilege to Make Glass’, SP 63/127/74.  
90 W. Johnes to Walsingham, 13 Apr. 1585, SP 63/116/11.
comments derived from his experience in Ulster of the 1580s, but the thrust of the argument in this chapter is that what happened in Connacht in the 1580s and 1590s was a continuation of and an elaboration upon what had been happening in north-east Ulster during the previous decades.

Nor, as we have also indicated, was this behaviour of army captains significantly different from what had been happening in Munster, until an effort was made to halt the drift towards self-advancement in that province by the introduction of a state-supported plantation. Those who looked at the self-serving of captains and their followers from a distance believed them to be lapsing from a civil condition, and the earl of Ormond, who resented the charge of degeneration being constantly made by English officials and soldiers against his own ‘English by blood’, must have enjoyed the irony as he complained ‘that the marriages of some Englishmen with women, being the earl of Desmond’s followers, hath done no good to the service’. His complaint was justified by secret relief provided to Desmond and his followers by Edward Spring, vice-constable at Castlemaine, and by Gregory Martin, vice-constable of Askeaton, ‘and divers others’. The Irish wives of these officers were not usually identified but Captain William Apsley and, on the death of Apsley, Captain Thomas Spring had, in turn, married Anabelle, a daughter of one John Browne, ‘a man of good account’ in Munster who had been killed while fighting with Desmond.91

What transpired in Connacht was therefore predictable. Then, in the 1590s, efforts were afoot to extend this mode of government to the southern reaches of Ulster from the moment the government decided to shire that province as a preliminary to the introduction of a provincial presidency there also. In some instances those employed in Ulster were individuals who had been associated with the worst abuses in Connacht. Thus Humphrey Willis, who had served as a sheriff and captain in Connacht, was nominated sheriff for Counties Fermanagh and Donegal. After an interval, in early 1592, he and his band of 100 soldiers were forcefully expelled by Red Hugh O’Donnell who had himself just escaped from Dublin Castle. Another Captain Willis had been appointed sheriff of Monaghan in 1589 but his extortion so exasperated the ruling Mac Mahon family that he was killed, his soldiers were driven from the county, and the Mac Mahons resolved to have no further sheriff. In defence of this action, Sir Ross Mac Mahon stated that he had no option but to expel Willis because once it had been announced that Sir Ross would tolerate a sheriff in the county ‘all the most part’ of his tenants ‘went away to other counties’. When these experiments collapsed in Ulster because of the local resistance they provoked, consideration was given to the employment instead of adventurous Palesmen such as had been seen to succeed in

91 Ormond to Walsingham, 28 May 1583, SP 63/102/50; Wallop to Walsingham, 9 Aug. 1580, SP 63/75/30; petition of Thomas Spring to Privy Council, SP 63/102/119.
Connacht where English captains had failed. The name of John Talbot, ‘a gent of the county of Louth’, was duly proposed by Archbishop Loftus to be sheriff for County Monaghan, only to be dismissed by the governor Sir William Fitzwilliam on the grounds ‘that men of the Pale’ who were initially more acceptable than Englishmen as sheriffs always proved themselves unsatisfactory because they tended to ‘carry with them their several factions’ and put their ‘private commodity’ before any desire to ‘do good’. In the particular case of Talbot the governor did not ‘expect any other service in that place but that of a stepmother’.

These remarks show that the governor, for one, admitted shortcomings in the instruments of the policy that was being promoted by the government in Ulster and Connacht if not in the policy itself. Spenser and many of his contemporaries in Ireland shared these misgivings but they, like Fitzwilliam, still believed that military methods and military personnel were necessary to promote reform in the more remote parts of Ireland. One who defended the use of soldiers, possibly because he was a military man himself, was Captain Thomas Lee. He countered the frequent criticism of the Old English that the promotion of English authority into remote areas was more often associated with the spread of martial law than with English common law which the government had a responsibility to foster. This, he asserted, was unavoidable because ‘martial law is very necessary and (in my opinion) ought to be granted to all governors of remote and savage places, where your Majesty’s laws are not received, with all other authority and power severely and sharply to cut off or punish offenders, according to the quality of their offence, until such time as the people shall become civil and embrace the laws and peaceable living’. What seemed to be missing in Connacht and on the borders of Ulster was a will to move beyond containment to promote civility. The responsibility for directing that transition rested with the chief administrators in Ireland rather than the officers in the field.

2.4. Administrators

The senior members of the administration, from the governor down, never ceased to emphasize their commitment to the reform of Ireland, although they also frequently complained of the lack of resources to bring this to completion. Ciaran Brady has treated of the programmes for government that were worked out successively by Sussex and Sidney—his programmatic

92 Gardener to Burghley, 27 Feb. 1591/2, SP 69/163/36; Fitzwilliam to Privy Council, 31 Mar. 1589, SP 69/142/57; Sir Ross Mac Mahon to Lord Deputy, SP 69/142/57 i; Loftus to Burghley, 20 May 1591, SP 69/158/11; Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 5 Nov. 1591, SP 69/161/12; Morgan, Tyrone’s Rebellion, 55–81.

governors—in advance of their appointments, but grand ambition for Ireland did not cease with those two governors. Lord Grey de Wilton was dispatched to Ireland in 1580 specifically to deal with the rebellions that were then under way, but he believed he had the added responsibility to create the conditions whereby no further insurrections would occur. Thus while admitting the possibility ‘that things might be patched up and a face of peace and quietness made to prevail’ he insisted that ‘the mask of this quiet would soon be thrown off’ and he therefore sought authority for ‘a plot’ so bold that it would save the queen the annual charge of 2,000 men’s pay while effecting ‘a thorough reformation’ of the country.

Sir John Perrott, who held the position of governor 1584–8, was especially charged to undo the alienation of the queen’s subjects which, it was contended, had resulted from the forceful and sometimes rash actions of his predecessors. This was emphasized in his arrival speech of 21 June 1584 which must have been dictated by the queen, possibly after consultation with Ormond. In this, Perrott spoke of ‘Her Majesty’s care and love of this nation and how she held them in one reckoning with the natural born subjects of England’ and of her concern ‘to draw them out of extremity and bring them to that same felicity and quietness which her Majesty’s subjects in England do live in’. The means for achieving this was through the Irish parliament which was duly convened in 1585 and at which representatives of the recently shired counties in the outlying provinces attended. And Sir William Fitzwilliam, who succeeded Perrott in 1588, defined for himself the special mission to hold the line in Ireland in the event of a constantly expected Spanish invasion and to curb the advances that had been made there by the Counter-Reformation.

The occupiers of senior posts in the central administration remained as a kind of permanent civil service and experienced difficulty in reconciling the frequently contradictory positions adopted by the rapid succession of governors. However, they strove, if sometimes unconvincingly, to suppress their better judgement and to follow whatever was the official line of the moment, while at the same time they expressed their true feelings to their patrons on the English Privy Council. Such private critical comment to their English patrons was tantamount to undermining the authority of the serving governor because this criticism might subsequently be voiced by the patron at the Council board whenever the position of the governor was weak and his removal possible. All who held the post of governor were alert to these hazards, because all, with the exception of Grey, were themselves previous

95 Queen’s instructions to Lord Grey, July 1580, in Commentary, ed. Grey Egerton, 74–6; Grey to Queen, 26 Apr. 1581, SP 69/82/54.
96 Fenton to Walsingham, 10 July 1584, SP 69/111/16.
officeholders in Ireland and all owed their appointments to their connections with the patronage network in England.

These realities obtained not so much because senior figures at court were interested in Irish affairs, but rather because control of civil and military appointments in Ireland was increasingly important to those who wished to be powerful patrons. The consequence for the English presence in Ireland was that those who should have been making and enforcing policy were divided among themselves, and frequently engaged in mutual criticism sometimes designed to destroy a rival. Moreover while each senior administrator took pride in his association with a broad patronage network that encompassed the two kingdoms, each in turn attempted to create a clique of his own within the Irish administrative and military establishment. One might think that the development of such rivalries would have resulted in a total absence of policy and purpose, and it is therefore surprising to note the level of agreement that emerged, at least among those of the administrators who were English.

One principle to which, after 1579, all English commentators subscribed was that senior vacancies as they occurred should go to people born in England rather than to candidates from the Pale. Religious considerations were sometimes invoked in support of this stand, but a comprehensive justification had been compiled by Sir William Gerrard who had been appointed to the post of chancellor during Sidney’s second deputship. The continued employment of Palesmen, he then argued, was not advisable first because few of them held the requisite qualification, and second because, even when qualified, they were too closely linked in alliance and kinship within the Pale and could not be trusted to uphold crown interests whenever these came into conflict with those of the community. A second proposition on which all could agree was that the standard of civility against which all things in the Pale should be measured, and to which those in the remainder of the country should be brought, was that of low-lying areas of England and Wales. And to ensure that those standards would be met it was argued that all servants of the crown in Ireland should be adequately compensated (usually from the crown’s Irish estates) for a service that was represented as more taxing, less rewarding, and more dangerous to reputation (and even life itself) than service in England. The most effective master at self-effacement, possibly because he was the longest-serving governor in Ireland, was Sir William Fitzwilliam. Shortly after he had resumed the governorship for the third time in 1588, he complained that, in dealing with such Irish noblemen as the earl of Ormond, he was ‘but William Fitzwilliam without nobility, or other great title or honour or office at home’. Consequently, he stressed, when his term as governor came to an end he would gladly return to do his duty to his queen in England.

97 ‘Gerrard’s Notes’; Brady, Chief Governors, 155.
'without regard or remembrance of the place I now serve in'. Whenever Fitzwilliam or any other of the supposedly upstanding servants of the crown were forced to confront anomalies in their administration they attributed the fault as the circumstances dictated either to the untrustworthiness of the Palesmen, or to the corruption of army captains, or to the sharp practice of one, or more, of their enemies within the administration.

Administrators therefore represented themselves as a distinct people, and as the only ones in Ireland worthy of the description servitor. Experience showed however that they were neither as isolated, as high-minded, nor as united as they wished to have it thought. The first reality, which they did not always care to admit, was that they were closely interlinked with the captains of the army, and the faults which they cast upon the army therefore reflected also upon themselves. The close connection is explained in part by the fact that administrators and army captains ultimately owed their appointments to the same patronage connections, and the governor in Ireland was head of both army and administration. Moreover most governors of this period had been closely associated with the army before they took up duty as governor. Both Sir Henry Sidney and Sir William Fitzwilliam had served for a time as treasurer at war which, in effect, made them paymasters of the army with responsibility to monitor the accounting procedures of the captains. Lord Grey de Wilton was chosen to be a soldier-governor, and Sir John Perrott’s experience in Ireland, previous to his appointment as governor, was as president of Munster where he was particularly active in the suppression of the rising led by James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald. However, another inescapable reality was that administrators and soldiers were ultimately joint participants on the same mission and, notwithstanding faction and personality differences, they could quickly close ranks and even employ the same propagandists to defend their actions when these were challenged in England, at the instigation of the Palesmen. Thus Sir Richard Bingham, whose actions in Connacht were constantly complained of by some of his subordinates and by many who were subject to his rule, came to be represented as an exemplary governor by such propagandists for strong government as Edmund Spenser and Richard Beacon. Similarly, Vincent Carey has shown how John Derrick could subsume the most dubious actions of army captains, including the massacre at Mullaghmast in 1578, within his panegyric of the glorious endeavours of Sir Henry Sidney.99

Another development which brought captains and administrators closer together was that the most obvious extension to the administrative arm was the establishment of provincial councils in Munster and Connacht, which were essentially military institutions having regular resort to martial law. The

98 Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 10 Nov. 1588, SP 69/138/14.
99 Canny, Elizabethan Conquest, 102–5; Carey, ‘John Derrick’s Image of Ireland’. 
government in England accepted that administrators and military officers in Ireland served a common purpose and this was reflected in the fact that provincial governors, and also purely military officers such as Marshal Henry Bagenal, came to be appointed to the Dublin Council which had previously been composed of administrators and members of the Irish nobility. Nor were they doing any injustice to the administrators in this, because during the years of war several of their number came to fulfil much the same functions and to demand the same perquisites as those enjoyed by the army captains. This was best exemplified by Sir Henry Wallop who held the office of treasurer and treasurer at war, 1579–99, through the governorships of Lord Grey de Wilton, Perrott, and Fitzwilliam, and who served briefly as joint lord justice with Archbishop Loftus.

From the outset, Wallop enjoyed the command of a band of footmen, initially stationed at Athlone and later in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, where he developed a close working relationship with Captain Thomas Masterson, seneschal of that county. Wallop therefore enjoyed the various sources of income of a captain while, at the same time, he was entitled to the salary and perquisites of an administrator. It was logical therefore that he should have moved rapidly to defend his position in 1588 when the newly appointed governor Fitzwilliam, still in the full flush of reforming zeal, moved to establish the principle that no councillor should be in charge of a band. Because he was in practice a soldier-administrator, Wallop echoed the enthusiasm for action enunciated by Malby and Bingham. Both the Baltinglass revolt and the Desmond uprising, as well as subsequent disturbances in Connacht, he claimed, provided evidence of ‘the great affection they generally have for the Popish religion, which agreeth well with their humour, that having committed murder, incest, theft with all execrable offences, by hearing a Mass, confessing themselves to the priest, or obtaining the Pope’s pardon they persuade themselves they are forgiven’. Therefore, as he reiterated on several occasions, neither the imposition of cess nor ‘the oppressions of the garrisons could . . . (as they inform) be the principal cause of this rebellion for when James Fitzmaurice began these troubles in Munster there were no soldiers nor Presidents at all there, and in all Ireland besides not above 500 footmen and not 200 horsemen’. Even without the occurrence of revolt, Wallop, like the captains, bewailed the power and influence of Irish noblemen, and where Malby and Bingham had complained of the earls of Thomond and Clanricard, he pronounced that neither ‘my lords of Ormond or Kildare could or did ever like of any whatsoever that did depend on the state, they seek to have all men depend on themselves; so great is their faction that all Ireland, as well the remoter parts as the Pale, depend or are followers to the one or the other’.100

100 Wallop to Burghley, 25 Oct. 1588, SP 63/137/35; same to same, 10 June 1582, SP 63/93/17; see also same to Walsingham, 9 Sept. 1580, SP 63/76/21; same to same, 29 July 1582, SP 63/94/35.
While consistent with the captains’ thinking on the causes of revolt, Wallop was also of one mind with them on what the outcome should be. Time and again from the moment of the first revolt he had witnessed, he demanded that ‘the land of the traitors should be made bear the charges [of suppressing the revolt] wherein may be planted better subjects’. And when identifying who these better subjects should be Wallop always included himself. Therefore, in 1580, his wife requested that the house in which they then resided in the White Friars in the suburbs of Dublin, and for which they paid an annual rent of £24, should be declared confiscate to the crown and given to them on a long lease because it belonged to Mr Richard Stanyhurst who ‘is one of this conspiracy of Baltinglass’. The following year Wallop himself was fearful ‘that a right course to settle this broken state [would] not . . . be set’, but he nonetheless recommended that the O’Tooles, O’Byrnes, and Kavanaghs should be rooted out to make way for loyal subjects, and he expressed a particular regard for ‘this County of Wexford [which] was the first place our nation landed and inhabited in; to this day they speak only English and are best affected to our nation’. Again those most qualified to settle these remote areas were people like himself with previous experience in Ireland, and he also recommended for favour several who had been involved with the midlands plantation. Lest anyone should question his eligibility for crown leases he detailed how all previous treasurers since the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Henry VIII had enjoyed leases with their salary and he contended that Sir William Fitzwilliam had enjoyed an annual income of £3,000 from that source. But while recommending that the government ‘should bestow all her Majesty’s rewards upon the English and to plant many here where now there is not ten that can live without her Majesty’s pay’, he moved rapidly to challenge the grants being made by the governor, Lord Grey de Wilton, to his favourites. Here Wallop instanced how Mr John Dyve, one of these favourites, was stripping the lands of which he had been granted custody ‘of 4,000 fair young trees near to his house which will greatly hinder the sale thereof, woods being scant in all parts thereabouts’.101

While Wallop’s attention at this time was concentrated on Leinster he was fully abreast of what was happening further afield in Munster, and of the potential opportunities which lay there for people of ability and integrity like himself. Already in 1580 he was recommending ‘the platt drawn by Mr. Waterhouse and agreed by us all that were in Munster . . . to make Munster pay her Majesty’s charges’. What was involved in that ‘platt’ was never detailed, but it seems that Wallop, Waterhouse, and Sir William Pelham, who was then lord justice, had outlined some fantastic scheme whereby the various counties of Munster would be shared out as dependencies of the

101 Wallop to Walsingham, 3 Jan. 1580, SP 63/71/1; Lady Katharine Wallop to Walsingham, 4 Sept. 1580, SP 63/76/8; Wallop to Walsingham, 8 June 1581, SP 63/83/14; same to same, 1 Mar. 1582, SP 63/90/4; same to same, same date, SP 63/90/5; Wallop to Burghley, n.d., SP 63/94/76.
principal members of the Leicester faction at the English court. The emissary from Leicester and Walsingham was Fulke Greville (friend and biographer of Philip Sidney), who had been conveyed by boat by Pelham and Waterhouse along the full length of the Shannon estuary from the ocean mouth at Mount Brandon to Limerick city so that he could have a better view of the Desmond lands that were likely to be forfeit to the crown. It seems likely that Edmund Spenser, who was not to receive an official appointment in Ireland until some months later, accompanied his fellow poet on this reconnoitring expedition because only a first-hand view of this dramatic passage of water could explain the vividness with which he represented, in the *Faerie Queene*, the collision between the river Shannon in full flood and the rising ‘tide that comes from th’Ocean mayne’. Greville was obviously as impressed as his fellow poet by what he witnessed, since, after further discussion with Wallop, Pelham, and Waterhouse, he returned, ‘as a link in our chain’, to report ‘by word of mouth’ to Leicester and Walsingham of ‘a certain secret matter’. From hints in subsequent correspondence, it seems that the scheme had the support also of Sir Geoffrey Fenton, and this group envisaged Leicester receiving a grant of the entire estate of Viscount Barry, conveniently under arrest on a charge of treason. Then the entire county of Kerry—‘a large circuit, full of profit and pleasure’—would ‘be transferred to . . . Warwick, or else to Mr Philip Sidney, by the title of Baron of Kerry’. Whichever accepted would, they felt confident, ‘be acceptable neighbours’ to Leicester, and Fenton urged Leicester to ‘lose not that which the time’ offered him. There is nothing to indicate what was in the scheme for its proposers, nor is it clear whether it came to nothing because of lack of interest on the part of the principals, or because it failed to win favour with the queen. In any event, Wallop was still hopeful that profit would come to him from the events in Munster, and in 1581 he was advising against the granting of pardons to any who were in revolt. Then hinting that an easy victory was attainable, he remarked that in Ireland ‘wars is but like fox hunting, for our enemies fly from us to the woods and will at no time fight with us but upon great advantage’.102

There was little mention of the possibility of profit while the war was raging in Munster but by 1584 Wallop had assumed the position, with Sir Valentine Browne and others, as surveyor of the lands of the rebels in Munster. He was then impressed by the heavy mortality that had fallen on the province through war and famine, and he pointed to the consequent need ‘to repeople it again with a better race and kind of people than the former were’. Wallop again had clear ideas on who would be fitted ‘to draw thither of their friends and followers out of England to inhabit and manure the same’. Those most

102 *FQ*, book IV, canto iii, stanza 27, p. 447; Wallop to Walsingham, 9 Sept. 1580, SP 63/76/21; Greville to Walsingham, 14 July 1580, SP 63/74/32; Waterhouse to Walsingham, 14 July 1580, SP 63/74/90; Fenton to Leicester, 8 Sept. 1580, SP 63/76/19; Wallop to Walsingham, 17 July 1581, SP 63/84/23.
unsuited were, in Wallop’s opinion, those who were most greedy, and he considered Ralph Lane, who, as we saw previously, had petitioned for a grant of all of County Kerry, to be particularly unsuited to the task. However he had no doubts as to his own competence and he was especially anxious for a grant of Munster land because, while the province contained the mountainous land of Kerry that was useful only for pasture, he found ‘the soil in generality as good and as well accommodated with all commodities as any that I have seen either in England, France, the lower part of Germany or Flanders’. What he initially eyed for himself, Desmond’s castle of Any and Lough Gur in County Limerick, certainly met these standards, but what he eventually chose was a prime piece of property on the bank of the river Shannon. This included a lease of three abbeys and a friary at Adare which he exchanged for the castle of Athlone, and a grant of the custody of a castle and lands of the earl of Desmond in the vicinity of Foynes for which he requested a lease of twenty-one years from the crown. The lease was granted, but Wallop, despite being a senior official, failed, as did most of the serving captains in Munster, to procure a seignory in the formal plantation in Munster which he had done so much to advocate.

Surprisingly, Wallop has left us with no reaction to his exclusion from the plantation scheme, perhaps because he was preoccupied with his many other activities. Those for which he is remembered are his political engagements, but Wallop had as keen an eye for his own economic advancement as any captain in a remote province. His acute observations extended from details about the collection of cess in the Pale to the pattern of external and internal trade in Ireland, but he was particularly interested in the possibilities presented by the application to Ireland of the experiments of English ‘projec-tors’. He had a lively interest in the possibility of growing and processing woad in Ireland, and he detailed why the production of woad which would facilitate the development of a dyeing industry in Ireland should not be subject to the same criticism which had been raised in England. Production in Ireland, unlike that in England, would, he pointed out, have no adverse effect on crown revenue because dyestuffs exported from Ireland to England would be liable to customs duty, and neither would it impact negatively on existing employment because there was no established textile industry in Ireland other than the making ‘of frieze and blanketing’, and that not on a large scale anywhere except in Waterford and Kilkenny. It was unfortunate for Wallop that his interest in woad, which he appears to have shared with the absent Sir Henry Sidney, conflicted with a similar interest being pursued by Sir John

103 Names of commissioners for the Munster survey, 19 June 1584, SP 63/110/74; Wallop to Burghley, 17 Sept. 1584, SP 63/111/90; Wallop to Walsingham, 16 Oct. 1584, SP 63/112/10; same to same, 21 May 1585, SP 63/116/46; same to same, 11 Oct. 1585, SP 63/120/9; Wallop to Walsingham, 19 Aug. 1585, SP 63/118/73; Hampshire County Record Office, Wallop Trust Papers, Letters Patent to Wallop, 20 July 1585, 44 M69/F14.
Perrott, the new governor, together with Sir Francis Walsingham, the English secretary of state. In these circumstances Wallop had again to give way, although it is interesting that Perrott’s agents in this matter, John Williams, brother to his secretary Philip Williams, and Peter Desmaistres, a Fleming, were found wanting by Walsingham and replaced by a Mr King and a Mr Andrews. Perhaps it was this latter intervention which explains why no land in the vicinity of Youghal was ultimately designated for this purpose in the Munster plantation as had been intended by Perrott. 104

This further frustration meant that Wallop’s hopes for economic advancement were concentrated thereafter on County Wexford. From the outset he had been well disposed towards Thomas Masterson, the seneschal there, and in 1582 he was writing in support of Richard Sinnott, a native of the county, who, he believed, acted as a counterweight to the Ormond interest in the area. Then, in 1588, as was already noted, Wallop was defending his own command of fifty troopers at Enniscorthy against the retrenchment measures of Fitzwilliam, and he proceeded to emphasize how he, with Masterson, had eliminated the previous disordered condition of Wexford, thus making the case that savings would be better effected in Munster, ‘at this present . . . the quietest province in Ireland’, and at the expense of the vice-president and Sir Edward Denny, each of whom had been favoured with a seignory in the plantation. The death, in 1590, of Seneschal Masterson made it possible for Wallop to argue that savings might be effected in Wexford through the abolition of ‘this needless office’ of seneschal, and he now, with the aid of his band, took sole credit for having brought Wexford and its borders ‘to better civility, inhabitation, and plough-going than heretofore in the memory of man had been’. More significantly he had identified a potential source of manufacturing employment based on the raw materials of the area, and having begun the sawing of ship planks he already had sufficient for the construction of two or three ships. By that date, the foundations had been set for the Wallop family seat in County Wexford that was to flourish into the next century. 105

It will be evident from what has been said that the interests, attitudes, and achievements of this senior official were similar to those of any of the senior

104 Wallop to Burghley, 26 Sept. 1581, SP 63/85/61; same to same, 8 Jan. 1588/9, SP 63/140/9; same to same, 25 Dec. 1585, SP 69/121/46; Wallop to Walsingham, 19 Apr. 1585, SP 63/116/18; Perrott to Walsingham, 10 May 1585, SP 63/116/39; same to same, 19 Jan. 1586, SP 63/122/33; Thirsk, Economic Policy and Projects, 75–7.

105 Wallop to Walsingham, 29 July 1582, SP 63/94/55; for further details on the Sinnott family and their co-operation with English people see ‘The Life of Peter Carew’, in Calendar of Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, 1515–1624, 6 vols. (London, 1867–73), 1515–74, p. xcix; and for a lease by Wallop to Sinnott, 25 July 1587, see Hampshire County Record Office, Wallop (Portsmouth) Collection, 15 M84/Box 57; Wallop to Burghley, 8 Jan. 1588/9, SP 63/140/9; same to same, 15 Aug. 1590, SP 63/154/7; these same details can be viewed from a more purely legal perspective in the surviving archive relating to Wallop’s Irish estate, and the development of the Irish property in the 17th century and its ultimate sale can be studied in the same source; Hampshire County Record Office, Wallop Trust Papers, 44 M69/F14; Lieutenancy Papers, 44 M69/G5.
army officers in Ireland. The essential difference between them was that Wallop was involved at the policy-making end of government as a matter of course whereas captains had an opportunity to influence the shaping of policy only when they were called upon to give advice, or when they addressed unsolicited tracts to their patrons at court. Also, because he held a critical position in the administration, Wallop enjoyed altogether more liberty than a humble captain to criticize those in authority. He crossed swords with both Lord Grey and Sir William Fitzwilliam, and besides his conflict of interest with Perrott over woad, he was one of the group of hard-nosed English Protestants in the administration who frustrated Perrott at every step. Even then Wallop enjoyed an exceptional degree of independence because he had acted on two separate occasions as joint lord justice with Archbishop Loftus, and he suggested, in 1585, that he might himself have been governor if he had been willing to accept the position. In offering a detailed statement on why he would not persist in government, either jointly with Loftus or alone, Wallop presented what is possibly the most telling critique composed by any contemporary of the office of governor in sixteenth-century Ireland. The principal insufficiency of the post, as he saw it, was that even strong governors, with ‘great backing and friendship in court’, were liable to have their reputations ‘erased and disgraced within six or eight months by reason of the great credit [given at court to the] subtle and malicious . . . informations of this nation’. This proposition was as a preliminary to his engaging upon a vindictive onslaught against the Old English population, and he asserted that they were particularly truculent because of the growing influence of the Counter-Reformation in their midst, and because they realized that the government was in no position to curb their religious inclinations because of its military commitments in the Low Countries. Moreover he contended that, as governor, he would have been unable to place any trust in the ‘old councillors’ who were ‘all but dissemblers and [sought] nothing but to make their profit and serve their own turns’. This appears as no more than the typical bombastic onslaught of an English Protestant against the population of the Pale until one notes Wallop’s subtle mention that ‘even our English that are planted to live here differ little from those that are of this country [by] birth’. This attack by Wallop upon his fellow English administrators can be likened to Tremayne’s criticism of the tyranny of some seneschals ‘in which there is no great difference betwixt a seneschal and a [Gaelic] captain when they proceed by will and not by law’. Like that assertion it was designed to invite an investigation, and Wallop pointed his finger at where the investigation should begin when he alleged that Archbishop Loftus, his ‘colleague’ in government, had in former times ‘sought his own profit and the pleasing of his friends which are many’ because of his need to provide for a large number of children.106

This assault by Wallop upon a close colleague makes it clear that the English Protestant administrators were not, as they liked to have themselves considered, a coherent group bent single-mindedly on reform. Instead they, like the army captains, were riven by dissent and their divisions can be associated with factions at the English court. Therefore the particular transgression of Loftus that made him unacceptable to Wallop was that ‘a great league’ existed between Loftus and Ormond, which Wallop considered ‘dangerous’ for himself.\(^{107}\) What he meant by this is that Loftus was linked not only to Wallop’s most formidable Irish opponent, but through him to the English court faction of Lord Burghley, while Wallop, as was noted, looked to Sir Francis Walsingham and Leicester for support.

Divisions and mutual criticisms which came to the attention of people at the highest level of government in England were certain to bring about investigation, not least because the queen and her principal advisers were increasingly concerned over the escalating cost of governing Ireland. Earlier investigations had found evidence of fraud in the payment of the army, and the administration had been faulted only for the undervaluation of land that was being leased from the crown, and a tardiness in the collection of crown rents. Faults of this nature were usually attributed to staff shortages or to the necessary tension between the interests of the crown and those of the local community. Thus English-born officials usually emerged from such investigations with their reputations unscathed, and they attributed financial shortfalls to the unprincipled behaviour of Palesmen and those few English who had been corrupted by them.\(^{108}\)

The investigations commissioned in the 1580s, and especially those associated with Robert Legge, who was a designated investigating officer in the Court of Exchequer, told a different story. Legge, like all previous inspectors, did find evidence of corruption within the community of the Pale, on the part of both landowners and those who held office. He had a particular complaint against the claims of corporations that confiscated lands within their jurisdictions should fall to them rather than to the crown, and he found evidence of Baron Devlin having laid claim to the lands of the Abbey of Fowre through the use of a forged document. More generally, he found the people in Ireland ‘of a mighty proud and haughty mind [who did] grudge to be governed by their inferiors, but by Dukes, Marquesses, or Earls as in time past they have been’. This respect for hierarchy explained for Legge why the Irish-born administrators were so timorous, and he told of the clerk of the first fruits who excused his incompetence on the grounds that ‘he [was] this country man and therefore dare not do his office’. Again, like all previous observers, Legge found that many holding office lacked experience and an adequate knowledge of the law, and he seemed to endorse the previous

\(^{107}\) ‘Reasons why Wallop would not . . .’, 8 Apr. 1585, SP 63/116/8 i.

\(^{108}\) See for example Loftus to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1582, SP 63/88/27.
general solution of appointing Englishmen to senior positions when he praised Mr Justice Gardener for his learning and independence, and he endorsed Gardener’s view that the only way to ‘a flourishing commonwealth’ was to have pardons, protections, and the employment of martial law discontinued in favour of the untrammelled use of the common law.

However, while praising Gardener and acknowledging the support he received in his investigations from Lord Deputy Perrott and Sir Henry Wallop, Legge implied that these were exceptional among Englishmen. Most who held office, whether born in England or Ireland, claimed Legge, owed their appointments to the governor of the day, and many, he contended, sold their position to the highest bidder once their patron was recalled. Therefore incompetence was not confined to the Irish born, and Legge pointed to a new form of corruption that appeared peculiar to English servants of the crown. This was the abuse, of which Wallop had previously accused Lord Grey, of granting confiscated lands in custody to favourites rather than assigning them under lease from the crown. This new procedure, he asserted, produced no rent at all to the crown and provided the holder of the custodiam with the opportunity to exploit the property to his best short-term advantage. Legge found similar widespread abuse in the disposal of church property, and concluded that the prevailing ethic in the administration was ‘that an officer should not be too careful for her Majesty’s affairs, for it is Her Highness’ pleasure every man should get under her, and I have been wished not to be so earnest’. Legge contended that the pressure upon him to conform to the prevailing ethic soon developed into bribery and intimidation, and he complained both of ‘the ill will’ he had incurred for but doing his duty and ‘the threatening words . . . both from the Archbishop of Dublin and others, [and] the time weighed how [he] would be used if the Lord Deputy . . . should be called hence’.

At this point Legge had become embroiled in the bitter dispute between Lord Deputy Perrott and Archbishop Loftus that paralysed the administration in Ireland until Perrott was eventually recalled in 1588. Worse still for the credibility of Legge’s case, the charges he levelled against both Lofts and Thomas Jones (bishop of Meath and brother-in-law to Loftus) were taken up by Barnaby Riche, an army pensioner and Protestant pamphleteer who was the bane of everybody holding any position in authority in Ireland from the 1570s to the 1610s. The particular obsession of Riche was the increasing influence of the Counter-Reformation within the community of the Pale, and he attributed this advance partly to the negligence of Loftus and Jones, both in their laxity in imposing the penalty of the law upon recusants, and in their poor choice of parish clergy to preach the truth of the gospel. Each bishop was negligent, asserted Riche (returning to a theme already highlighted by Wallop), because each had been compromised by efforts to negotiate marriages for their many children within the narrow community of the Pale
‘for whom they provide matches at four or five years old’. Such onslaughts proved embarrassing to the bishops, who already did not enjoy the confidence of Perrott as governor, and both Loftus and Jones saw the need to write to Walsingham to defend Jones against the charges of worldliness that had been brought against him. Later, however, when Perrott had been recalled, the bishops had their chance to discredit their enemies, and Loftus complained of ‘the secret observers’ who had ‘secretly collected and booked some accusations’ relating to both his own ‘doings’ and those of other clerics. This ‘slanderous back biting’ of bishops, asserted Loftus, stemmed ultimately from the ‘malicious disposition of some Papists and Atheists’ who had found a ready instrument ‘to sow the seeds of sedition in his Godless course’ in Barnaby Riche, ‘a man of himself very needy, by nature immodest, and subject to many and very gross infirmities’. While the personal attack was reserved for Riche, Loftus also identified Legge among the conspirators against him, but it was left to the new governor Fitzwilliam to dispose of this man whose investigations had proved so embarrassing for the administration, and on the same grounds on which Loftus had disposed of Riche. The opportunity came in 1592 when the position of chief baron of the exchequer fell vacant. One obvious candidate for the post was Legge who, according to Fitzwilliam, possessed the requisite skill and had proven himself a ‘good servant’, but then, warned Fitzwilliam, Legge was ‘a needy and poor man, and one that liveth to spend all his own and more, this country is a shrewd allurement to cause such a one to step aside’.109

While Loftus was able to weather the storm of criticism raised against himself and Jones, the investigations conducted by Legge do reveal the extent to which the English-born administrators had followed the same path of corruption previously pursued by the Palesmen. This is not to deny that there were, in Ireland, uncorrupted and apparently incorruptible administrators such as Justice Gardener or Sir Robert Weston, who had served briefly as chancellor during the 1570s, but the surviving correspondence reveals that most established administrators continued to demand and expect liberal perquisites and grants of land, in addition to salary, as a mark of favour from the crown. Thus, in 1592, Sir Geoffrey Fenton (who incidentally had married a daughter of Robert Weston) not only asked that a letter should be addressed from the Privy Council to the governor as proof of his good standing with them, but requested also the restoration of the custodiam of the parsonage of Dunboyne of which he had been deprived, plus a ‘grant in fee farm or in reversion of so much lands either in possession or in reversion as it shall

109 Legge to Burghley, 27 Jan. 1587, SP 63/128/10; Report of Legge, 21 Sept. 1587, SP 63/131/28 i; Legge to Burghley, 21 Sept. 1587, SP 63/131/28; books by Legge on the reform of the administration, SP 63/130/52 i; 52 ii; memoranda on reform, SP 63/152/2; ‘Relation by Barnaby Riche’, [15 July 1592], SP 63/156/27; B. Riche, Allarme to England (London, 1578); Jones to Walsingham, 8 Dec. 1589, SP 63/149/28; Loftus to Walsingham, 8 Dec. 1589, SP 63/149/29; Loftus to Burghley, 27 June 1592, SP 63/165/21; Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 5 May 1592, Cal. State Papers Ireland, 1588–92, 384.
please her Majesty to set down for me to be taken where I can find them in
Ireland’. What was concealed behind this technical language was a request
that he be included in the unscrupulous scramble for land held by defective
title which was visited upon the country during the 1590s.\textsuperscript{110} This undigni-
fied campaign for self-enrichment is usually associated with impecunious and
minor officials operating in Connacht, but the desire of Fenton and other
senior administrators to become involved indicates that all members of the
administration, regardless of rank, strove anxiously for any windfall profits
that might be directed their way whether by fair means or foul. It seems
reasonable to conclude that, in the matter of corruption, there was no differ-
ence between administrators and army captains, and the two in fact
frequently colluded in defrauding both crown and community for their own
enrichment.

It also comes as a surprise to discover that many of the senior English admin-
istrators like many in the military establishment continued to work closely with
members of the Pale community. According to their public version of them-
$\textsuperscript{-selves$, the English administrators wanted rid of their Irish-born colleagues,
and eschewed any close relationships with people who refused to conform in
religion. Yet this was contradicted in practice, and at different social levels.
Among the charges aimed by Legge against the chancellor archbishop was
that he appointed poorly qualified vicars, frequently natives of Ireland, to
church livings in his diocese and paid them derisory sums while he himself
enjoyed the residue. This, it was said, not only provided him with a handsome
illicit gain but enhanced his popularity with his recusant neighbours who were
not anxious to have vigorous Protestant clergy in their midst. Thus Legge
charged Loftus with appointing as vicar to the parsonage of Castleknock,
worth £20 a year, ‘a poor simple fellow that teacheth his children of the vir-
ginals’, to whom he assigned a salary of one mark which was only infrequently
paid. Likewise, when Riche complained of having been physically assaulted
by agents of the archbishop he identified as his attacker ‘one Piers Walsh a
Papist recusant and yet the Lord Chancellor’s man’.\textsuperscript{111}

Again, at the upper social level, the actual relationship between English
Protestant administrators and their Catholic counterparts was at odds with
their rhetoric. There were, with the passage of time, clear policy differences
between English Protestant officials and officials from the Pale, with the latter,
whose views were best articulated by Sir Nicholas White, the master of the
rolls, being opposed to war as the solution to Ireland’s problems. This
provided the English administrators with yet another reason why they should
always expect vacancies to be filled from England, and they did consistently
ask that Englishmen be named whenever an appointment was in process. In

\textsuperscript{110} Ranger, ‘Richard Boyle’.

\textsuperscript{111} Book by Legge, SP 63/150/52 ii; ‘Relation of Barnaby Riche’, SP 63/166/27.
doing so, however, they frequently identified the Palesman who might make a suitable appointee and sometimes even implied that this was the person they really preferred. Thus, for example, when the post of chief justice fell vacant in 1584 Sir Geoffrey Fenton went through the formula of advising the appointment from England of ‘some learned and sincere man, such as being rich by the gain of the law would now be persuaded to serve for credit and hope of further advancement’. Then, hinting that such a paragon could not be found, he recommended Mr Butler, second justice of the bench, who was ‘for learning, gravity and uprightness the best qualified of any that I know of this nation, and in truth the most frank and liberal man to speak’. Ultimately the test was one of faction rather than religion or place of birth, and people like Fenton always preferred somebody on whose support they could rely, particularly in doubtful dealings, even if this person proved to be an Old English Catholic. And the same practical consideration worked in the opposite direction. Nicholas White, although the self-appointed spokesman for the interests of the Pale, was also a client of the earl of Ormond and through him of Lord Burghley. Therefore, when it came to divisions on the Council board in Dublin, White was more likely to side with those, like Loftus, who had the same patrons as himself, than with his fellow countrymen on Council. Indeed he said of Sir Lucas Dillon, the single most influential Palesman on Council through this entire period, that ‘he and I have been of long time of contrary minds, as well for choice of friends, as many other ways’.112

Thus while the increasingly strict enforcement of the Supremacy Act, and the steady progress of Counter-Reformation Catholicism within the community of the Pale, did conspire to grant English people a virtual monopoly of positions in the Dublin administration by the end of the century, this did not seem either inevitable or desirable to most English people who held high office in Ireland down to the early 1590s. For most of these, as for the captains serving on the borders of the Pale or in the provinces, profit always came before principle, and they identified boundless opportunities for profit in the Ireland of Edmund Spenser. Their position was perhaps best stated by Geoffrey Fenton who, when soliciting support from his patron Sir Francis Walsingham for the Irish service, assured him that ‘if the customs of the people were somewhat reformed and the soil of the land reduced to his natural fruitfulness, Her Majesty need not seek for other Cathay or Terra Florida than this’.113

112 White to Burghley, 2 Feb. 1581, SP 63/30/48; same to same, 4 Nov. 1582, SP 63/97/7; Fenton to Walsingham, 28 Apr. 1584, SP 63/109/64; White to Burghley, 14 Sept. 1582, SP 63/95/43.
113 Fenton to Walsingham, 29 July 1580, SP 63/74/78.
It will be evident from the foregoing that, when considered from the perspective of the crown, the insight of Sir Geoffrey Fenton, which held out the prospect of Ireland continuing to provide opportunity for the restless and venturesome in England, was a most unattractive prospect. Already the queen and her advisers were perplexed at the continuing drain upon crown resources that resulted from the policies being pursued in Ireland, and anybody who chose to consider what was happening there would have recognized that the country was further from being ‘somewhat reformed’ than it had been thirty years previously. Moreover, anybody who scrutinized England’s involvement with Ireland would have recognized that many of the English appointed there were drifting from a civil condition more rapidly than the Irish were being reformed. This reality was disguised somewhat by the rhetoric emanating not only from the officials in Church and state but also from the more articulate of the captains, all of whom argued consistently that their endeavours were on the brink of making Ireland a reformed commonwealth where English common law and the Protestant religion would suddenly be embraced by the population.

That this was not in prospect, and that the altered condition of the country was worse than the first, would not have come as a surprise to those who, thirty years previously, had analysed the problems confronting England in Ireland. Sussex, as was noted, had favoured a policy of containment aimed at upholding English civility among those people in the country traditionally loyal to the crown while attempting to manage and overawe those who threatened that civil area from without. Sidney, who followed him, did give serious consideration to a forceful policy aimed at extending crown authority and English civility everywhere in Ireland but he was of the opinion that this would be achieved only in the aftermath of a military conquest linked with a series of plantations. The pursuit of such a policy immediately raised problems, the two principal being the cost that would be involved, and the scruples of the queen over becoming a conquering monarch. Sidney, for a time, believed the solution to the first problem lay in raising funds from private individuals who would be granted crown title to the lands they conquered with responsibility to plant them. Experience was to show that these private ventures raised more problems than they resolved, but it became equally clear that the queen could never reconcile herself to being a conqueror. Thus, at the point when she appointed Lord Grey, who was the most likely instrument to effect the military overthrow of her enemies, she specifically advised him that:114

114 Queen’s instructions to Lord Grey, July 1580, in Commentary, ed. Grey Egerton, 74–6; I have refrained from modernizing the spelling of the queen’s ‘interessed’ but she probably meant ‘interested’.
whereas our subjects of that country birth have (as we are informed) conceived that we have a determination as it were to root them out, with an intention to place there our subjects born in this realm, we would have you seek, by all means you can, to remove that false impression wrought in them by certain seditious and ill-disposed persons, that would be glad to work a divorce between us and our subjects there; whereas in truth, we being interested alike in our subjects of both those realms, do carry like affection to them both, unless through their unnatural and undutiful dealing, and by having intelligence with foreign princes, as lately certain of them have had, they shall give us just cause to the contrary.

This outburst may have come as a surprise to the prospective forceful governor but Sidney, unlike Grey, had long been aware of the scruples of the queen in her dealings with her Irish subjects. Thus, during his second term in office, and with a view to salvaging his reputation and meeting his obligation to advance crown authority in Ireland, he had engaged upon a scheme, to which neither he nor his son was ever committed, of extending the English military arm into all parts of the country with a view to maintaining a holding operation which would meet its costs through the raising of a composition rent which would be imposed on all landowners throughout the country. As Sidney launched upon this programme, which was soon to produce the results we have witnessed, he voiced his own misgivings and he remained convinced that the policy of conquest and plantation was still the best one, although he had learned from the private enterprises he had encouraged that it was ‘no subject’s enterprise; a prince’s purse and power must do it’.115

This preference of Sidney was shared by his son and by the many officials and captains of the Leicester faction who owed their appointments in Ireland to Sidney, and who continued to lobby, as late as 1583, for his return as governor.116 But while they might have agreed in principle with Sidney’s assessment they took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves for their own enrichment. Their determination to do so became all the greater when, for the most part, they found themselves excluded from the one major plantation scheme that was proceeded with in those years; that on the confiscated lands of the earl of Desmond and his adherents. The benefits of that scheme, as we shall see in the next chapter, went principally to court favourites who had the necessary standing and resources in England to make them effective planters, and the few serving officials and captains who received grants of land were those like Captain Edward Denny and Edmund Spenser who both served in Munster and had been special favourites with the advanced Protestant faction at the English court. Several of those English proprietors who did benefit from the plantation in Munster (Chapter 3) invested heavily in the scheme and those, like Spenser, who came from

115 Canny, Elizabethan Conquest, 90–1, 157.
116 See Malling to Walsingham, 25 May 1582, SP 63/92/65; Piers to Walsingham, 11 Apr. 1583, SP 63/101/20.
but modest circumstances enjoyed a dramatic social and economic improvement in their position. They were all aware, however, that what was happening in Munster was exceptional, and that the remainder of the country, and even parts of Munster, were being left to the freebooting exploits of mercenary captains and officials that seemed more likely to provoke insurrection than bring the people to an acceptance of reform measures. Furthermore, as was frequently stated, there seemed plentiful evidence that the officials, captains, and soldiers who were the supposed instruments of reform were being seduced by the tyranny and licence that became available to them once they adapted to Irish practices and conditions. Therefore as those who had become planters became ever more fearful that what they had gained was being jeopardized by the imminence of renewed conflict, it was logical that their spokesmen, notably Edmund Spenser, Richard Beacon, and Sir William Herbert, who articulated the fears of this group should give prominence in their writings to the dangers and prevalence of degeneracy. The fear of degeneracy in a moral sense was, as was noted in Chapter 1, deeply ingrained in the imagination of everybody who contemplated the consequence of the fall of humanity from divine grace, and the practical process of degeneration had frequently been advanced to explain the loss of potency suffered over time by the descendants of the Anglo-Normans who had conquered Ireland with such facility in the twelfth century. Now, as a renewed effort to recover England’s interest in Ireland was under way, those who took the moral justifications for that effort seriously could not avoid the conclusion that what they were witnessing was a degeneration of their fellow countrymen serving in Ireland which was more rapid than anything that had befallen the descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman conquerors of Ireland. While fearful that their own civil plantation community was about to suffer a similar collapse, these authors were not quite driven to despair because they still believed there was a possibility that the government could be persuaded to undertake a rapid and thorough conquest that would clear the way for a comprehensive plantation of all parts of the country. Action in itself came to be regarded as therapeutic and this explains why the notorious Richard Bingham, whose career in Connacht we have witnessed, as well as Lord Grey, emerged as an exemplary hero in the writings of all these authors. The apparent concern with degeneration, which features so prominently in the writings of Spenser and his English contemporaries in Munster, can therefore only be comprehended when these texts are considered within the context of the English presence in Spenser’s Ireland. At the same time the glowing optimism that something positive could be retrieved from an apparently chaotic situation can be understood only when account is taken of the efforts that were made in the 1580s to erect a new society in Munster through the process of plantation which, to the minds of its admirers, provided a practical example of the good that purposeful violence could produce.
It will be obvious from the previous chapter that no English policy-makers who looked dispassionately at the English presence in Ireland during the later decades of the sixteenth century could have been confident that the crown’s interests would remain secure into the future. Most of the queen’s advisers would have accepted that the best course to follow was to advance the authority of the crown forcefully in those parts of the country where it was being challenged, and, through a process of colonization, aim at establishing model English settlements to take the place of those Irish lords, and their subordinates, who had resisted the authority of the queen or who had consorted with her enemies. This, after all, had been the preferred course of most governors in Ireland since Sir Henry Sidney had first held that position, and this was also the scheme of government which enjoyed the authority of precedent that derived from what was thought to be true of the achievements both of the ancient Romans in Britain and of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland.

The argument from precedent had been articulated most authoritatively by Secretary Sir Thomas Smith, himself a civil lawyer and the author of the political text *De republica Anglorum*, when he undertook a private plantation in Ulster during the 1570s. Those who became adventurers in this scheme were given the title of ‘colonel’, not only because of their military functions but because they had responsibility to lead forth ‘colonias to people the country with civil men brought up in the laws of England’. The precedent that Smith had in mind was therefore primarily Roman and he envisaged his colonels exercising the same self-discipline as he believed the Romans had done when they had spread their rule into barbaric regions. No colonel ‘nor any of his soldiers [was] to marry with the wild Irish’, and none of the captains, serving under any colonel, should ‘banquet and feast for five years’. Instead, each captain should ‘dine with the company’ under his command leaving visiting ‘strangers’ to ‘dine with the colonel only’. It was further decreed by Sir Thomas Smith that the construction of his central capital, *Elizabetha*, was to be the first undertaking of his hierarchical settlement, because the colonial endeavours of ‘Rome, Carthage, Venice’ had shown that without such a
centre of authority the settlers would become ‘like wild beasts that play at base with others’. Thus *Elizabetha* was to be as ‘Byrsa was to Dido and Mons Aventinus to Romalus’. The reference to the medieval Venetian Empire indicates that classical precedents were not the only ones with meaning for Smith, and he also referred frequently to England’s medieval legacy, and particularly to its involvement with Ireland. Thus I.B. (possibly Jerome Brett), whose initials appeared on the pamphlet commissioned by Smith as an advertisement for his plantation, placed Smith in the role of the Cambro-Norman adventurer Strongbow, who during the 1170s had spearheaded the conquest of Ireland ‘at his own charge’. I.B. was free to draw this analogy because Smith believed that the low priority given to Ireland in more recent centuries had been ‘a great negligence and a foul error of all the princes . . . since King Richard the Second’s time’, and he could thus take pride in being a new Strongbow.¹

None of the officials associated with Ireland during the 1580s went to the same lengths as Smith to establish a pedigree for their opinions but we can see that they took the precedents for granted, and cited them (usually from some received or invented version of the history of ancient Rome) whenever their arguments or actions seemed questionable. Such citation occurred unsurprisingly in formal treatises, such as Edmund Spenser’s *View*, William Herbert’s *Croftus*, and Richard Beacon’s *Solon his Follie*, but they also cropped up in casual correspondence.² Beacon’s letters were pedantically layered with Ciceronian quotations which testified to his knowledge of classical literature, while they provided classical authority for his actions and opinions. For example, when warning his fellow planters against placing trust in the Irish merely because they appeared compliant, he alluded to the caution offered by Cicero to his brother Quintus in his dealings with the Greeks whom Cicero had portrayed as a people ‘diuturna servitute ad nimiam assentationem

¹ On the involvement of Sir Thomas Smith with Ireland see D. B. Quinn, ‘Sir Thomas Smith (1513–77) and the Beginnings of English Colonial Theory’, *American Philosophical Society Proceedings*, 89 (1945), 543–60; Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland* (Hassocks, 1976); 85–8; Hiram Morgan, ‘The Colonial Adventure of Sir Thomas Smith in Ulster’, *Historical Journal*, 28 (1985), 261–78; the particular citations are Smith to Fitzwilliam, 8 Nov. 1572 (London, PROSP 69/38/30); indenture with Francis Brunying, 16 Dec. 1573 (Chelmsford, Essex County Record Office, MS D/Dsh. 01/4); ‘Officers Necessary in the Colony of the Ards’, 20 Dec. 1573 (Chelmsford, ECRO, MS D/Dsh. 01/7); letter of Smith from Paris, 1572 (SP 70/146/110); Thomas Smith to his son, 10 Apr. 1572 (SP 70/146/78); *A Letter Sent by I.B. gentleman* (London, 1571), sig. B3; Smith to Fitzwilliam, 8 Nov. 1572 (SP 69/38/30); *A Letter Sent by I.B.*, sig. A5; Byrsa was the original citadel founded by Dido, queen of Carthage, and Mons Aventinus was one of the three original hills on which Romulus built Rome. The first hill on which Rome was founded was the Palatine but reference to this would not have served Smith’s purpose since it would have suggested Irish palatinate jurisdictions which Smith, like other English observers, reviled. I am grateful to John Madden, a colleague in the Classics Department, for advice on this matter.

eruditii’ (trained by a long course of servitude to show an excess of syco-
phancy). More generally, Beacon recommended that the queen should adopt
towards the Irish an ‘ancient policy used heretofore by the Romans upon
any suspicion of foreign invasion, to place strong garrisons in every of their
fortresses, to disarm them, and to take sufficient pledges of the great and
suspected men’. Then, whenever classical precedent did not appear suffi-
ciently persuasive, the various authors could draw upon the even higher
authority of Scriptures. William Herbert did cite Cicero to support his argu-
ment that traditional Irish modes of dress should be forbidden, but a more
authoritative justification for sartorial regulation was because the ‘Israelites
[had been] forbidden to wear clothes of Canaanites’. Similarly, Jesse or Jossua
Smythes, chief justice of the provincial council in Munster, claimed super-
iority for the English common law over civil law because it was ‘first made
out of the law moral and judicial of God, given by Moses to the Jews’ whereas
civil law was ‘rather invented by men or by the instruct of false gods’.3

While citing authority from precedent and Scripture for the course and
principles they favoured, the officials of the 1580s were far from agreed on how
principle would be put into practice. Experience of the immediate past sug-
gested that any colonial ventures in Ireland would prove expensive in terms
of both money and human resources, and such undertakings had therefore to
be weighed against England’s domestic and foreign policy commitments.
Then, apart also from considerations of cost, officials had to take account of
the natural reluctance of the queen to engage on undertakings which implied
a failure on her part to retain the allegiance of her subjects. Therefore those
with experience in the government of Ireland knew that the alternative to
‘reducing of this country into civility’ was ‘to govern by lenity and qualify the
Irish by policy’ as had been demonstrated in ‘Sir Henry Sidney’s platt’. That
to which reference was being made was the policy adopted by Sidney, during
his second period as lord deputy, in place of his preferred programme of
colonization which he had been forced to abandon because it had proven both
expensive and divisive. Those who referred to this ‘platt’ knew that it was
favoured by the queen both because it promised to be economical, and because
she knew it to be so popular with ‘the Irishry, with the English Pale, yea [with]
the very children of the street’ that they all cried ‘out for Sir Harry Sidney’s
return’.4 Sidney’s improvised, and seemingly moderate, proposals also won

3 Beacon to Walsingham, 24 Feb. 1588/9 (SP 63/141/40); Herbert to Burghley, 25 May 1589 (SP 63/144/57); Smythes to Herbert (SP 63/139/17 i); Beacon cited a letter to Quintus as the source of his Latin quotation and I am grateful to John Madden for identifying it as the first letter of book 1 of Cicero, Epistulae ad Quintam Fratrem, in Cicero: The Letters to his Friends, ed. W. Glynn Williams, vol. iii (Loeb edn., London, 1960), 404–5; for a broader context for Smythe’s extolling the super-
iority of English common law over civil law see reference to contemporary debates in England in Alan Cromartie, Sir Matthew Hale, 1609–76: Law, Religion, and Natural Philosophy (Cambridge, 1995).
4 Auditor Thomas Jenyson to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1582 (SP 69/88/29); the ‘platt’ to which Jenyson
referred is detailed in Ciaran Brady, The Chief Governors (Cambridge, 1994) although (as I have detailed
support among the more cautious of the queen’s counsellors, and Sir Thomas Cecil, who had been sent on a fact-finding tour to Ireland by his father Lord Burghley, advised, in 1580, that ‘to avoid the stirring up of rebellion in Ireland’ the queen should seek:

to recover the minds of all the nobility of late greatly grieved by very hard dealings, and to permit them to continue their ancient greatness, strength, honour and surety; to take away the fear of conquest of late deeply grafted in the hearts of the wild Irish, and to wink at private disorders which do not properly offend the crown and have by custom long been used in that realm.

Even more potent than any argument in fixing the queen in her preference was the evidence that none of the recent efforts at colonization in Ireland had produced the dramatic results promised by their promoters.5

These diametrically opposed views over the propriety of employing colonization as an instrument of government policy for Ireland, and also over what precisely was meant by colonization, came into sharp relief while the crown forces were still engaged upon the suppression of the Desmond and Baltinglass revolts 1579–83. The issues continued to be debated when government authority was restored, and throughout the years 1585–96 even as the government was engaged upon establishing a plantation on the confiscated lands of the earl of Desmond and his adherents. The queen, so outraged at Desmond’s revolt and his invocation of the Papal Bull Regnans in Excelsis to justify it, was inclined to have the earl and his associates executed and their property confiscated. It was to advance this possibility that Lord Grey was appointed governor, and, even as the conflict was raging, the English captains and officials who supported him were formulating plans for the colonization scheme which, they believed, would inevitably follow military victory. Sir Francis Walsingham encouraged the composition of such ‘plats’, and Edward Waterhouse made it clear to Walsingham, in 1580, that there were three possible means by which, ‘in reason’, the province could be rendered profitable to the queen in the aftermath of victory. The three options, in his preferred order, were:

whether it should be totally inhabited with natural English men, or with a mixture of mere English and those of the English race born in the Pale, or whether part of

in Nicholas Canny, ‘Review Article: Revising the Revisionist’, Irish Historical Studies, 30 (1996), 242–54

the natural inhabitants, now rebels, might not either upon fines or rents reserved or both, be [allowed to] repossess their own.⁶

As these three possibilities were being contemplated, those English who operated in Munster in a military or civil capacity were already detailing schemes which would meet the first of them. Thus Sir William Pelham, a commander in Munster who was to serve briefly as lord justice, offered his support ‘to the petitions of the captains’, which held the promise that when the lands of Counties Limerick and Kerry were ‘well employed’ they would bear the entire charge of the queen’s garrison in Ireland. Pelham, seemingly in the company of Waterhouse and other captains and officials, had, like Fulke Greville, already viewed the river Shannon ‘from source to the sea’ and they envisaged an English settlement along the banks of the river that would guarantee the future security of the three provinces of Munster, Connacht, and Ulster. The focus of the settlement was obviously to be on the manors that Desmond had held on the south bank of the Shannon, which, in Pelham’s opinion, would produce more wealth than any other region ‘if the land were blessed with good people’. His associate, Captain Edward Fenton, spoke even more extravagantly of a ‘fruitful and pleasant country such as the sun cannot shine on better’ which, if the rebels were once expelled from it and if it were ‘rightly governed . . . would maintain thousands of loyal and dutiful subjects and, in short time, increase greatly her Majesty’s revenue’.⁷

This, and the even more ambitious plantation project involving Leicester and Sir Philip Sidney discussed in Chapter 2, exemplifies the advantage that the participants in the war in Munster believed would accrue to themselves once victory was achieved, and they assumed the appellation ‘servitor’ to validate their claims.⁸ However, as the conflict persisted and as costs escalated, the queen leaned again towards conciliation. Now Grey was recalled from his task, while the queen entrusted the government of the country to Sir William Pelham as lord justice, and the conduct of the military campaign in Munster to the earl of Ormond, as lord general. This was regarded as a volte-face by most English officials and officers in Ireland because they believed it would result in the pardon of Desmond and his associates. Therefore, John Norris, the president of Munster, was still reminding Burghley, in 1584, that the queen had promised him and the other captains who had come to Ireland from Flanders that they would have a portion of the escheated land as a reward for their service, and he pointed specifically to castles, with their

⁶ Ed. Waterhouse to Walsingham, 20 April 1580 (SP 69/72/85).
⁷ Pelham to Walsingham, 5 Apr. 1580 (SP 63/72/33); Waterhouse to same, 5 Apr. 1580 (SP 63/72/35); Waterhouse to same, 20 Apr. 1580 (SP 63/72/55); Edward Fenton to Walsingham, 11 July 1580 (SP 63/74/21).
⁸ See above, pp. 108–9; ‘Petition of a Servitor who has Served as Captain . . . throughout the Entire War’ (SP 69/108/23).
associated demesnes, that should be put into the hands of the presidency. Servitors also resented the lack of resolve to punish the rebels because they believed that Ormond was principally responsible for counselling a placatory policy which would put paid to their prospects of self-advancement.

The servitors were not strictly correct in their suspicion of Ormond, and the fact that Thomas Churchyard, the renowned military propagandist, could praise Ormond’s military exploits and describe him as ‘the scourge of rebels’ suggests that some English soldiers in Ireland recognized Ormond’s resolve to destroy his old adversary the earl of Desmond while otherwise counselling moderation. It was senior government officials, including Adam Loftus, archbishop of Dublin and lord chancellor of Ireland, who, at critical junctures, proposed that Desmond be received to mercy, accounting him ‘a subject base, rude, and of a savage sort’ rather than a true English nobleman. Geoffrey Fenton, who served in Munster before being appointed secretary to the Dublin government, invoked necessity as the reason why the queen should pardon Desmond and pursue ‘an other course . . . lest Ireland prove as grievous and chargeable to her Highness as the Low Countries have done to Spain’. This stratagem (from which the servitors distanced themselves once victory had been achieved) had involved granting a royal pardon to all but a few of Desmond’s followers. Then it was envisaged that Desmond would be received ‘to mercy’ on the clear understanding that the earl should not look ‘to enjoy the state of his earldom with his unruly royal liberties’ and that he should be left to depend on the favour of the queen concerning his own life and that of his son.

While sometimes driven by circumstances to advise the queen to compromise her principles, most Protestant officials and soldiers recognized that the recall of Grey presaged a policy change by the queen, which indicated that the formulation of policy for Ireland was shifting from the hands of their patron Sir Francis Walsingham to Burghley, with whom few captains or officials, besides Warham St Leger, were well connected. In these changed circumstances it fell to St Leger to voice the reservations of the Munster servitors. This caused some initial embarrassment for St Leger because he himself had been counselling a moderate course so that he could enjoy the property which he had held in mortgage, since the 1560s, from the earl of Desmond. What St Leger had been advising was not essentially different from the measures favoured by Ormond, so St Leger now resorted to personal deni-

9 Norris to Burghley, 20 Nov. 1584 (SP 69/112/78).
10 Thomas Churchyard, The Scourge of Rebels (London, 1584); more generally on Ormond see Ciaran Brady, ‘Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond, 1531–1614: Reform in Tudor Ireland’, in Ciaran Brady (ed.), Worsted in the Game: Losers in Irish History (Dublin, 1989), 49–59; David Edwards, ‘The Ormond Lordship in County Kilkenny, 1515–1642’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Dublin, 1998), esp. pp. 186–245; Loftus to Burghley, 5 Nov. 1582 (SP 69/67/16); Fenton to Walsingham, 19 June 1583 (SP 69/102/93); this prescient comment by Fenton continued to have relevance to the end of the 16th century as has been shown in Hiram Morgan, Tyrone’s Rebellion: The Outbreak of the Nine Years War in Tudor Ireland (Woodbridge, 1993).
11 Burghley to St Leger, 9 Dec. 1582 (SP 69/98/56).
igration in order to discredit the lord general. Ormond was essentially unsuitable for the military role assigned him, asserted St Leger, because he was of Irish birth and was therefore ‘aligned in consanguinity or affinity to all the lords and chieftains . . . in this province in very near degree’. Moreover, claimed St Leger, there was no possibility that Ormond would seek to eradicate ‘the ancient and foul customs’ which were proving to be the principal support for the queen’s adversaries in Ireland because he himself derived his living from ‘Irish customs as other lords do’ and would realize that, once these practices were banished from Desmond’s lordship, ‘then standeth his staff next to the door’. St Leger also pointed to the practical objections to having Ormond as lord general, because ‘the greatness’ to which he would ‘grow’ in Ireland, by virtue of the ‘credit’ placed in him, should be avoided in ‘all politique governments . . . and chiefly where a broken state is’.12

Ormond responded in detail to these ‘opprobrious articles’ laid against him, but the element of his defence which would have proven most convincing for the queen was his assurance that he was ‘of good sincere English disposition and that the course of his service was . . . to make her Majesty and her laws known and obeyed and her revenue, so far as might be lawfully and without peril of great discommodity, to be increased’.13 This profession was unanswerable, coming as it did from a Protestant and a cousin of the queen. Nevertheless, Ormond’s actions and recommendations, both before and after the chance slaying of the earl of Desmond on 12 November 1583, indicated that there was some substance to St Leger’s charge and that there was an essential difference between the approach of Ormond and that of the English-born servitors to the common problem confronting them. Where the captains and officials clamoured for some form of colonization which would provide opportunity for them once their expected victory had been achieved, Ormond favoured a policy of liberal pardons to those of Desmond’s followers who would sue for the queen’s mercy from himself as lord general. This course had been favoured by Ormond initially because it would bring a quicker end to hostilities, but it was then recommended on the pragmatic ground that a province which was severely depopulated in the aftermath of war would ‘hardly be inhabited without the help of the people of the same’. Therefore, he warned that ‘the informations and the plats that go from Sir Warham [would] never advance the service of her Majesty or do the country good’, and he recommended instead that the spoils of victory should go as a reward to himself and those other Munster landowners who had assisted him in the suppression of the revolt.14

12 St Leger to Burghley, 21 May 1580 (SP 63/73/23); same to same, 26 Jan. 1581 (SP 63/80/29); St Leger to Queen, 8 May 1583 (SP 63/102/16).
13 Answer of the Lord General Ormond, undated (SP 63/106/56).
With the death of Desmond, the demand by officials and captains for a colonization scheme in Munster assumed a fresh momentum, and the work of identifying, through inquisition and survey, what manors would become liable for confiscation was got under way immediately. Even in the face of this enthusiasm, Ormond still strove to stall progress. His first stratagem was to promote the case for a restoration to their lands of those former rebels who had been accepted to mercy before Desmond’s death; then he canvassed the claims of Eleanor, countess of Desmond (who happened to be Ormond’s own mother), for the recovery of ‘a great portion of the earl of Desmond’s lands for her jointure’; and, finally, he lent support to the legal argument that it was only the demesne lands of the deceased earl and his associates that had been forfeited because all other profits they had enjoyed from the freeholders in the province were by extortion rather than by right. Ormond was less sympathetic towards the claim of Sir Thomas of Desmond, brother of Desmond (and his son James), to succeed to the estates of the deceased earl, and he countered it by asserting that he himself was ‘heir general’ to Desmond’s lordship and was entitled ‘by law to inherit any land that was not entailed to the heirs male’.15

These interventions by Ormond were with the purpose of minimizing the scope of the plantation which now seemed inevitable, and he did this most effectively by encouraging some native proprietors to pursue legal challenge to the title being claimed by the crown to some of the lands previously occupied by Desmond. More immediately, Ormond’s interventions paved the way for himself to receive a royal grant of most of Desmond’s estates in County Tipperary. However once it became clear, in January 1584, that Sir John Perrott, the newly appointed governor, had been specifically commissioned by Burghley ‘to repeople’ the ‘dispeopled’ province of Munster so that ‘the lands escheated should be inhabited with obedient people’, Ormond reconciled himself to the inevitable and strove to shape rather than to frustrate what was now becoming the projected plantation of Munster.16 He did this not only by claiming part of the Desmond lands for himself, but, more crucially, by confirming Burghley in his prejudice that, however deserving of reward they might be, those captains and officials who had served the crown in Ireland lacked the resources necessary ‘to inhabit the land, considering the waste of the country’. Then, to further dampen the prospects of these claimants, Ormond alluded to the recent ‘experience’ with the plantation established on the forfeited estates of ‘the rebels of Leix and Offaly’. There, he contended, crown leases had been granted to ‘persons of small ability’

15 Ormond to Lords Justice, 16 Dec. 1583 (SP 69/106/130); St Leger to Queen, 31 Jan. 1584 (SP 69/107/53); Ormond to Burghley, 4 Mar. 1584 (SP 69/108/5).
16 Memorial for Lord Deputy Perrott, [19 Jan.] 1584 (SP 69/107/35); Perrott to Burghley, 24 Sept. 1585 (SP 69/119/32).
whose insufficiency had subsequently ‘put her Highness to infinite charge without any commodity or profit’.17

Ormond hoped, when offering this timely reminder, to enter one final plea for the grant of the escheated lands to those Munster lords who had remained loyal to the government during the course of the rebellion. This was a forlorn hope, and the consequence of Ormond’s lobbying was further to convince the court officials who were given responsibility for the settlement of Munster that a plantation was necessary to provide stability to a troubled province, and that the planters should be people from England with command of the requisite resources to develop a successful enterprise. Ormond must have been disappointed that no recognition was being given to the claims of deserving Irish lords, other than himself, but he would have shed no tears for the frustration of the ambitions of the servitors of the crown in Ireland whom, as was noted in Chapter 2, he regarded as unprincipled ‘Machevilles’. For their parts the servitors not only saw their prospects of advancement vanish, but they had to reconcile themselves to the loss of support from their erstwhile patron Francis Walsingham who acquiesced in the view that had now become dominant in the Privy Council that:

the best way to draw men into Munster [was] for Her Majesty to grant such estates in the escheated lands as may encourage men of ability to go over from hence to inhabit there who may be able to sustain the charges of the first planting and tarry for their gain till after some years, for if the lands be otherwise disposed upon such as shall not be so qualified they will farm out the same to the natives of the country who will not manure them but in such idle manner as hath been used before.18

This view of Walsingham, which was essentially the official government position, was not far removed from that articulated earlier by Sir Thomas Smith in relation to his own unsuccessful plantation, and involved a sharp departure from the shapeless English presence in Munster, and in the country generally, up to that date. What was in prospect for Munster was a rigidly structured hierarchical settlement, and previous scholars have identified Burghley, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Christopher Hatton, Attorney General John Popham, and Solicitor General Thomas Egerton as the court officials who designed the plantation scheme for Munster. Ormond, as was noted, also exerted both a direct and an indirect influence over the course of events by discrediting the servitors on whom Walsingham had intended to hinge a more flexible scheme. This, therefore, left Walsingham with no choice but to endorse a hierarchical settlement which would draw principally on the resources of people of wealth, and therefore of high social standing, in England.19

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17 Ormond to Burghley, 4 Mar. 1584 (SP 63/108/5).
As well as participating in the formulation of a plantation scheme for Munster, Hatton and Popham volunteered to become undertakers themselves while Walsingham was to take advantage of the speculative opportunities which Munster had to offer. When Hatton and Popham became directly involved with the plantation in Munster, they were consciously setting an example for their peers, just as Secretary Sir Thomas Smith had done in relation to his Ulster plantation scheme of the 1570s. However, unlike that experience, which envisaged people of modest means investing in a common stock which would be managed by their superiors, the conditions laid down for the plantation in Munster made it clear that only people who commanded substantial resources and social prestige in England would be welcome as planters. They were to receive ‘seignories’ ranging in size from 12,000 to 4,000 profitable acres, and they were to undertake (hence their designation as ‘undertakers’) to establish ninety-one English families for every grant of 12,000 acres, with proportionate numbers on the lesser holdings. Each full seignory was to be divided by the head landlord into six freeholds and each freeholder would himself farm 300 acres, then also six ‘farmers’ would each lease 400 acres of land, forty-two copyholders would each hold 100 acres, and thirty-six lesser tenants and cottagers would be granted smaller holdings or be settled on an estate village. It was agreed that the entire plantation would consist of the equivalent of twenty-five full seignories, which meant that its architects envisaged 2,275 English households, corresponding to a settler population of 11,375 people, being established on the escheated Munster lands.

These conditions were not only stipulated in the grants made to the individual grantees, but detailed calculations were provided of the advance planning that each undertaker and tenant-in-chief would have to make ‘for the transporting of some English colonies or companies into Munster in Ireland’. These ‘colonies or English companies’ were ‘to be entirely maintained of mere English persons without any intermixture of the mere Irish’, and the accompanying specifications described the farming personnel that participants in the enterprise would have to recruit in England for their property in Munster; the food, livestock, seed, furnishings, and implements that would be necessary to meet the start-up costs of these people in their new environment; and ‘the sorts of necessary people especially to be provided’ in the model village that would be erected in each seignory. These villages, composed of at least twenty-six families, were to include ‘two gardeners, one wheelwright, one smith, one mason, one carpenter, one thatcher, one tyler, one tailor, one shoemaker, one butcher, one miller, a victualler, and the

parish clerk’. Each village was required to have ‘one vicarage for a minister’ who would have land and other living to the value of 100 marks a year, and each estate village would also have ‘one windmill or water mill’, as well as a leet court. Finally, proprietors would be put to the expense of making ‘provision of warlike furniture of horsemen and footmen’ so that the colony would be able to defend itself against ‘the savage or rebels’.

What was specified in writing was given visual depiction in an idealized model of a seignory, which made it clear that each undertaker was expected to have...

Note: This sketch is based on an illustration from the Public Record Office, SP 63/122 (55). Similar, but not identical, models were designed for the plantation in Munster, and for subsequent plantations in Ireland and further afield. For another on Munster see that published in J. H. Andrews, ‘Geography and Government in Elizabethan Ireland’, in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock, Irish Geographical Studies (Belfast, 1970), 178–91.

MAP 3.1. Model of a Munster seignory

to build a defensible mansion for himself, as well as houses for his tenants and an estate village with its church and a mill. This depiction of the nucleus of a colony was so compelling that it was to be imitated by British plantation projectors in various parts of the Atlantic world to the beginning of the eighteenth century, for example in 1719 by Sir Robert Montgomery in ‘A Plan Representing the Form of Settling the Districts, or County Divisions in the Margravate of Azilia’ in the Carolinas. Official estimates for Munster indicated that an investment of £2,577 would be required from each of the proprietors before any of the sixty-two seignories would become a going concern, but, as with the equally fanciful margravate of Azelia, this would be but the first instalment because each model community would be no more than one element in an expansive grid of settlement. In Munster, each model seignory was to be one of nine. Then the proprietors in each cluster of nine seignories were, collectively, to provide for ‘one market town placed if conveniently it may be in the navel or midst of the other eight and furnished with merchants, retailers, and artisans of all sorts’, and populated by 200 English families. There would also be a place in this town for ‘a minister excelling the rest in learning’, who would enjoy an income of £100 a year which would be collected from all nine seignories. 21

The conditions, together with this draughtsman’s model, indicate that what was envisaged by the designers of the scheme was the creation of a microcosm of English society on each of the sixty-two seignories. Together they were to constitute an English world in an Irish environment, which would serve as an example in civil living to the Irish population, who would be dominated by the settlers both politically and economically to the point where the Irish would have no option but to imitate them. This educational role of English colonies was put succinctly by Geoffrey Fenton, who described Munster as ‘a country as it were regenerate and born of new’, and ready ‘to be translated from an Irish government to a civil English Pale’. This, he believed, would be ‘easily accomplished if the Irish and English [were] brought to give good neighbourhood one to another and both nations [would] conform themselves to such conditions and tenures for their lands as her Majesty shall impose on them’. 22


22 Fenton to Burghley, 23 Aug. 1585 (SP 63/118/75).
Fenton’s optimism was shared by most officials in England as well as some senior officials in Ireland, and their belief in the potency of colonization as an instrument of reform was increased when it became clear that the indigenous population had been decimated during the course of the war. The loss of population and devastation of the province was reported on by many, most graphically, as was noted in Chapter 2, by Spenser in the View where he described how ‘a most populous and plentiful country [was] suddenly left void of man and beast’. This contention, that the land to be planted lay almost vacant, was given statistical authority by Sir Valentine Browne who, by December 1584, had already surveyed all of the lands which were liable for confiscation (except those in Ormond’s palatinate county of Tipperary to which he was denied admission), and who reported that ‘not one of thirty persons’ had survived the wars and ‘those for the most part starvelings’.23

This information was considered relevant not only because it was vital to the planning of the plantation, but because it was considered an essential justification for the English purpose to fashion a completely new order through a process of plantation in preference to reforming the existing society in Munster. Prior to this statistical information becoming available, several English participants in the proposed plantation had been anticipating the moral scruples that Queen Elizabeth was likely to have (or that might be put in her mind by Ormond and his Old English associates) over this resort to colonization, and they had been striving to overcome these scruples by reminding her that she was entitled to enjoy the ‘fruits and profits of the war’ because of ‘her great treasure wasted’ in suppressing the unpardonable rebellion of Desmond and his associates. Far less disturbing for the queen than a claim based on the right of conquest was the invocation of what Anthony Pagden has described as the Roman law known as res nullius. This, to paraphrase Pagden, maintained that all ‘empty things’, particularly unoccupied or under-utilized land, remained the common property of humanity until it was brought into efficient use by an enterprising people who might then become its owners. Such argument became commonplace among the English observers of Ireland during the 1580s who wished to universalize the action they proposed to engage upon while legitimizing it.

The most blunt statement, based on res nullius, was articulated by Andrew Trollope, writing under the pen name Republicae Benevolus, when he concluded, on the basis of his staggering negative depiction of the living conditions of the inhabitants of Ireland, that they were ‘not thrifty, and civil and human creatures, but heathen or rather savage and brute beasts’. Trollope, it must be said, counted for little when it came to policy-making for Ireland, but his, or similar, opinions proved useful to the governor, Sir John Perrott, in that

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23 Browne to Burghley, 18 Oct. 1584 (SP 63/112/18); Spenser, View, 104; Wallop and Browne to Burghley, 4 Dec. 1584 (SP 63/113/16).
they enabled him to depict the plantation which he proposed to embark upon as a work of ‘reformation [which would] breed competent wealth, and competent wealth containeth men in a liking [of] obedience where desperate beggary runneth headlong to rebellion’. However while serving, for the moment, to counter the critics of the colonial option, such rationalization was altogether more compelling when it was supplemented by evidence that the lands in question lay vacant, thus overcoming any reasonable objections that might be raised, and meeting the preference of such as Francis Bacon for a ‘Plantation in a pure soil; that is where People are not displanted to the end to Plant others. For else it is rather an Extirpation than a Plantation.’

3.2. THE PRACTICE

The assurance of the officials that all was in place for what would be a glorious experiment at colonization justified by universally accepted principles explains why the work of identifying the escheated lands was well under way before the conditions for the plantation were agreed upon. Formal title to the property was established by an Act of Attainder of the deceased earl and his associates which was ratified by the Irish parliament of 1585–6, and a campaign was launched almost immediately to attract appropriate undertakers from England. It cannot be established who were invited to participate, or how the government went about advertising the scheme. However, the Privy Council was clearly convinced in January 1586 that more than sufficient undertakers would come forward, because the directions then given to Sir Valentine Browne and his fellow surveyors, who had responsibility for guiding the undertakers to their seignories and establishing precise boundaries for them, was that they should satisfy themselves on ‘the ability’ of those ‘disposed to repair into the realm of Ireland to inhabit there’ to meet the conditions of their grants. This implies that the Council envisaged some Englishmen venturing to Munster to investigate the possibilities which that province presented, and the Counsellors hoped that the impeccuous would be discouraged ‘for that otherwise for lack of ability they themselves shall receive no benefit by any such grants, and her Majesty’s expectations [would be] greatly frustrated touching the peopling of the said realm’. Some measures were also taken by the senior officials in England to vet those who came forward as undertakers; thus Henry Oughtred, the Southampton businessman, was forbidden to depart with his goods for Ireland until he provided security for his debts.

26 Privy Council to Sir Valentine Browne et al. 31 Jan. 1586 (SP 63/122/54); Lord Chancellor Bromley and Burghley to Oughtred (HMC, Salisbury MSS iii. 212).
The Privy Council gave initial publicity to the scheme in England, by directing letters to justices of the peace in various shires. Since the only letters that survive relate to shires in the west and north-west of England and in the Welsh borderlands, it has been suggested that the trawl was confined to those areas that were contiguous to Ireland.\(^{27}\) That may have been true when it came to recruiting undertakers on a county basis, but other means of attracting planters must also have been employed. How else can we explain the petition of eight members of the Wingfield family from Stoneley, Huntingtonshire, to be placed ‘with other colonies in the province of Munster’, or of the list of eighteen gentlemen from disparate places in England who volunteered to ‘undertake in the company of Henry Oughtred’, of Southampton? Only widespread advertising would also explain the belated overture, in 1589, of a group of artisans, describing themselves as ‘the society of Essex’, who were advanced in Protestant views and who now wished to be included within the scheme.\(^{28}\)

If the government did indeed spread its net wider than the shires closest to Ireland, the recruiting message is likely to have been the same wherever it was broadcast. The invitation to participate was addressed to people of ability in the shire and they were advised to seek further information from a nominated individual in their midst. For example, in the case of Cheshire the named individual was Sir Edward Fitton who supplied those of his countrymen who expressed interest in the project with ‘letters, articles and plots for the peopling of Munster’. The justices of the peace for the shire then met collectively with Fitton and conferred among themselves, and then each justice was given responsibility for recruitment in a particular district.\(^{29}\) Justices were directed by the Privy Council to have ‘a special regard . . . to the preferment and setting forth principally of the younger children, brethren, and kinsfolk of gent. of good families and countenance, and then of those of inferior calling and degrees’.\(^{30}\) In this way particular seignories in Munster were assigned to lists of potential undertakers from particular English shires, and each county group was assured that they would be ‘joined near together [lest] otherwise they shall be severed by intermixture of strangers to them and perhaps to their action’.\(^{31}\) Some prospective undertakers seem to have made a reconnoitring expedition to Munster, or sought information from


\(^{28}\) Petition of Jacques Wingfield of Stone et al., 24 May 1586 (SP 63/124/40); ‘Names of Those who Undertake in the Company of Henry Oughtred’, 5 May 1586 (SP 63/124/5); petition of the gentlemen of Essex, 30 Apr. 1589 (SP 63/142/51).

\(^{29}\) JPs of Cheshire to Privy Council, 6 Apr. 1586 (SP 63/123/27).

\(^{30}\) Privy Council to Sir John Stowell et al. (SP 63/122/80).

\(^{31}\) Sir Valentine Browne and Sir E. Phyton to Walsingham, 2 June 1586 (SP 63/124/64).
those familiar with the province, because the government received several petitions for specific parcels of land.  

By such disparate methods, lists were compiled of potential undertakers and the acreages for which they had contracted, and each prospective undertaker would seem to have immediately set about negotiating with potential tenants and artisans who might accompany him to Munster. Most enlistment of settlers was probably done on a face-to-face basis by justices of the peace or gentlemen undertakers within the shires in which they resided. This paternalistic approach was certainly adopted by Sir Edward Fitton who reported, in February 1587, that ‘his countrymen’ were ready to make the journey to Munster and that he was seeking an order for their transportation. Other undertakers, however, reached beyond their own counties in search of settlers with particular skills.

The only surviving evidence concerning the inducements offered to would-be settlers is in the sole identified piece of printed propaganda relating to plantation in Munster, *A Briefe Description of Ireland* by Robert Payne. This pamphlet was based on Payne’s own letters from Munster addressed to Nicholas Gorsan and others of the twenty-five people who had accompanied Payne as partners in the seignory undertaken by Phane Beecher, a London haberdasher. The views expressed thus enjoyed the authority of experience, but if Payne’s primary purpose was to praise the merits of Ireland he had to begin by dispelling the fears of any English people contemplating the journey there, because his pamphlet was composed in 1589 when anti-Catholic hysteria in England was rampant following the Spanish Armada of the previous year.

While Payne decried the perversity of those in Ireland who had resisted the authority of the English state and Church, he insisted that not all the Irish were as ill disposed as some English authors portrayed them, and he claimed that ‘the better sort [were] very civil and honestly given’. Although conceding that most Irish people remained attached to popery he denied that this suggested that they would defect to Spain, and he drew satisfaction from the fact that the Irish were fully informed of Spanish tyranny ever since they had learnt ‘of their monstrous cruelties in the west Indies’, which had been described in the writings of the Dominican missionary Bartolomé de Las Casas, recently translated into English. To give substance to this contention, Payne alluded to the treatment accorded by the Irish to those members of the Spanish Armada who had been cast ashore on the west coast of Ireland where they were slain ‘like dogs in such plentiful numbers that their garments went about the country to be sold as cheap as beasts’ skins’.

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32 See, for example, petition of Jacques Wingfield et al., 24 May 1586 (SP 63/124/40).
33 Sir Edward Phyton to Burghley, 3 Feb. 1587 (SP 63/128/20).
34 *A Briefe Description of Ireland: Made in this Year, 1589, by Robert Payne unto xxv of his Partners* (London, 1590), 3, 5–7.
Having thus sought to dispel the fears of would-be English migrants to Ireland, Payne returned to his particular concern which was to detail the economic benefits that would be gained by English people of all ranks who made the move to Munster. He began by expounding on the natural resources of Munster which would sustain manufacturing as well as farming and fishing, and he made much of the relatively low cost of living in Ireland. Prices and wages were such, he claimed, that a landowner ‘may keep better house in Ireland for £50 a year, than in England for £200 a year’. Nor were the advantages confined to those who would become property owners. Those invited to become tenants by ‘the better sort of Undertakers . . . according to the meaning of her Majesty’s grant’, would be able to enjoy ‘either three hundred acres of land in fee farm or four hundred acres by lease for one hundred years for 6 pence the acre without any [entry] fine’. Then, when citing the conditions offered by Sir Richard Grenville to artisans and labourers who settled on his seignory, Payne demonstrated that they also had greatly improved their circumstances by their move to Ireland, since each had been provided by Grenville with ‘a house, 40 acres of land, and 6 milch kine for 40 shillings a year, for the term of three lives’.

Grenville’s generosity, according to Payne, had been surpassed by Phane Beecher whose seignory lay in the barony of Kinalmeaky. He had behaved ‘so honestly’ that the dozen gentlemen who had been given leases by him ‘of 500 acres a piece’ had each placed subtenants on ‘small parcels of 50, 60, or some a hundred acres to be had as good cheap and under as good conditions as the best’ because it was Beecher’s ‘special care’ to allow ‘every inhabiter there . . . as much liberty as a freeholder in England’. Beecher was also credited with having made provision for ‘a learned preacher’, a free school, and a hospital for the maimed and the elderly, and with creating an ambience which was so comfortable for English people that Payne predicted that Beecher’s estate in the vicinity of the Bandon River would be ‘more like a civil city of England, than a rude country (as late it was) in Ireland’. The wealth of detail provided by Payne on the benefits likely to accrue to settlers in Munster is unsurpassed, and his specificity is due probably to his previous experience as a ‘projector’ in England where his every proposal would have had to be costed. However, since his pamphlet did not appear until 1590, it seems safe to assume that other instruments of propaganda were composed to induce migrants to Munster. Those who made the journey to Ireland in 1586 and 1587 seem to have done so in the company of the undertakers who had

55 Ibid. 8.
56 Ibid. 8, 11; a similar effort at estimating profit appeared in manuscript form in an anonymous paper, probably of Dec. 1585, entitled ‘That it may Appear what Profit, Commodity, and Advancement may in Short Time Grow to the Younger Houses of Gentlemen’ (SP 63/121/6/).
enlisted them, and the official intention was that surveys of the property assigned to each group would be conducted as they arrived, so that exact boundaries for each seignory would be immediately established. This expectation placed a severe strain on Arthur Robyns and his two assistants who were responsible for the surveys, and it made no allowance for the hostility of the local population to the surveyors, who were exposed to such hazards as stones being dropped on them from the top of Condon’s castle.

Despite complaints and difficulties, Robyns and his associates claimed to have surveyed over 160,000 acres by September 1587. Robyns took personal credit for measuring 100,000 acres, ‘both by line and instrument’, and for having made ‘perfect demonstration geometrical in sundry plots of all the particular parcels’. This, he believed, would enable the commissioners to lay out boundaries for the seignories. If Robyns’s claim was true, then his was a remarkable achievement in mapping. However, its scientific value was reduced, first because the survey was only taking place as the would-be settlers were already pouring into the country, and second because those with the best political connections, and those with best previous knowledge of the province, seized the lands they had set their sight on without regard for the work of the surveyors. Moreover, as the survey proceeded, it became clear that the land available for settlement was not sufficient to meet the requirements of those who had been assigned property as undertakers. Thus it was suggested in June 1586, following the survey of County Cork and the assignment of eleven of the eighteen seignories, that, with only seven seignories left to meet the requirements of forty gentlemen who were still to arrive, ‘those western men which should have been placed in Cork must needs be drawn to stay at home’. Sir Valentine Browne who was Robyns’s superior, and an undertaker himself, remained optimistic and, in an expression of wishful thinking that was to be repeated in all subsequent plantations in Ireland, he expressed himself confident that the shortfall would be made good by the

**Note:** This illustration is based on an original entitled ‘The Distribution of a Seignorie in Mounster in Ireland’ which is listed as MS Mi da 57c at the University of Nottingham, and is published here with the permission of the Manuscripts and Special Collections Department at the University of Nottingham and of the Hon. Michael Willoughby. It illustrates how the process of taking possession of estates in Munster was happening simultaneously with the supposed preparatory work of surveying and mapping. This confusion of processes was to occur in subsequent plantations in Ireland and elsewhere. The sketch also indicates the importance attached by prospective settlers to navigable waterways, but it shows no awareness of the variable quality of land in Munster.

38 Arthur Robyns’s suit, undated (SP 63/131/14); report of Robyns, 17 Sept. 1587 (SP 63/131/22); details on the work of surveying and the problems associated with it can be pieced together in ‘A True Certificate and Brief of All the Lands that have been Surveyed’, Feb. 1587/8 (SP 63/133/96); Sir Valentine Browne to Privy Council, 16 Oct. 1588 (SP 63/137/21); ‘Payments to Commissioners and Surveyors in Munster’ (SP 63/149/75).

39 ‘Note Touching the Seignories Surveyed in Cork’, June 1586 (SP 63/124/102).
The Munster Plantation

The County of Cork
20 seignories

The Munster Plantation

The County of Kerry
This is desired by Sir William Herbert & his associates
which will make 2 whole
seignories & the rest
will be left in particular
parcels because it will
be dispersed

The County of Cork
is desired by Sir Walter Rawley &
Sir Attorney General & their
associates, where there
is already surveyed by 20 seignories besides those not
surveyed which, as is thought, will make it more

The County of Limerick

The County of Waterford

The County of Tipperary

The County of Desmond
1 seignory 11,000 acres

Waterford

Dungarven

Youghal

Cork

Kinsale

The County of Tipperary & Limerick is desired by
Claremore rent & partly Sir Walter Rawley, whereas there
is already surveyed by 20 whole seignories, and it is thought that
the land which is not surveyed will make it more

The County of Desmond
This is desired by Sir William
Rawley & Sir Lavington & their
associates and is already surveyed as
in which seignories and two acres over is
besides that which is not yet to survey
& certain land in the midst of
Adamoto is desired by Sir
Valentine Browne as seignory

County of Desmond 11,000 acres

West

South

Limerick

Cork
discovery in the province of concealed land which belonged rightfully to the crown.40

As it transpired, no concealed lands were discovered, and, worse still, the area available for plantation was rapidly whittled away as Irish proprietors established before the courts that lands on which Desmond had charged rents had not been his outright property and should not therefore have been included within the plantation scheme. This use of the law to reduce the scale of the plantation was encouraged by Ormond, and it caused uncertainty in the minds of all undertakers who now accepted that the experience of Sir Edward Fitton was not unusual. He, as we saw, went to considerable trouble to recruit settlers for Munster, but as he took possession of his seignory he was confronted by those he described as ‘former rebels’ who claimed that he stood ‘in their property’. Even Sir Valentine Browne, who was principally responsible for putting the plantation scheme into operation, found that the land assigned to himself as an undertaker had been given as a gift to the earl of Clancar, and this forced him to redeem the estate from the Irish nobleman.41 Lord Deputy Perrott, who thought it essential that the undertakers should be encouraged always ‘to go forward’, advised against making concession to ‘any pretended title except [upon] good matter and sufficient proof’. The government, presumably on the insistence of the queen, who would have been influenced by Ormond, considered that legal niceties had to be observed, and directed that the issue of disputed ownership should be resolved by a comprehensive investigation of all exactions that had been claimed by the earl of Desmond. This investigation, which took several years to complete, was reliant upon the information of locals who, in the words of Robyns, were determined to ‘misinform and . . . to interrupt and hinder the service’, and who, in the experience of Attorney General Popham, were ‘much given to forgeries and regard[ed] not at all their oaths’. Therefore, not only did the work of the commission result in a substantial reduction of the area available for plantation, but the uncertainty which it created also persuaded several undertakers to abandon the service to which they had been once committed.42

Another disincentive to enterprising undertakers was the assignment to other grantees of seignories which they believed to be rightfully theirs. This was the inevitable consequence of priority being given to court favourites in

40 Browne and Fitton to Walsingham, 2 June 1586 (SP 63/124/64).
41 Fitton to Burghley, 30 July 1587 (SP 63/130/55); the disputed territory was the castle and lands of Kilmanehin, County Waterford, which had been passed to Fitton, but for which an Irish lord, Richard Power, could show letters from the queen: see Thomas Norris, Jesse Smythes, and Richard Beacon to Walsingham, 17 Oct. 1587 (SP 63/131/61); for continuing uncertainty over disputed lands see ‘Instructions for Sir Valentine Browne’, Mar. 1587/8 (SP 63/134/15); Sir Valentine Browne to Walsingham, 16 Oct. 1588 (SP 63/137/22).
42 Perrott to Secretary General Wilbraham, 23 Aug. 1587 (SP 63/139/71); Arthur Robyns’s suit, undated (SP 63/131/14); ‘Memorial Exhibited by Attorney General Sir John Popham’, 22 June 1588 (SP 63/135/43).
Note: This map, based on contemporary documentary evidence and on the work of previous scholars, shows where the government intended that beneficiaries of plantation in Munster should hold their estates.

MAP 3.3. The assignment of estates in Munster
the assignment of properties; the most favoured being Sir Walter Ralegh and Sir Christopher Hatton. Ralegh broke all the rules when he took possession of three and a half seignories of prime land in the vicinity of Youghal, while Hatton received priority treatment when being assigned a neighbouring seignory close to Dungarvan in County Waterford. Other overlaps occurred due to bureaucratic accident. The most acrimonious of these concerned the seignory of Tarbert in north Kerry strategically located on the banks of the river Shannon. Tarbert was occupied promptly by Denzil Holles only for him to find his claim disputed by Geoffrey Fenton, who had gone to considerable expense ‘to procure tenants and cattle out of England’. Then, after Fenton had abandoned his claim, Holles was challenged more persistently by Sir William Herbert, who occupied a neighbouring seignory in Kerry. Perhaps, in this instance, Fenton was the most discommoded of the parties, but his experience of wasted effort and money was shared by some of the best-connected undertakers. Those representing Attorney General Popham complained in 1589 that they ‘had above 60 Englishmen there this past two years’ until ‘for want of land [they were] driven to call them home again’ together with ‘diverse women and servants’.

Other undertakers were discouraged by what confronted them in Ireland. Edward Fitton was obviously unprepared for the dilapidated state of his property: ‘the country generally wasted. But yet not a pile in any place’, and ‘no church covered’. Fitton also seems to have been genuinely upset by the poverty and indigence of the inhabitants on his lands which were ‘full of the poorest creatures . . . so lean for want of food as wonderful, yet so idle as they will not work for they are descended either of kerne, horsemen, or gallowglass’. For Edward Denny, who held the seignory of Tralee in Kerry which was persistently disputed by his neighbour Sir William Herbert, it was the quality of the land—‘much worse than Limerick and Conneloe’—and the absence of timber, mineral or fishing resources, which accounted for his despairing cry that he would ‘not be able in this remote place to make it’.

It so happens that all those whose reservations we have noted persisted as undertakers, but it seems likely that others were discouraged and silently disappeared from among the ranks of the original list of undertakers once they encountered difficulties. Michael Mac Carthy-Morrogh has identified eighty-six people who volunteered to become undertakers in Munster and he

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44 Fenton to Walsingham, 29 Sept. 1587 (SP 69/131/33); ‘The Controversy between Sir William Herbert and Mr Denzil Hollis for Tarbert’, 3 May 1589 (SP 69/144/2); petition of Hollis (SP 69/144/3); Mac Carthy-Morrogh, *Munster Plantation*, 65.
45 ‘The Relation and State of English in Munster’ (SP 69/141/58).
46 Fitton to Burghley, 30 July 1587 (SP 69/130/33); Edward Denny to Burghley, 26 July 1587 (SP 69/130/52); the gallowglass, or golliglaigh, in Munster would have been such families as the Sheehys who were descendants of Scots mercenary families of the medieval period; G. A. Hayes Mc-Coy, *Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland, 1565–1603* (Dublin, 1937).
has shown how this original figure dwindled to the less than forty individuals who eventually took out patents for Munster land. Those who persisted as undertakers included many of the principals—notably Ralegh, Hatton, Oughtred, Fitton, Beecher, Holles, Denny, Herbert, and Ormond—who had indicated an interest at the outset, but the final list also included names that were not originally there. The most conspicuous element among these new undertakers was those with previous experience in the province. These included Warham St Leger, Sir Richard Grenville, and Robert Cullum who had previous interest in Munster land and who were now able to barter what they already held for grants of plantation land. Others among this Munster group were Sir Valentine Browne and Arthur Robyns who had been responsible for surveying the escheated lands, and Thomas Norris, Richard Beacon, Jesse Smythes, and Edmund Spenser; all of them officials on the provincial council of Munster.

The emergence of this second group as undertakers shows that Walsingham’s original idea that the fruits of victory should go to those who had rendered service to the crown was partially rehabilitated once the official scheme, which placed its trust in property owners from England, failed to measure up to expectations. However, Walsingham’s expectations to reward servitors fell short of what he had hoped, and former captains generally went unrewarded and had to satisfy themselves with custodiams of the properties assigned to the fortified positions in the province. Under these circumstances, those who had previously relied on Walsingham for support now looked also to ‘Sir Walter’ who was described by one of the new grantees as ‘a general advocate for all of Munster’.

The rise to prominence of the favoured servitors gave a more military aspect to the Munster settlement than had been envisaged by the planners. This became even more pronounced because the government, in an effort to retain the interest of undertakers whose outlays far exceeded the initial calculations, effectively subsidized their plantation efforts by placing horsemen in the

47 Mac Carthy-Morrogh, *Munster Plantation*, 290–2, where he lists the names of the thirty-five undertakers, names their seignories, and identifies the location of these seignories on an accompanying map; Mar. 1588, ‘Certificate by Sir John Popham . . . of Undertakers who have Abandoned the Enterprise’ (SP 69/134/49); Sheehan, ‘The Population of the Plantation of Munster’.

48 The struggle of St Leger and Grenville against the counter-claim of John Cooper, a royal favourite, is detailed in Mac Carthy-Morrogh, *Munster Plantation*, pp. 72–6; the same author does not include Grenville on his list of undertakers that appears pp. 291–2; Captain Robert Cullum claimed to have held land on lease from the knight of the Valley which he subsequently surrendered for a grant as an undertaker thus claiming to be ‘the first Englishman that went thither to inhabit after the wars’ (SP 69/133/50 i).

49 Spenser was, strictly speaking, not a member of the Munster council; the position of clerk of the council was held by Ludowick Bryskett for a salary of £20 a year; ‘Book of Charges’, 31 Mar. 1588 (SP 69/135/96 iv); Smythes does not appear on Mac Carthy-Morrogh’s list but he did occupy a half-seignory in Carrigaline; ‘The Answer of Jesse Smythes’, May 1589 (SP 69/144/69).

50 Nicholas Browne to Sir Edward Denny, 24 Mar. 1589 (SP 69/142/39).
queen’s pay under their command. Sir William Herbert, who was given to representing himself as a plantation purist, objected to this practice lest the depredations of the soldiers would make the Irish ‘weary of their loyalty and their lives’. However, while exhorting his fellow planters to justice and good government, which would render ‘bands and garrisons’ as unnecessary in Munster as they were ‘in Surrey or Middlesex’, Herbert also took advantage of the royal munificence that was on offer and accepted command of nine soldiers in the government’s pay. The other undertakers who commanded companies in Munster in 1588, when the threat of the Spanish Armada made the issue of defence critical, were Sir Valentine Browne, Sir Walter Ralegh, Sir Edward Denny, Sir Edward Fitton, Sir Edward Berkeley, John Popham, Edward Rogers, John Cooper, and Sir Christopher Hatton.

This development, as well as the presence of soldiers in garrison under the command of the president and the army captains, indicates that the character of the English presence in the province was not transformed as had been intended by the original theorists of colonization. Thus while Sir John Popham busied himself with devising a method for raising a composition rent in the province that would meet the cost of maintaining the soldiers, Herbert accused his fellow undertakers of having become degenerate as they measured their ‘seignories not by acres but by countries; not by perches but by miles’, and as they sought ‘to tyrannise, to extort, to make the estate of things turbulent, to live by prey and by pay’.

Such criticism was compounded by the charge that the planters, the officials, and even the Protestant clergy in the province had become so preoccupied with material considerations that they had neglected the religious purpose that was the ultimate justification for plantation. ‘The churchmen’, asserted Edward Fitton, ‘collect their tithes with most rigour and neither give food spiritual nor temporal’, while others suggested that religious controls were so lax that the plantation had become a place of refuge for English recusants. Therefore the fear expressed by Sir Edward Fitton, that the plantation would fail unless steps were taken to have ‘as well God’s word planted as English people’, was widely shared, and many, like Herbert, called for a return ‘to the purport of her Majesty’s articles and the groundplot of this action’.

51 ‘Six Score Horsemen Allowed by Queen to the Undertakers in Munster’, 30 Sept. 1587 (SP 69/131/35).
52 Note of muster of Sir William Herbert’s nine horsemen, 24 June 1587 (SP 69/130/21); Herbert to Walsingham, 12 July 1588 (SP 69/135/84); ‘Companies of Horse Allowed to Undertakers in Munster’, 31 Mar. 1588 (SP 69/133/96 iv).
53 On the military character of the English presence in Munster and in Ireland generally see Chapter 2 above.
54 Popham to Queen, 30 Oct. 1588 (SP 69/137/53); Herbert to Burghley, 20 Oct. 1588 (SP 69/137/31).
55 Fitton to Burghley, 30 July 1587 (SP 69/130/53); complaints on the recusant issue were made in Herbert to Walsingham, 12 July 1588 (SP 69/135/81); Hugh Cuffe to Burghley, 2 Oct. 1588 (SP...
While there may have been grounds for such criticism, it should not be permitted to shroud the real achievement of the plantation, which was the establishment of a series of pockets of English people where none had existed before. Credit for this must go principally to those planters who sought to meet the conditions of the plantation. In this respect, Robert Payne drew a clear distinction between the conscientious planters and ‘the worser sort of undertakers’ who had ‘done much hurt in the country, and discouraged many from the voyage’ by demanding excessive rents from would-be tenants and by refusing wages to their servants and workmen. Furthermore they had preferred Irish over English tenants because they expected the Irish would continue to meet the extortionate demands that had previously been claimed by their Irish lords. Such unscrupulous planters, according to Payne, could turn a quick ‘profit’ by charging Irish tenants ‘the fourth sheaf of all their corn & sixteen pence yearly for a beast’s grass’. Payne and Sir William Herbert were not alone in drawing this distinction between the scrupulous and the irresponsible, and the sense of isolation felt by those undertakers who took their duties seriously was best articulated by the merchant Henry Oughtred who spent much money and time in Munster during the early stages. The ‘action’ which committed undertakers were engaged upon, he remarked, was ‘not acceptable to any Irish lord’, and was also ‘crossed by all the Irish governors and magistrates’ because it impinged upon their patronage, while ‘the old captains and soldiers [did] utterly mislike it’ since the plantation had put paid to their prospects of advancement.\(^{56}\)

Even if Payne, Oughtred, and Herbert were correct in identifying the conscientious planters as exceptional, all undertakers were goaded into meeting their obligations by officials in both England and Ireland who were determined to see that the objectives of the plantation were met. Already in March 1588, the government was seeking details on the number of ‘tenants of Irish birth’ remaining on plantation estates, and officials demanded an enumeration of settlers in the plantation whose names were to be entered on ‘a register or calendar . . . like a muster book of all English persons, with the names and qualities of the said persons’.\(^{57}\) No such compilation has survived, although a detailed muster exists of those soldiers assigned to the undertakers for the years 1587 and 1588, and this, in some instances, identifies the English ploughmen on particular seignories.\(^{58}\) At the same time, steps were taken to identify those undertakers who had taken up residence and how they had

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\(^{56}\) Payne, *A Briefe Description*, 7; Henry Oughtred to Burghley, 10 May 1589 (SP 63/144/11).

\(^{57}\) Instructions to Sir Valentine Browne, Mar. 1587/8 (SP 63/134/15).

\(^{58}\) See especially ‘The Names of Sir Edward Fitton’s 25 Horsemens’, 12 Feb. 1587/8 (SP 63/139/44); other documents relevant to the muster are SP 63/130/21; SP 63/131/35; SP 63/134/33; SP 63/135/18; SP 63/135/98; SP 63/135/96 iv; SP 63/138/8 i; SP 63/138/20.
‘peopled their lands’. None of these investigations purported to be comprehensive, and only some of the respondents to the government surveys named those they had settled on their estates.59

Despite all their shortcomings, the reports collectively provide clear evidence of a steady influx of settlers to Munster and a considerable outlay on building, cultivation, and stocking of animals on the estates for which reports were made. The general conclusion of those who conducted the investigation of February 1589 was that 661 English ‘people’—by which they probably meant heads of households—were present on the properties from which reliable information was available. This figure (if we are to follow Michael Mac Carthy-Morrogh’s assumption that each head of a household represented five persons) implies a total settler population of 3,305 English individuals on those estates alone by 1589, and Mac Carthy-Morrogh suggests that the settler population in the province had increased to a total of 4,000 people by 1598.60

This first figure, which suggests that 3,000 individuals moved from England into Ireland in only four years, matches the more rapid population flows to European overseas settlements during the early modern centuries, and the experiment could be considered disappointing only because the movement tapered off after this initial burst.61 However the true impact of the plantation upon Munster, even in the first decades of its existence, becomes apparent only when it is taken into account that the English settlement was concentrated on particular estates and in particular parts of the province. Already, in 1589, some proprietors had accomplished as much as could have been expected of them in such a short time, and among those committed to meeting their responsibilities that very summer, at least two—Phane Beecher and Henry Oughtred—did live up to their promises. The report from the seignory

59 Those who identified their settlers by name were Sir Edward Denny (SP 69/144/24); Cal. State Papers Ireland, 1588–92, 169); William Trenchard (SP 69/144/25); Henry Cuffe (SP 69/144/26); Thomas Fleetwood (SP 69/144/31,32); Arthur Hyde (SP 69/144/68); Sir Christopher Hatton (SP 69/144/73); Sir Warham St Leger and Sir Richard Grenville (SP 69/144/74, 75); Henry Billingsley (SP 69/145/40, 41); others who reported in more general terms were Henry Oughtred (SP 69/144/11); Sir Edward Fitton and associates (SP 69/144/15); Alex Fitton, agent for Sir Edward Fitton (SP 69/146/33); Alexander Fitton and his brother Richard Fitton (SP 69/146/34); Phane Beecher (SP 69/146/1, and SP 69/146/45); Sir William Herbert (SP 69/144/41); Charles Herbert (SP 69/144/22); Sir George Bourchier (SP 69/144/23); Sir Walter Raleigh (SP 69/144/27); Marmaduke Redman (SP 69/144/33); Alexander Clarke (SP 69/144/67); Jesse Smythes (SP 69/144/66); Captain Francis Berkeley (SP 69/144/71); Arthur Robyns (SP 69/144/72); Edmund Mainwaring (SP 69/145/44); Sir Richard Grenville for his property in Kinalmeaky (SP 63/148/36).

60 ‘Memorandum of How Undertakers in Munster have Peopled their Lands’ (SP 69/141/37); ‘The Relation and State of English in Munster Given to H.M. Attorney and Sir Edward Fitton this Last Summer and since’ (SP 69/141/58); the military musters that named ploughmen as well as soldiers made it clear that they were not taking account of women, servants, or labourers present; see Mac Carthy-Morrogh, Munster Plantation, 115–16, where he only allows for 328 households and a possible 2,640 settlers in 1589; Sheehan, ‘The Population of the Plantation of Munster’.

of Christopher Hatton gives a vivid impression of the effort being made to promote what would become a successful enterprise. The construction of a grand residence at Cappoquin was ‘already underway’ and Hatton’s agent, one William Edwards, as well as Thomas Crayford and Geoffrey Lee had each been granted a freehold of land and placed in possession of the ruins of a castle. Besides these, there were twenty-two English men and eight English women on the estate, although such names as John ap Hugh, carpenter, and Gryffeth Owen suggest that some of the ‘English’ were in fact Welsh. Then a list of fifty-three ‘Irish people descended of English race’ indicates that the property was still primarily reliant on the native population to produce a rental income, and the census of livestock on the property provides a further guide to the balance between English and Irish economic forces on the seignory of 12,000 acres. The settlers claimed ownership of 300 cattle, 400 sheep, two teams of English horses and ten other horses, and sixty milch kine, while the ‘inhabitants’ were credited with eighteen ploughs, 167 cows, and 1,000 sheep.62

There was a much greater presence of English people on the property held jointly by Sir Warham St Leger and Sir Richard Grenville but this was not surprising because they both had long experience in Ireland, and some of their English tenants may have been in the country before the plantation got under way. However, no freeholders had been established on their land because no patent for their estate had been granted while the title to it was being disputed in law. They nonetheless maintained 145 ‘persons of natural English birth’ at their ‘charge’ between them, and in identifying these by name it was mentioned incidentally that William Teigg, gent., was ‘a Cornishman’; this detail suggests that he spoke Cornish since he was the only one of several Teiggs listed who was so identified. The listing also mentioned that one Robert Chandler had been ‘lent by Sir Warham to William Edwards’, on Hatton’s seignory, ‘to make a mill’, and St Leger could obviously dispense with Chandler’s services because he admitted to having sown no grain on the estate. St Leger and Grenville seem, however, to have been involved with the selective breeding of livestock because they distinguished between animals of English and Irish breed in their herd, with most of the English animals being bulls and rams, except for ‘4 English horses able to serve for light horsemen’.63

There was also a significant English presence on the seignory of Henry Billingsley in County Limerick. He claimed to have removed all Irish residents from the property and he boasted of ‘40 households’ composed of people ‘of English birth, freeholders, farmers, and copyholders . . . whereof some have sixteen, some seventeen persons in a house, some more some less,

63 The answers of Sir Warham St Leger and Sir Richard Grenville (SP 63/144/74-75).
they which have least have four or five’. The moveable wealth on the
Billingsley estate was again expressed principally in livestock but he claimed
that there had been 100 acres under wheat the previous year ‘and as much
of summer corn’. This may have been exaggerated since in another report,
which has a ring of truth to it, the respondent professed himself interested in
sowing wheat, oats, and barley, but then admitted that he had used his two
ploughhorses principally for bringing timber and stone for his house ‘now
half finished’.64

These details provide some measure of the progress of Munster planters
during the early years when they were under close scrutiny. Perhaps a more
accurate pointer of the settlers’ estimation of the agricultural potential of the
province may be the enumeration, taken by St Leger’s clerk, of all the live-
stock in County Cork. He found—in the aftermath of war—that there were
still 36,000 ‘cows’ in the county, the same number of three- and four-year-
old beasts, 20,000 two-year-old cattle, 15,000 calves, 26,000 garrans and stud
mares with proportionate numbers of yearling and two-year-old colts, besides
75,000 sheep, 36,000 goats, and 36,000 hogs. This suggests that St Leger’s
secret ambition was to build and improve upon the pre-plantation economic
base. If such was the case he was not alone, since the Royal Commission of
1615 remarked that in those places of Munster where the English occupied
‘there is none, or very little, manurance or tillage of the ground . . . but that
they have converted the arable ground into pasture which they commonly
graze with unprofitable cattle, as garrans, studs, [and] young cattle’. This,
despite the rhetoric of the promoters of plantation in Munster, made eminent
sense because the land and climate made the province better suited to
pastoralism rather than to tillage, and because meat and the by-products of
stock-raising—hides, wool, and tallow—then commanded premium prices on
European markets.65

When such economic considerations are taken into account, it seems that
undertakers’ progress reports for 1589 would have appeared satisfactory to
any reasonable investigating official, even if little tillage was in evidence. What
would have most disturbed officials was that a significant number of the
undertakers did not respond to the questionnaire, and these delinquents
included all the Irish-based grantees, with the sole exception of Jesse Smythes.
The general failure of this group to make returns suggests that they had done
little or nothing to meet the plantation conditions; an impression that is
upheld by Smythes’s answer, to the effect that he had placed no tenants and
was contemplating setting his land to ‘such as have been soldiers in this land
and now out of entertainment’. Therefore Smythes’s metaphorical pro-

64 Answer of Henry Billingsley (SP 63/145/2); see also answer of Robert Cooper, agent for Henry
Billingsley, undertaker (SP 63/145/40); answer of Henry Oughtred (SP 63/144/11 i).
65 ‘Note of the Numbers of Cattle in County Cork’, May 1589 (SP 63/144/78); ‘Council Book of
the Munster Presidency’ (BL, Harley MS 697, 24 July 1615, fo. 94v).
nouncement concerning Irish tenants, that he would ‘rather set fire in the
nest than such birds should roost in any land of his’, speaks more of the stri-
dency of his views than of his ability to be an effective planter. 66

Besides undertakers like Jesse Smythes (and Edmund Spenser fits into this
same category), who failed to make an impression as planters because they
lacked the resources and social standing to do so, there were others who had
both the means and the will to succeed but whose progress was hindered
because their titles to their property were being disputed in law. One such
was Henry Oughtred, who had twice visited his estate before 1589 and who
had maintained an agent there for two years, but had still not succeeded in
passing his patent because his title to some of the property was being chal-
lenged. By that date, Oughtred was able to report that he had placed two
freeholders and twelve copyholders, but that ‘divers others’ he had brought
over from England with his ‘own money’ had returned again ‘for lack of
assurance’. 67 Arthur Robyns similarly experienced difficulty in appointing
freeholders because his title was ‘constantly challenged’ both by the former
owner James Fitzjohn Barry, ‘a pardoned rebel but a former coiner of money’,
and by ‘one Edmund Tyrrey a merchant of Cork who claimeth to have a
mortgage of his [Barry’s] lands if he recover it from her Majesty’. Here
Robyns was learning the truth of his earlier observation, made when he was
surveying the escheated lands in the province, that ‘the gentlemen and free-
holders’ in Ireland were ‘accustomed seldom or never to sell any land but to
mortgage it, either for money or kine’, and that such acquisitions were ‘as
good as freeholds and fee simples for they are seldom or never redeemed’.
In this instance the operation of mortgage procedures meant that Robyns
had to confront the claims of a Cork merchant, who was better able than
Barry to challenge his claims under English common law. 68

Another factor which influenced the pattern of settlement was the quality
and location of the land available to undertakers. The scheme of plantation
had distinguished between profitable and waste land but the planners then
proceeded from the assumption that all profitable land was of equal value
regardless of its location or productivity. The undertakers soon came to
recognize that location, agricultural potential, and the availability of such
natural resources as timber and fish all influenced the value of property, and
this same lesson was not lost on those who made the journey to Ireland to
become tenants to particular proprietors. The assumption of the planners
was that settlers would always remain under the control of the proprietors
who brought them to Munster at their own cost. However it soon emerged
that once settlers had arrived in Ireland, they claimed independence from

66 Answer of Jesse Smythes (SP 63/144/69).
67 Answer of Henry Oughtred (SP 63/144/1 i).
68 Answer of Arthur Robyns (SP 63/144/72); request (probably by Robyns) re concealed land (SP
63/139/64).
their superiors, and showed no hesitation about abandoning their original patrons to seek out the best possible conditions on offer. Jesse Smythes, who was himself conspicuously ineffective in retaining tenants, described ruefully how potential settlers ‘first will come but to see, making no absolute agreement before they have seen’. What they wanted to see, as had been explained by Payne, were the rents being charged and the leasing terms being offered, but the quality and location of tenancies must also have influenced their preferences.69

Some who made the journey to Ireland to accept tenancies from particular planters went so far as to abandon the settler community entirely and accept the more favourable terms that were offered them by the native lords of the province. Jesse Smythes again commented specifically on this development, noting that the ‘Irish landlords’ with ‘great territories waste’, due to population loss during the war, were so desperate for tenants that they were ready to ‘allure’ many of the incoming English population ‘with proffers of good land at as easy rates almost as the patentees pay her Majesty’. Such moves outside the orbit of the plantation could be easier than movement within the plantation, because whenever incoming settlers shifted from their original patrons to other planters it gave rise to differences between their betters. Mobility of this kind, for example, provided edge to the rivalry between Sir William Herbert and Sir Edward Denny, with Herbert admitting that he had given tenancies to some people associated with Denny, but denying that he had lured them away from his rival. As he stated his case, Herbert provided the best insight we have on the selective movement of settlers. He had never, he insisted, accepted any of those who had been brought by Denny to Ireland until they had first ‘abandoned’ him, ‘remained with another lord’ for a time, and then made their way to Herbert ‘when neither they were [Denny’s] tenants nor he my friend’.70

The settlers who became the subject of this dispute were obviously engaging in a second phase of betterment migration, this time within Ireland, and a few other scattered references, including those in Payne’s Briefe Description, indicate that such shifting about by tenants in search of better opportunity was not limited to those English immigrants who had first been placed on the poorer-quality lands of County Kerry. Rather, it seems that as English settlers became better acquainted with the opportunities which Munster had to offer them, they gravitated towards the more desirable situations in the province, regardless of whether the lands were owned by planters or natives. These choice locations were quickly identified as the valley of the river Blackwater, with its outport at Youghal; the valley of the Bandon river, with its outport at Kinsale; the fertile territory lying south of Cork city towards

69 Smythes to Burghley, 7 Mar. 1592 (SP 63/163/56); Payne, A Briefe Description.
70 Smythes to Burghley, 7 Mar. 1592 (SP 63/163/56); Herbert to Sir Valentine Browne, 1 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 63/140/1 i).
Carrigaline along the estuary of the river Lee; the lush countryside of County Limerick drained by three tributaries of the Shannon, the rivers Maigue, Deale, and Feale; and a narrow strip along the west coast of County Cork which gave access to rich sea-fishing and other natural resources.

The lure of this western area explains the presence there, at the outset of the seventeenth century, of one ‘John Winspeace, shipwright, living in Ireland at the Bay of Bantry . . . near the woods of Langarra . . . having now settled himself and family there upon the fishing trade’. Winspeace, having made a living from fishing during the war years, was contemplating a resumption of his craft in the more peaceful times of King James’s reign, and was soliciting an order from some of the corporation of London for pipe staves, kneetimber, and coopers’ timber which he was willing to deliver ‘felled and squared’ at stated prices and to convey the same, in a lighter or boats that he would construct for the purpose, to ships that would be dispatched from London to Bantry Bay.71 Many English besides Winspeace settled in west Cork beyond the reach of the plantation and official authority, and one of the principal preoccupations of the Munster presidency, once it recovered its authority in the early seventeenth century, was to rid the coast about Baltimore and Inisherkin of the communities of ‘desperate and dishonest men’ and ‘shameless and adulterous women’ who congregated in ‘divers taverns, alehouses and victualling houses’ which had been established to serve the needs of pirates who made use of those coasts.72

A similar spillover of English settlement beyond the confines of the plantation occurred wherever a possibility existed either to exploit the raw materials which Ireland had to offer, or to grow rare, and therefore expensive, agricultural commodities. Richard Speart and his fellow projectors who sought permission, in 1583, to become involved in Munster attributed their interest to the possibility of producing woad, madder, and hemp as well as the opportunity to engage in fishing and iron smelting. This overture led to the granting of a licence to grow woad and madder in the vicinity of Youghal to two famous projectors, Peter Demaistres and John Williams, who, as was noted in Chapter 2, succeeded in attracting investment from Francis Walsingham and Lord Deputy Perrott. Details on this venture are known because the projectors were brought before the courts on the charge of having defrauded their investors, but the high-powered support they enjoyed may explain why they, and other English ‘woadmen’ from Southampton, Chichester, and Bury St Edmunds, were able to experiment with their craft in such diverse areas as Counties Tipperary, Queen’s, Dublin, Kildare, and Louth as well as in the planted areas of Munster.73

71 Petition of Winspeace, undated (SP 43/130/70).
72 By the President and Council of Munster, 6 Aug. 1616 (BL Harley MS 697, fo. 36).
73 Request of Richard Speart and others, 16 Dec. 1583 (SP 63/106/15); ‘Warrant for Granting a Privilege . . . to Peter Demestrias and John Williams’, 1584 (SP 63/113/55); Williams to his sister, 28
Such developments would suggest that direct plantation, which brought settlers to Ireland in the first instance, soon gave way to plantation by colonial spread. This phenomenon was also to become a feature of British settlement in seventeenth-century Ulster, and plantation by colonial spread was to occur in almost all plantations of white settlement established in different Atlantic locations under the aegis of the British monarchy during the course of the seventeenth century.74 In the case of Munster, however, many of the more ambitious and more capable undertakers encouraged this spread when it was to their advantage. These, after all, had been the first to evaluate where opportunities lay, and they seized the better-quality and best-situated land at the very outset of the plantation. Then, once they were established in prime locations, they were in a position to accelerate the process of colonial spread by enticing English tenants away from their previous landlords. William Herbert denied that he was guilty of such sharp practice, but neither denial nor apology was offered by Sir Walter Ralegh or his agent when a similar complaint was lodged on behalf of Thomas Fleetwood, whose seignory lay on the river Bride close to the Ralegh seignory. It was Fleetwood’s contention that Ralegh’s agent, one Robert Maole, did ‘vex and trouble him in seeking to draw his tenants from him’.75

Therefore, the clustering of English settlement that manifested itself in sixteenth-century Munster, and which would be sustained into the seventeenth century, was the product both of initial placement and of subsequent dispersal. Dense settlement always occurred and was sustained where scrupulous undertakers received estates in prime locations, but not even the most conscientious of those who were assigned less desirable estates could prevent the tenants they brought with them from England or Wales from shifting about in search of either better, or more favourably situated, land. One of the less fortunate undertakers was Sir William Herbert who was not only accused by his neighbour Edward Denny of having stolen his tenants, but had difficulty in retaining even these. When he reported on the habitation of his seignory, Herbert was able to claim only twenty ‘persons of English birth’, as opposed to ‘above a hundred’ Irish tenants to none of whom he had given leases ‘for longer term than one year’. The harsh reality, which...
Herbert acknowledged in his report, was that land in nearby County Limerick was ‘far better’ than land in Kerry, and neither he nor Denny could prevent their tenants from drifting there. Perhaps it was this general failure of Herbert to retain English or Welsh tenants on his Kerry estate, and his consequent reliance on Irish tenants to pay him rent, which explains why he devoted more attention than most planters to discerning how best to convert the Irish population to a civil condition and the Protestant religion.76

While we can speculate on the relative importance of the capability of undertakers and the attractiveness of resources in determining the pattern of English settlement in the Munster plantation, it is evident that some of the undertakers lacked the ambition and the resources to be effective planters. These, quite clearly, welcomed the opportunity to acquire broad acres and a social elevation that exceeded their wildest dreams, but there was never any possibility that they could have met the conditions of the plantation because of the high costs involved. Those, like Jesse Smythes, Richard Beacon, and Edmund Spenser, whose only income was what they commanded as crown servants in Ireland, were quite obviously incapable of meeting the plantation conditions, and it can be said in defence of the designers of the scheme that it had not been originally envisaged that people with such limited means would be countenanced as undertakers. Servitors, however, were not the only ones who lacked the resources to fulfil their contracts. The indefatigable William Herbert complained, in 1589, of ‘Mr. Stone the Queen’s footman and one Champion a man of Sir Walter Ralegh’s the one of them worth little, the other worth nothing, neither of them even able to perform what they have undertaken nor the hundreth part thereof’, and George Stone and John Champion did indeed prove to be dismal failures as planters.77 Some undertakers who had no interest in becoming effective colonizers were nonetheless interested in the enterprise because of the opportunity that existed to strip their estates of natural assets, especially timber, while even some conscientious planters could not refrain from taking advantage of the opportunities for quick profit which would help defray their initial outlays. Thus the Irish landowner Morishe Shighan, in complaining of trespass done by tenants of Sir George Bourchier, claimed that they had staked a claim on his land by building ‘a few thatched cottages’ and doing ‘some ploughing’ merely because they wanted to ‘spoil’ his wood ‘to the great decay thereof to his great damage’.78

Therefore, as we appraise the efforts of the undertakers who participated in the Munster plantation, account must be taken of the different ways in

76 Answer of Sir William Herbert (SP 69/144/21); Herbert wrote several reports on how best to reform the Irish but his most considered statement was elaborated in Latin in his Croftus sive de Hibernia liber.
77 Herbert to Burghley, 13 Sept. 1589 (SP 69/146/41).
78 Petition of Morishe Shighan to Privy Council, [30 July 1591] (SP 69/159/25).
which they impinged upon native society. Those who strove conscientiously to meet their contractual obligations, and had the means to do so, obviously presented an immediate threat to the indigenous population in the localities in question because they were aiming to rid their properties of all Irish habitation, but they disturbed their neighbouring Irish lords only to the extent that they deprived them of local political influence and occasionally trespassed on their property in pursuit of exploitable natural resources. Contrariwise, those who lacked both means and ambition to be good planters were anxious to retain Irish tenants on their properties, albeit at extortionate rents, but these were notoriously rapacious, and therefore disruptive of the wider Irish society, because they were driven by need to seek out windfall profits by a variety of means. The activities of this second group were commented upon most graphically by Sir Thomas Norris, vice-president of Munster, who, on his return to his post in early 1589 (after a brief interlude of military service in Ulster), found that the principal disorder in the province was due to the conduct of ‘sundry of the undertakers’ who, supposing ‘themselves absolutely freed from all men’s government in Ireland’, had trespassed upon the property of those Irish lords who had always been obedient to the crown.79

These rapacious ones worked in concert with the captains who held crown land in custodiam, and whose conduct we discussed in Chapter 2, and they offered the same rationalizations as the captains for their actions. Thus Sir Edward Denny could remonstrate as well as any soldier on the tyranny and essential disloyalty of all Irish lords. All of them, he averred, neither loved the queen nor made ‘her sufficient known unto her people’ but strove rather to ‘keep them so in ignorance for their own assurance, strength, and glory sake that they may know no queen or power beyond or above themselves’. In making this claim Denny had particularly in mind the earl of Clancar, formerly the Mac Carthy Mór of south-west Munster. The incoming planters looked closely at Clancar, both because he was the most influential Gaelic Irish lord who had retained property in the province, and because he was especially active in opposing their incursions into his area of influence. St Leger complained that Clancar had expelled, and threatened to murder, the undertaker Alexander Clarke, who upheld the interest of Attorney General Popham, from the area of Clandonnel Roe in west Cork, allegedly saying ‘that neither the Lord Deputy nor Vice-President should have to do with those lands for rather he would spend his life than any man should enjoy those lands but himself’.80

This supposed onslaught on Clarke happened a year after Clancar had outwitted the planters, and especially Sir Valentine Browne, for the posses-

79 Sir Thomas Norris to Burghley, 21 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 63/140/36).
80 Denny to Burghley, 26 July 1587 (SP 63/130/52); St Leger to Burghley, 22 June 1589 (SP 63/145/19).
sion of the seignory that Browne had been assigned. On that occasion, Clancar had disputed Browne’s claim before the courts and by direct appeal to the queen, and the issue had been resolved in the earl’s favour on the understanding that the earl’s daughter, who was his only legitimate child under English law, should marry Nicholas Browne, the son and heir of Sir Valentine. Therefore, it seemed that the entire lordship of Clancar would fall into planter hands on the earl’s death. This arrangement, which met with the enthusiastic approval of all settlers, came to nought when the earl had his daughter secretly married to her cousin Florence Mac Carthy, who was then well placed to succeed to the earldom as well as his own patrimony. This outcome enraged and alarmed all planters and servitors in the province, and all would have agreed with St Leger’s solution that Florence Mac Carthy should be sent a prisoner to England where Clancar’s daughter might be ‘divorced from him . . . and she married to some English husband’ of the queen’s choosing. This extreme solution was not followed, and the rancour of the planters against Florence Mac Carthy remained constant. However, the episode is of interest for our present purpose because it illustrates one method by which the leaders of the settler community had hoped to enhance their interest in the province at the expense of the landholders who had survived the original confiscation.81

Our next example of the settlers involving themselves in the internal affairs of an Irish lordship concerns another Mac Carthy family, this time the lords of Muskerry in north-west Cork. In this instance there was a disputed succession to the lordship, and the spokesmen for the settler community testified solidly in favour of Cormack Mac Dermod Mac Carthy, who, they contended, had been defrauded by his uncle, Sir Cormack Mac Teige Mac Carthy, when Cormack had been left a minor of 7 years old on the death of his father Sir Dermod Mac Teig Mac Carthy. The settlers now wanted to set aside the patent for the property which the queen had granted to the uncle. They therefore pleaded that Cormack Mac Dermod Mac Carthy and his ancestors had ‘by lineal descent, time out of mind, held the same according to the common law of England and Ireland, and [had] obtained several grants from the kings of England strengthening and confirming their English tenure’. And in discrediting the rivals to Cormack Mac Dermod Mac Carthy the settlers now contended that these were striving ‘to establish an Irish tanist [tánaise, heir apparent] in that country to take away all possibility of wardship and escheat’. It is true that the settlers in Munster, even at this early stage, looked hungrily at the possibilities which the wardship of the children of Irish lords presented to them, but their arguments in favour of Cormack Mac Dermod were entirely specious because the lordship in question was a Gaelic one. The truth seems

81 Sir Valentine Browne to Walsingham, 16 Oct. 1588 (SP 69/137/22); Nicholas Browne to Walsingham, 6 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 69/140/7); remembrances of Sir Richard Grenville, 10 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 69/140/16); St Leger to Queen, 10 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 69/140/14).
rather that they favoured Cormack over his uncle and cousin because he seemed the more compliant of the two, having been advised by Nicholas Skiddy, the Cork lawyer who had married Cormack’s sister, to comport himself after the English fashion. However a more cynical explanation for the concern of the settlers to intervene in this dispute was that it presented them with the opportunity to accentuate existing divisions within an Irish lordship with a view to hastening its eventual dismemberment.\(^\text{82}\)

While we can do no more than speculate as to the motives of the settler spokesmen in that instance, we can discern their purpose more clearly in relation to other lords and lordships in Munster which escaped confiscation. St Leger was firmly set against favour being shown to any Irish lords on the grounds that they were a ‘company of hollow hearted papisticall wretches’ whose claims and complaints should not be allowed to disinherit the queen’s ‘loving and natural English subjects’. Instead of making concessions to them, St Leger recommended the capture and safe keeping in England of three lords, Patrick Fitzmaurice, Patrick Condon, and the seneschal of Imokilly, on the grounds that he regarded them as ‘three very wicked men such as will never be good except they were to be made anew’.\(^\text{83}\)

St Leger also wished to have Lord Viscount Roche incarcerated, and Roche, for his part, believed himself to be the victim of a general planter conspiracy. Roche, who was supported by Ormond, complained that he was so impoverished by loss of land to the plantation that he was no longer able to maintain his ‘vocation and house’ as his ancestors had done. His situation had been worsened because he had been forced to mortgage yet more land to meet the cost of a visit to court to apprise the queen of his grievances, but his most immediate fear was that his planter neighbours were conspiring to deprive him of most of what remained of his estate. His complaints against them related to such violent acts as being shot at with an arrow and having goods stolen from his tenants, but his ultimate grievance was that the planters were able to exploit the law to his disadvantage. Roche instanced how Arthur Hyde had been able to insert the manor of Cregg and other named properties in his patent even though these were part of Lord Roche’s inheritance, and how Jesse Smythes had used his authority as chief justice of Munster, and as one of the commissioners for attainted lands, to lay claim to the manor of Carrigleamleary ‘and to have got cunningly a patent for the same’. However, Roche’s venom was directed especially against Edmund Spenser, clerk of the council of Munster, who ‘by colour of his office and by making corrupt bargains with certain persons’ had got them ‘falsely’ to pretend title to several castles and parcels of land which rightfully belonged to Roche.

\(^{82}\) St Leger to Walsingham, 25 Mar. 1588/9 (SP 63/142/12); Sir Nicholas White to Burghley, 25 Mar. 1588/9 (SP 63/142/13); the title of Cormack Mac Dermod for Muskerry, 25 Mar. 1588/9 (SP 69/142/14); Sir Richard Grenville to Walsingham, 27 Mar. 1589 (SP 63/142/53).

\(^{83}\) St Leger to Queen, May 1589 (SP 63/144/82); Cal. State Papers Ireland, 1588–92, 200–3.
There is no evidence that the planters were engaged upon a similar onslaught against the inheritance of Lord Viscount Barrymore, whose property was based on Castlelyons in east County Cork, but the fact that St Leger compiled a detailed description of Barrymore’s manors suggests that he had set his sights on bringing them also into the direct or indirect control of himself or some other planter.  

These examples show that the plantation in Munster quickly began to assume an appearance and function very different from anything envisaged by its planners. The more conscientious and more prosperous undertakers soon began to create model settlements which they aspired to make exclusively English enclaves. However, their efforts were hindered because the lands they had been assigned were scattered parcels of property rather than the self-contained compact units which were necessary for creating model settlements, and plantation holdings became even more dispersed as Irish proprietors recovered substantial parcels of confiscated land through the law courts. Then, at the same time, those who lacked the resources to meet plantation conditions were busy in seeking to expand the scope of English ownership of property by undermining, or provoking, those Irish lords who still retained property and influence in the province. While it is possible to distinguish two groups of planters, these divisions were not absolute. Sir Walter Ralegh, for instance, certainly belongs among those who strove to meet the plantation conditions from the outset, and by 1590 had drawn to Munster some of those who had been involved with his Roanoke colony, including the limner John White. However, Ralegh also acted as protector of some of the more clamorous planters and captains, and the matter was further complicated because the captains, who held land in custodiam in the province, identified closely with those planters who targeted the surviving Irish lords for dispossession. Therefore, as the settler community began to establish itself, the two positions that seemed, at the outset, to be necessarily contradictory became confused. An even more important development was that those undertakers who favoured expansion were the more vocal and the more constantly present in Ireland, and their opinions began to become the dominant ones. St Leger, for example, was himself an energetic planter, but once he began to support the proposition that the settler community in Munster could never be secure until all Irish lords had been removed he became one of those who argued that the government was fully justified in acting outside the law to achieve this objective. Once he did so, St Leger was endorsing the position of such notorious adventurers as Edward Denny who held it ‘no[t] politik that the inhabitants of this nation should be left wealthy, populous and weaponed till they were

84 Lord Roche to Ormond, 16 Feb. 1588/9 (SP 69/141/26); complaints of Lord Roche, Oct. 1589 (SP 69/147/15 i); Bill against Lord Roche, 12 Oct. 1589 (Cal. State Papers Ireland, 1588–92, 247); ‘Note of Viscount Barrymore’s Manors’, 1588 (SP 69/139/61).
first brought to the knowledge of God, sovereignty of her Majesty, and to be answerable to the laws of the realm’. And that planter, according to Denny, who sought ‘to win them to God and her Majesty’ by moderate measures was ‘a sorry and poor man in judgement and utterly devoid of experience’. Therefore, as Denny put it succinctly, ‘justice without remedy must first tame and command them’, and (anticipating what Spenser would have to say in the View) Denny recommended that the entire province of Munster should be subjected to five years of rigorous government.

Here, as in so much else, Denny was opposing himself to the opinions of Sir William Herbert, his local rival in Kerry, but, for all the verbal clamour between the two, their opinions were not essentially different. Herbert, in addressing the same problem, pronounced himself fearful of the opposition to the ‘colony’ that would come from the native inhabitants whenever they would hold ‘the chief magistracy’, and his well-known arguments on how the Irish might be reformed by persuasion always proceeded from the premiss that the Irish lords would first have been made subservient to the incoming planters. In this respect, even Herbert was satisfied that the plantation was proceeding on correct lines because the government was beginning to rely on the new cohort of planter landowners to establish a virtual monopoly over such offices as sheriff and justice of the peace. This authority at the county level was supervised by the provincial council which became in effect an instrument of planter power; and, if we are to judge from the sole surviving council book, it functioned largely through the issuance of proclamations and orders by the provincial president.

Therefore, as the planters established themselves in the province and took stock of their situation, they came to concur that their influence would never have the desired ameliorative effect until such time as they had subverted the influence of the countervailing force which was represented on one level by the Catholic Church and on the other by the Irish lords and merchants who supported it. Their arrival at this conclusion, in turn, explains why the planters in the province, regardless of faction or disposition, could gravitate from optimism to despair. Thus as Jesse Smythes contemplated the reported presence of Jesuits in Waterford he pronounced in despair that ‘Ould Ireland [was] no changeling except there come new punishments to their old offences’, while, in the same letter, he looked forward to Kerry becoming ‘the best end of piety and justice’ once a godly bishop was appointed there.

These apparent inconsistencies could be reconciled because all planters, like Smythes, learned to think on the micro as well as on the macro level. Some began to consider their seignories as isolated units of civility, which is what the planners of the plantation intended them to be, and gave them

86 Denny to Walsingham, 25 July 1589 (SP 63/145/78).
87 Herbert to Walsingham, 12 July 1588 (SP 63/135/84); ‘Council Book of Munster’ (BL, Harley MS 697).
eponymous names such as ‘Denny Vale’ or ‘Colony Fleetwood’, while others, like Smythes, believed that nature had provided particular pockets of settlers with protection from outside contamination. Thus, when Smythes pleaded for a bishop to be appointed in Kerry, he was satisfied that the work of evangelization that this bishop would engage upon would prove enduring because ‘he doing his part, those mountains and the sea [would] impale a good both English and Christian Pale’. This sentiment was shared by the usually pessimistic William Herbert, who could wax eloquent at the prospect of his making ‘Kerry and Desmond a little England beyond Ireland’ just as ‘some worthy gentleman in time past [had] made Pembrokeshire a little England beyond Wales’. These examples could be multiplied as most undertakers strove to convince themselves that the plantation was secure even when they recognized that an onslaught was imminent.\(^{88}\)

### 3.3. THE CONSEQUENCES

As the various commentators within the English community in Munster appraised their position during the later 1590s they could see that neither the plantation as a whole, nor individual units within it, was insulated from outside influence. Even those few commentators who suspected that all was not well underestimated their vulnerability. Thus, even as some of the undertakers gave voice to their optimism, they expressed concern, rather than alarm, over the possibility of intrusion from outside cancelling all their achievements. The most immediate concern in the 1590s was that Ormond would again ‘come over general of Her Majesty’s forces and have the government of the province of Munster’ where, it was assumed, he would further promote the interests of Irish lords at the expense of the planters. The individual most threatened by this possibility was Sir Thomas Norris, the holder of the offices which might be granted to Ormond, and he appealed to Walsingham to have regard to his ‘own poor reputation’ if these changes in government were to be contemplated.\(^{89}\) The misgivings of Norris would have been shared by all, which would explain the ambiguous attitude towards Ormond voiced in Spenser’s *View*. It was, obviously, not expedient for Spenser to have either Eudoxus or Irenius challenge one who had rendered sterling service to the crown and who was secure in the royal favour, and the closest the discussants came to criticizing Ormond’s position was in suggesting that his palatinate jurisdiction should be revoked on the death of ‘that right noble man that is the lord of that liberty’, on the grounds that it provided a sanctuary to thieves and rebels.

\(^{88}\) Smythes to Herbert (SP 69/139/17 i); Jenkyn Conway to Denny, 7 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 69/140/8); order by Fitzwilliam and Council, 4 June 1590 (SP 69/153/3); Herbert to Burghley, 9 Jan. 1588/9 (SP 69/140/11).

\(^{89}\) Sir Thomas Norris to Walsingham, 22 Mar. 1589/90 (SP 69/151/29).
While thus criticizing the authority enjoyed by Ormond, Irenius, and the planters whose opinions he represented, fully appreciated that Ormond’s position in Tipperary provided the plantation with a bulwark against outside attack. This fact was tacitly acknowledged by Irenius when, in expounding on the ill will of the Irish population, with ‘their ears upright waiting when the watchword shall come that they should all rise generally into rebellion and cast away the English subjection’, remarked that they waited only for ‘the death of one noble person, who being himself most steadfast to his sovereign Queen, his country coasting towards the South Sea, stoppeth the ingate of all that evil which is looked for, and holdeth in those which are at his back with the terror of his greatness, and the assurance of his immovable loyalty’. 90

Despite this open acknowledgement of the planters’ precariousness, and their more explicit denunciations of the malevolence of the earl of Tyrone, who had been two years in open rebellion when the View was reaching completion, Irenius remained convinced that the English presence in the country could resist any possible local attack and, as is suggested by his reference to the south coast, that the plantation would collapse only in the event of Spain providing assistance to the rebels. 91 This, however, was becoming ever more possible in 1596 because, having tried all other options, the only means left open to an ageing King Philip II of Spain to take revenge for the humiliating defeat of his attempted invasion of England in 1588 was to provide support to Tyrone in his rebellion. 92 Even without this imminent threat, Irenius concluded that the plantation in Munster was not meeting the purpose it was intended to serve quite simply because those who were intended to promote a civilizing mission were themselves succumbing to the degeneracy of their Irish neighbours. Attention was given in Chapter 1 to the concern of Spenser over the issue of the inevitability of degeneracy, but we did not then follow the Spenser argument to its denouement where Eudoxus and Irenius concluded that any plantation that would resolve the malign condition of Ireland and halt the process of degeneration there would have to be dramatically different from what had been attempted in Munster.

The first essential characteristic that Spenser required in 1596 was that the plantation scheme should be promoted primarily by military men with previous experience in Ireland. The second distinguishing feature of Spenser’s scheme of plantation was that it would be pursued relentlessly until it had effected the overthrow of all Irish lords in all parts of the country, and until all surviving elements of the Irish population had been incorporated into a refashioned social order dominated by English-born soldier settlers. It was only then that Eudoxus and Irenius were satisfied that English islands of rural

90 Spenser, View, 30, 94.
91 The date of 1596 as the date of composition of the View is supported by Spenser’s references to the Tyrone rebellion, p. 96.
civility, such as had been introduced into Munster, and English-style towns, would promote the dynamic commercial life which was essential both to civil living and to the conversion of the native population to Protestantism.

When advocating this radical solution, Irenius admitted two principal obstacles to its fulfilment: first that the costs involved far exceeded what the queen would be likely to concede, and second that English captains and their men were more liable than anybody else to become degenerate. The discusants resolved the first of these problems by contending that the experiment would support itself financially, after a short-term initial cost, because the army would be able to enforce the collection of a composition rent in every area as it extended its authority into all parts of the country. The second problem was resolved to the satisfaction of Spenser’s characters just as it had been by Sir Thomas Smith, when they recommended that colonels rather than captains should be the linchpin of the scheme. The captains, as Irenius admitted from his description of their misdemeanours in Ireland, would be necessarily corrupt, and the success of the scheme depended therefore on ‘the care of the colonel’ who would be ‘a man of special assurance and integrity’ and who would enjoy extensive authority over the captains. This granting of untramelled power to the colonels was again justified, as it had been by Thomas Smith, by the invocation of his understanding of Roman precedent: ‘for this was the course which the Romans observed in the conquest of England, for they planted some of their legions in all places convenient, the which they caused the country to maintain . . . And this hath been observed in all princes in all countries to them newly subdued, to set garrisons among them to maintain them in their duty, whose burden they made them to bear.’

These recommendations of Spenser must have seemed extreme at the time of composition, and they certainly implied a radical criticism of the theory and practice of plantation in Munster up to that time. However, while they were extreme, Spenser’s ideas were not original since, as David Edwards has established, one of the prime concerns of English officials in Ireland at this very time was the recovery of their powers of martial law which had been curtailed during the government of Perrott. Spenser’s recommendation that a colonel, with military subordinates, was necessary to make way for a comprehensive plantation also derived from the contemporary English understanding of classical precedent, even if it came indirectly to Spenser through Sir Thomas Smith. Then also Spenser’s suggestion that the cost of his scheme should be met primarily from composition rents to be levied on Irish land was consistent with the endeavour of successive governments, ever since the middle of the sixteenth century, to extend the scope of composition rents to the point where they would meet the cost of governing Ireland. Moreover

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when Eudoxus and Irenius agreed upon their most radical proposition, that
a plantation scheme should remain in continual process until it had covered
the entire country, Spenser was reviving a view which had been current
among English officials at the outset of the plantation in Munster. This argu-
ment had been stated most emphatically, in 1583, by Geoffrey Fenton when,
in suggesting that Munster should be converted into ‘an English Pale’
managed by ‘a mere English government’, he held out the prospect that this
would become a bridgehead which would provide the queen with the opportu-
nity ‘in time’ to have ‘entrance into the other remote parts of the realm,
to reduce them after the line and square of Munster’.95

The reason, therefore, that these opinions seemed radical in 1596 was that
most planters, and their associates, had lost sight of the grander purpose
which had legitimized the plantation in the first instance, and had devoted
themselves instead to reaping whatever financial return was available to them.
The planters believed they could afford to do this because they were quietly
confident they could resist any challenge to their authority that might arise,
and those whose consciences troubled them could argue that there was some
moral purpose behind their existence in Ireland by pointing to the reforms
they had implemented on their own particular estates. Moreover the truly
scrupulous ones who recognized that reform meant ultimately a transforma-
tion in religious allegiance could draw solace from the endeavours of Bishop
Lyon of Cork, and much was made of the supposedly capacity audiences
who attended his Communion services of thanksgiving for deliverance from
the Spanish Armada.96

The falsity of these assumptions and self-deceits was exposed when the
settlement in Munster was dramatically overthrown in October 1598 with a
lightning strike from the Irish midlands, led by Owny O’Moore (an agent of
Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone), and supported by malcontents in Munster
who aimed to expel all English people from the province and to recover their
ancestral lands. Despite subsequent Protestant claims of a bloody slaughter,
it seems that no more than a few hundred settlers were killed, and the truly
demoralizing aspect of the insurrection for those who survived was that the
much-vaunted plantation was swept from the ground virtually without a fight,
and that the settlers were forced initially into their castles and then to the
port towns, from which most of them (including Spenser and some of his
family) retreated penniless to England. And, to add insult to injury, it was
clear that the fate of the settler community would have been even worse if
they had not enjoyed the protection of Ormond and those few Munster lords
who remained loyal to the crown even as Munster society was generally
absorbed into the polity of Tyrone. Then James Fitzthomas Fitzgerald, a

95 Fenton to Burghley, 6 Dec. 1583 (SP 63/106/4).
96 Fitzwilliam to Burghley, 12 Feb. 1589 (SP 63/141/21); same to same, 28 Feb. 1589 (SP 63/141/42).
nephew of the deceased earl of Desmond, laid claim to the extinguished title of his uncle. 97

This continued support of Ormond and his adherents was more appreciated by the queen and her advisers than by the survivors of the onslaught upon the plantation. Their immediate reaction, once they reached the security of England, was to decry all elements of the Irish population as an irredeemable people who had been directed in their perverse actions of murder and mayhem by the foreign enemies of England, and especially by the Pope. 98 Their call for revenge was answered by the government when it assigned an army of 3,000 men which (under the command of Sir George Carew who was appointed as president of Munster in 1600) had restored government authority, but not the English plantation, to the province before the anticipated Spanish support for Tyrone’s revolt disembarked at Kinsale in October 1601. 99

The ensuing battle of Kinsale, December 1601, which resulted in the defeat of Tyrone’s Irish army together with their continental allies, was the decisive encounter of Ireland’s Nine Years War, and victory for the English meant that the government could reassert its authority in Munster, and inevitably in all other provinces also. The continuing military campaign, which persisted to the final submission of Tyrone in March 1603, and which resulted in much of the country being placed under garrison government, was perceived by English servitors in Ireland at the time as preparatory for a comprehensive plantation of the country such as had been adumbrated in Spenser’s View. As this assumption gained ground, so also did Spenser’s related proposition that the plantation in Munster had been fundamentally flawed and that a fresh beginning was called for. This was put most forcefully by Fynes Moryson, secretary to Lord Mountjoy under whose deputyship the war was brought to a successful conclusion. Moryson not only decried the insufficiency of all plantations which had been attempted in Ireland previous to that date but held that their inadequacy had been principally responsible for the threat to the crown interest in the country. This was the logical conclusion to draw from his proposition that, between the Wars of the Roses and Tyrone’s rebellion:


99 The conduct of the war in Munster, from Carew’s perspective, is detailed in Thomas Stafford, Pacata Hibernia (London, 1633; 2 vols., Dublin, 1810), and, from the Irish perspective, in Philip O’Sullivan Beare, Historia catholica Ibernia compendium, ed. M. Kelly (Dublin, 1850); see also John J. Silke, Kinsale: The Spanish Intervention in Ireland at the End of the Elizabethan Wars (Liverpool, 1970).
All the English in general that voluntarily left England to plant themselves in Ireland, either under the said Undertakers in Munster or upon the lands of other English-Irish throughout Ireland or to live in the cities and towns, were generally observed to have been either Papists, men of disordered lives or bankrots. . . . By which course Ireland as the heel of the body was made the sink of England, the stench whereof had almost annoyed very Cheapside the heart of the body in Tyrone’s pestilent rebellion.

On the other hand, Moryson, like Spenser, believed that ‘those of the army’ which had been brought into Ireland to deal with the rebellion were ‘of another time . . . and well known to be of good condition’, and the expectation of the English community in Ireland was that the future settlement of the country would depend on the energies and resourcefulness of the force that fought the last of Queen Elizabeth’s Irish wars.¹⁰⁰

As we consider this appraisal of developments we can see that three essential consequences derived from what historians have come to describe as the First Plantation in Munster. The most obvious consequence was that the plantation society which had been painfully and expensively established over a process of thirteen years was swept from the ground. Yet the fact that a plantation society had been brought into being and that its opponents had ultimately been defeated meant that the government was honour-bound to ensure that the undertakers were recalled to their duty and compelled to re-establish the plantation on more secure foundations. However, as officials issued these directives, they were convinced that the initial scheme was defective principally because it had relied excessively on the educational efficacy of model settlements which would be erected within an Irish environment. Therefore, it came to be assumed that such settlements could never endure if left in isolation, and Spenser’s idea, that the entire country would have to be subjected to a scheme of plantation which would be promoted by the army, was adopted as a matter of principle by those who upheld the crown’s interests in the country, even if this idea was not endorsed as official government policy. Therefore, this first experience at plantation in Munster was to have a lasting influence on the formulation of English policy for Ireland until well into the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER FOUR
Plantation in Ireland 1603–1622:
Theory and Practice

4.1. THE POLITICS OF PLANTATION 1603–1622

It was explained in the previous chapter how the overthrow of the Munster settlement in 1598, followed by the intervention of Spain to assist Hugh O’Neill and his confederates, brought it home to Queen Elizabeth and her advisers that a real possibility existed that England’s interest in Ireland would be obliterated, and that Ireland would become a satellite jurisdiction of the Spanish monarchy. It was to prevent the effective encirclement of England by the power of Spain that the government authorized a level of military expenditure in Ireland such as could not have been imagined even a decade earlier. At the height of the war effort, according to the calculations of John Mc Gurk, the strength of the army reached 21,000 men, and the total cost of maintaining this force came to £1,845,696. Most of the soldiers, as had previously been the case, came from the west of England and from Wales, but many of the new recruits, and their captains, assigned to the wars in Ireland were seasoned campaigners who had fought in the Netherlands or Brittany, rather than the raw conscripts who were more typical of the Irish service, and those placed in charge of the campaign, ranging from the queen’s favourite Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, to Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, were people of the highest reputation in England.1 Therefore, as the queen and her officials fretted over the financial strain that the war was placing on the finances of the English state, they took consolation from the belief that some of the outlay would be recouped through the confiscations which would follow upon their eventual victory. Moreover they convinced themselves that the resulting plantations would prove enduring because they would be comprehensive, and would draw upon the talents of disciplined people with a commendable range of experience.2

I am grateful to David Armitage for his critical comments on an earlier version of this chapter.


2 See the opinion of Fynes Morison cited in Chapter 3 above; more generally on Mountjoy see Frederick M. Jones, Mountjoy 1563–1606: The Last Elizabethan Deputy (Dublin, 1958).
This opinion was supported enthusiastically by the soldiers, and their captains, who endured the privations of a long war not least because they expected to be rewarded in Irish land once crown authority was restored. However, both officials and soldiers miscalculated in their appraisal of the ability of Tyrone and his associates to remain in arms; English victory at Kinsale did make it clear that the authority of the English crown in Ireland would endure, but Tyrone was still capable of holding out in his Ulster fastnesses because, to the astonishment of government observers, his closest followers ‘could not be induced by any rewards of money, or pardons for their own estates or lives, to betray him’. The resulting war of attrition aimed at pinning Tyrone down in the heartland of Ulster proved to be expensive, and futile to the point where, after a half-year’s campaigning against Tyrone, all the government could hope for was that they ‘would force him to flie the kingdon’. This outcome would have placed Tyrone in an even better position to negotiate renewed support from the king of Spain, and thus revive his standing in Ireland.

While the queen was determined to reduce ‘the arch-traitor with her sword’, her senior officials in England, and especially Sir Robert Cecil (who had succeeded to the office of secretary once held by his father Lord Burghley), were aware that the continuing cost of war threatened the solvency of the English state and necessitated a massive devaluation of the coinage used for paying the troops in Ireland. Another consideration which could not be stated openly was that if Tyrone could hold out until the death of the ageing queen he could hope for mercy from her agreed successor, King James VI of Scotland, with whom he had maintained contact even at the height of the war.

The imminence of the queen’s death preyed also on the minds of the senior officers in Ireland for a more selfish reason. Those who believed that they stood to win favour at court were most anxious to be at the centre of power when the new monarch came to the throne. For this reason Mountjoy, and also Sir George Carew who commanded the crown forces in Munster, had been lobbying for their recall ever since the victory at Kinsale, and, with a view to facilitating this, they had both been pleading that they be allowed to arrive at some accommodation with Tyrone rather than pursue him to the bitter end. The granting of terms to Tyrone would have meant the abandonment of the scheme to declare confiscate the property of all in Ireland.


4 Lord Deputy and Council to Privy Council, 29 July 1602, in Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary* (London, 1617; 4 vols., Glasgow, 1907–8), iii. 184; Fenton to Cecil, 15 July 1602 (London, PRO, SP 63/211/85); Mountjoy to Cecil, 19 July 1602 (SP 63/211/88).

who had opposed the forces of the crown, and, with it, the disappointment
of the queen’s hope—and that of her captains and soldiers in Ireland—that
a comprehensive plantation of Ireland was about to be implemented. Already,
however, this prospect had been considerably compromised by the one
concession that the queen was willing to countenance, and which Mountjoy
and his officers had been seeking to implement throughout 1602. This was
that they should receive to mercy ‘the secondary members and urighths
[uirrithe, satraps] from him by whom that life which is left him standeth’, but
that Tyrone himself was to be ‘left to feel the just reward of his foul demerits’.6
Many of the lesser lords in Ulster, and in the other provinces, who had been
in arms against the crown were granted mercy by Mountjoy, but neither he
nor his officers had confidence in such arrangements. Thus when word
reached Sir Arthur Chichester, who was in command of the military
endeavour in north-east Ulster, that some of those pardoned by Mountjoy
had renewed contact with Tyrone he cried out in anguish that it was ‘easier
for Her Majesty to make a new conquest of the country than bring those to
truth and honest obedience’ who were ‘beasts in the shape of men’.7

This outburst suggests that Chichester, like all career officers in Ireland,
would not have wanted any of the rebels pardoned, but, in the extreme situ-
ation in which they found themselves, they would have preferred to see mercy
conceded to the lesser lords in Ulster rather than to Tyrone. Mountjoy was
of a contrary opinion, and as the war—with its attendant costs—persisted,
he sought permission to enter into negotiations with Tyrone, rather than with
any of the lesser lords. Robert Cecil shared this opinion, which explains
why Mountjoy was finally granted royal permission, in February 1603, to
enter into negotiations with Tyrone. The generosity of the terms finally
granted by Mountjoy to Tyrone, on 30 March 1603, may have owed some-
thing to the governor’s concern that the business should be settled before
Tyrone was alerted to the fact that Queen Elizabeth had died some days
previously, and it certainly owed much to Mountjoy’s determination to win
his own recall to England.8

Even if Mountjoy’s leniency can thus be attributed to short-term consid-
erations he stood firmly by his decision and invited Tyrone together with
Rory O’Donnell (brother to Tyrone’s principal confederate Red Hugh
O’Donnell, who had died in Spain where he had gone to seek further help
after the debacle at Kinsale) to accompany him to England where they might
make their peace with King James. The clear implication of this was that
it was to be these two principal rebels, rather than the lesser lords who
had forsaken Tyrone while the war was still in progress, who would find
favour with the king. There was, as Mountjoy saw it in 1603, no merit to the

6 Queen to Lord Deputy, received 8 Mar. 1602, in Morison, Itinerary, iii. 131–2.
7 Chichester to Cecil, 15 Jan. 1602 (SP 63/210/24).
piecemeal settlements which he had been obliged to sanction during the closing stages of the war. Instead, he advised that all such previous agreements should be set aside in favour of one final settlement with the leaders in Ulster. The principal advantage of this arrangement, he asserted, was that it would have ‘one assured in Tirconnell and another in Tyrone’ each ‘able utterly to suppress’ his local opponents, thus guaranteeing order in the province.9

This dramatic cancellation of all previous arrangements met with strident criticism from the officers stationed in Ulster, and Sir Henry Docwra, who commanded the garrison at Derry, came forward as the champion of those Ulster lords who, as he represented it, had been left unprotected under the vengeful tyranny of Tyrone.10 These English officers may have been inspired by a concern for justice, but they were certainly perturbed because they had been holding in trust those substantial properties that had been reserved to the crown when each of these local surrenders had been arranged. Apart from such material considerations, the captains also considered that their honour had been impugned by Mountjoy’s settlement with Tyrone since it was they who had negotiated these early surrenders which were being summarily discarded. But the privately stated opinions of the captains on the character of such lesser Irish lords as Niall Garbh O'Donnell, Donal O'Cahan, and Turlough Mac Art, the grandson of Turlough Luineach O'Neill, whose causes they were sponsoring, indicates that they had no more confidence than Mountjoy that these would constitute a cohort of loyal subjects. On the contrary, the army officers seemed convinced that at least some of these would again stray into rebellion. However, they were satisfied that they had the capacity to deal with any such contingency, and they even welcomed the prospect of local disturbances which would provide them with the pretext to declare the lands of the rebellious lords confiscate to the crown. The arrangement which Mountjoy had negotiated with Tyrone left scant hope that any lands would become available through escheats because Tyrone had the capacity both to manage his estates efficiently, and to steer a cautious course in his dealings with the government. The captains were, therefore, appalled at the favour that was being shown to Tyrone by their superiors, not only because he had been their most formidable opponent during the course of the war, but because the terms being granted to him, and his associate Rory O'Donnell, seemed to put paid to any possible plantation in Ulster.

The frustrations endured by most serving officers and officials in Ireland when Tyrone was granted a royal pardon were articulated by the courtier

Sir John Harington who complained ruefully that he, who had been driven to ‘eat horseflesh at Munster’, had ‘lived to see that damnable rebel Tir-Owen brought to England, courteously favoured, honoured and well liked’. Harington’s resentment, which was shared by many others who ‘did hazard their lives to destroy him’, foreshadowed that which would be endured by successive groups of crown servants in Ireland throughout the seventeenth century on those many occasions when their superiors, whether in England or Ireland, placed the concerns of the metropolitan government above those of the settler community in Ireland.  

The servitors realized that their opposition to what was in prospect accorded with popular sentiment in England where it had proved necessary for Mountjoy to request a royal proclamation directing that Tyrone was to be treated with respect. 12 This realization may have emboldened the servitors in Ireland to persist with their demands for further plantations, even when they realized that this course of action ran counter to the policies favoured by the crown, on the advice of Mountjoy (created earl of Devonshire in 1603), and with the agreement of Sir Robert Cecil (created Viscount Cranbourne in 1604 and earl of Salisbury in 1606). The government’s first and most flagrant breach with principle, as the servitors in Ireland interpreted it, was the granting of a pardon to Tyrone. This, they realized, would be followed by a restoration to him of the lordship of Tyrone, with but minor reservations for the crown, and the grant of the O’Donnell lordship to Rory O’Donnell, who was duly conferred with a new title, earl of Tyrconnell. These two grants obviously cancelled the possibility of any significant plantation in Ulster.

The servitors believed that the government had further lost the opportunity to consolidate its position at the expense of its enemies when, in 1603, it issued an Act of Oblivion pardoning all offences committed in Ireland during the war. The logical consequence of this was the creation of a Commission for Defective Titles, duly established in 1606, which provided those Irish lords who did not have proper legal title to the lands they occupied, or those who stood to forfeit their estates because they had taken up arms against the crown, with the opportunity to obtain secure title to their estates. These measures, as they were described by one of Mountjoy’s supporters, were ‘for the better appeazing of strife, contentions, and suits of law in time to come, among the inhabitants of the land’. However, while normalizing the relationship between landowners and the state, these measures also cancelled the possibility of proceeding with plantations in those parts of Ireland—mostly Gaelic and

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Gaelicized lordships in the midlands and west of the country—where English common law had not previously been in operation and where many of the lords had supported Tyrone’s rebellion.13

Another complaint of the servitors was that the government did not take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen its position relative to the Old English population, especially with the merchants of the towns, at the close of the war. Relations between government officials and the Old English merchants in the towns and cities had been tense during the war because officials and military men had to proceed cautiously lest they should drive this community also to join the rebellion. However, while observing the constraints that were placed upon them, the servitors were resentful and jealous of the towns. Their principal criticism was that merchants had offered scant support for the government’s action despite having derived considerable benefit from ‘the mass of treasure’ sent by the queen to pay her army in Ireland which had been ‘expended by the Captains and soldiers amongst them’. This ingratitude was compounded by the widespread belief that the towns had sold ‘their merchandise to the rebels (underhand) at very excessive rates’, thus becoming the ‘principal aiders, abettors, and upholders of this unnatural rebellion’. And an even worse transgression, in the eyes of the servitors, was that townsmen had taken advantage of the government’s preoccupation with the war during the 1590s to invite continentally trained priests to engage in missionary work aimed at consolidating Catholicism among the English-speaking population, and to halt their possible defection to Protestantism. The immediate consequence of this frustration of the state’s purpose, claimed Thomas Stafford who had watched developments in Munster at close hand, was that the townspeople, under the influence of their priests, had taken to appointing lawyers, who also had had some education on the Continent, to serve as their mayors. Here, Stafford instanced how Mayor Geoffrey Gallway of Limerick did by his ‘malicious counsel and perjurious example’ persuade the townsmen both to challenge the right of the government to claim financial support from the towns in wartime, and to dissuade ‘the Mayor, Aldermen, and generally the whole city from coming to the church, which before they sometimes frequented’.14

Stafford believed that such flagrant defiance should have been punished, and what he had to say of the Munster towns was no different in urban centres in Leinster. These, according to Barnaby Riche, did ‘swarm with Jesuits, seminaries, and massing priests, yea and friars, that have recourse into Dublin itself [who kept] such a continual and daily buzzing in the poor people’s ears, that they were not only led from all duty and obedience to

their Prince, but also drawn from God by superstitious idolatry, and so brought headlong to hell'. The misgivings of such observers seemed to be borne out by the religio-constitutional claims for independence from state control articulated by the corporations of the Munster towns on the death of Queen Elizabeth. Mountjoy had then compelled the townsmen to renounce their more extravagant demands which included claims to political autonomy, and to the right to practise Catholicism even within the precincts of the historic cathedrals and churches which had come into Protestant use. However, while forcing the corporations to acknowledge that the representatives of the crown did have authority over them, and while obliging them to swear an oath of allegiance to King James, Mountjoy did not otherwise punish the townspeople. Rather, he had left them to practise Catholicism in the privacy of their homes until such time as the king would regulate otherwise. Instead, claimed the servitors, the governor should have used the rigour of the law to root out papistry. By this they meant the imposition of heavy fines on those recusants in the towns who, as they saw it, had been guilty of treason, the confiscation of their property, and the curtailment of Catholic control of the corporations. The servitors also wished to have Protestant clergy appointed to town parishes, and, with a view to facilitating their missionary work, they called for the expulsion of seminary priests and Jesuits, for the appointment of supervisors to prevent their return, and for the erection of forts or bulwarks in the chief harbours which would ensure that no future contacts were made with foreign enemies.15

While the servitors were clear in their minds on what action should have been taken in relation to each of these three segments of the Irish population, they were also determined to take advantage of whatever opportunities arose—or which they themselves contrived—to recover the ground that had been lost to the English interest in Ireland. They soon had an opportunity to do so because, in the immediate aftermath of Mountjoy’s recall, they secured unexpected control of the Dublin administration. Originally, Mountjoy had intended to retain the title of lord lieutenant and to maintain a supervisory role over Irish affairs from the vantage point of England, while his trusted supporter Sir George Cary, the treasurer at war, would succeed him as lord deputy. Mountjoy was as good as his word and, in his capacity of earl of Devonshire and member of the English Privy Council, he played

15 B[arnaby] R[jiche], Greene’s News from Heaven and Hell (London, 1593), sig. h; T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, vol. iii (Oxford, 1976), 188–92; Jones, Mountjoy, 163–73; ‘The True Lets and Hindrances Why we are not Assured of a Settled Peace in Ireland’, undated (SP 46/130/154); ‘Note Concerning the Miserable Estate of Ireland by Reason of Popish Religion’, undated (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7053); for an account of the recusancy challenge of 1603 in the towns from a contemporary Catholic perspective see James White, ‘After the Death of Queen Elizabeth’, Duffy’s Irish Magazine (Nov. 1848), 270–5; (Dec. 1848), 296–302; I wish to thank Clodagh Tait for the reference to this edition of White’s testimony.
an active part in decision-making for Ireland until his illness towards the end of 1605, followed by his death in April 1606, brought this to an end.

Well before then, Devonshire was encountering difficulty in controlling Ireland from a distance. One major problem for him was that Cary’s period in office proved to be short lived because he resigned his position in 1604, possibly to escape an inquiry into the rumours of his peculation at the time of the devaluation of the coinage. Cary’s surprise replacement was Sir Arthur Chichester, himself a servitor and one of the more strident critics of Mountjoy’s arrangements. Chichester had earlier refused appointment to the temporary and less exalted position of lord justice, and we can take it that he succeeded to the deputyship by default because people of high social rank in England who would normally have lobbied for this influential position were unenthusiastic about exile in Ireland during a period of political transition at home.16 Once in office, which he held until 1616 (and in which he was followed by another servitor, Sir Oliver St John, 1616–21), Chichester was an unapologetic upholder of the interests of the servitors and was ably supported by Sir John Davies, a new appointee from England who had held the position of solicitor-general since September 1603 and who was to serve as attorney-general for Ireland 1606–19. Under these circumstances, the management of Ireland’s affairs fell to those who had a vested interest in reversing the settlement that had been dictated by Mountjoy at the end of the war, and, from 1605 until 1621, they set out, with a single-minded rigour, to identify a strategy that would eventually create a situation whereby most of the country would be made subject to officially sponsored plantations.17

The first target for the cohort of officials who came to dominate government in Dublin was the degree of religious freedom permitted to the Old English community, and especially to the leading Catholics in Dublin and the Pale. Observers had long bewailed the open practice of Catholicism in the towns, and most especially in Dublin, and they were offended by the general refusal of the principal citizens of the towns, including Old English holders of public office, to attend at Protestant service, even on ceremonial occasions. This flagrant disregard for the wishes of the crown had become more entrenched due to the evangelization endeavours of seminary priests, and the only prominent members of the Dublin community who would attend Protestant service, at the outset of the seventeenth century, were those who had broken with Catholicism to become committed Protestants, usually in the wake of marriage into the families of English Protestant officeholders or clergy.18

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16 The nomination of Chichester for the post of lord justice is mentioned in King James to Lord Deputy Cary, 16 July 1604 (SP 63/216/31).
17 John McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester: Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1605–16 (Belfast, 1998).
Mountjoy was acutely aware of this affront to the authority of the crown but, as we saw, he could do little to rectify the anomaly while the war was in progress. Then, once the war was over, his problem was that he would not confront the issue lest it delay his return to England. Moreover, as we learn from the work of Hans Pawlisch, the government did not have sufficient authority under existing legislation to punish the more flagrant delinquents, and there was no possibility that the power of the state in this matter would be augmented by any Irish parliament as long as the Old English dominated that body. All that could be done, under those circumstances, was to require people who were nominated for government office to swear the oath of supremacy, and this requirement had been applied so strictly since the 1580s that, by 1603, only one Catholic held a post in the Dublin administration.19

This effective exclusion from office of the leaders of the Old English community had still done nothing to promote conversions, and the first reaction of the Protestant community in Ireland following Mountjoy’s recall was to enter upon a barrage of criticism of those who purported to be loyal subjects but would not conform in religion. The campaign was led by Archbishop Adam Loftus of Dublin and Bishop Thomas Jones of Meath but it was ably supported by the lay officials and by leading propagandists for the Protestant interest, notably Barnaby Riche. His was a relatively independent voice because it is clear from his earlier outpourings that he attributed the lack of progress of Protestantism more to the negligence of Loftus and Jones than to the stubbornness of the population of the Pale. Now, in the changed circumstances of the seventeenth century, Riche again placed emphasis on his associations within the Old English community in Dublin during his forty-seven years’ service in Ireland, for, as he put it, ‘may not a man love a papist, as he loveth a friend that is diseased’. While regretting the infection of ‘the Popish crew that [did] far exceed the rest in number’, he cited the existence in Dublin of ‘some as well learned divines as other grave and godly citizens that God [had] blessed with the light of his word’ as proof that there was ‘as near a highway to go to heaven from out of Ireland, as there [was] from any part of England’. The fault lay therefore not with the people, nor, in the case of Dublin, with the Protestant clergy, but rather with ‘juggling Jesuits’ and ‘lying historiographers’ who had ‘seduced’ people from both the truth of the Scriptures and their allegiance to the crown, and ‘poisoned’ their minds with ‘popery’ which ‘teacheth subjects to resist, to mutiny, and to rebel against their princes’. The remedy for the weakness of the authority of the state in civil as in religious matters recommended by Riche was, therefore, the expulsion of the seminary priests who had settled in the country during the war years.20


20 Chapter 2 above, pp. 114–15; Barnaby Riche, *A New Description of Ireland* (London, 1610), sigs.,
This advice was not only logical but was the course favoured by the Dublin administration, and that which was pursued by it after 1605. That year can be identified as a turning point, not only because the ailing earl of Devonshire in England was losing his previous influence over Irish affairs but also because the Guy Fawkes plot of November 1605 made it increasingly difficult for the Old English community to argue convincingly that loyalty to Catholicism was a private matter. Moves were afoot to convene a parliament in Ireland in that year, but the Dublin government, advised by Sir John Davies, recognized that they could save themselves that inconvenience because they were likely to obtain the agreement of the king to the management of religious matters in Ireland through proclamations from the deputy. In this way, as has been demonstrated by Hans Pawlisch, the harsh tenets of the Elizabethan religious statutes in force in England were applied in Ireland.

Thus by their application of English statute law to Ireland, Chichester and his associates in government waged an effective war of wills against the chief citizens of Dublin to force their public conformity with the established Church, and similar procedures were followed by Sir Henry Brouncker, the president of Munster, in his dealings with the towns of that province. The various steps in this strategy were first to make an example of the more truculent Catholic clergy by imprisoning them; then to seize control of the property that had been placed in trust by Catholic lay people for the use of the Catholic clergy; then to mandate prominent Catholic lay leaders to attend at Protestant services at a designated time and place; and finally to impose heavy fines, and to exclude from civic office, these people who refused to obey these mandates. When these procedures were challenged by Old English lawyers on the ground that English statutes could be validly applied in Ireland only when they were individually endorsed by an Irish parliament, Sir John Davies, in upholding the legal position of the government, countered by invoking medieval precedent, notably the Statute of Praemunire. This proved convincing to the king and the English Privy Council, but it soon emerged that the intentions of officials in England and servitors in Ireland were not in agreement. The government in Dublin would have proceeded with the policy to the point where Old English leaders would have had to choose between conformity in religion and being undermined politically and financially through the systematic application of fines. King James and his advisers in England were, however, merely concerned to demonstrate that it was within their capacity to enforce conformity, and having made that point they had no wish further to alienate the Old English. Therefore, once the principle was established and the Old English were cowed, the king imposed a restraining hand on his officials in Dublin.21


21 Pawlisch, Sir John Davies, 103–21; John McCavitt, ‘Lord Deputy Chichester and the English
This restraint infuriated Chichester and his subordinates but it can have hardly surprised them because, in jousting with the Old English, they, no less that Spenser in the 1590s, knew they were dealing with the element of the Irish population which exerted most influence at court. The Dublin administrators hoped, however, to effect a more comprehensive reversal of Mountjoy’s settlement in relation to the lesser lords of the outlying provinces because they, being for the most part Gaelic or Gaelicized, were less capable of defending themselves before the law and unlikely to be defended by others. The onslaughts against these lords were sometimes couched in general terms and sometimes focused on the misdeeds of a particular chieftain, while the recommendations to curb the power of Irish provincial lords were justified as regularly on fiscal grounds as in the interests of promoting religious and civil reform.

One persistent critic was Sir Robert Jacob, solicitor general since 1606, with ambitions to succeed Davies as attorney general in the event of Davies being translated to a senior position in England. Jacob always addressed the subject of the continued influence of Irish lords in the context of his discussing the heavy drain that the governance of Ireland imposed upon the resources of the crown. Like many of his associates, Jacob bewailed the opportunity that had been lost when the army of 15,000 men had been largely disbanded at the outset of the reign of King James. These men, ‘as valiant and expert captains and soldiers as served any prince in Christendom’, should, in Jacob’s opinion, have ‘been planted [in Ireland] and rewarded with the escheated lands’ to which the crown had been rightfully entitled at the end of the war. Then, their presence in Ireland as landowners and tenants ‘would have made [the country] so sure long ere this that it should have been out of all danger to be shaken by any power the Irish could make’. Instead, pardons had been granted and most of the soldiers had been discharged, but the demobilization had not achieved its short-term purpose of saving money, because much of what had gone on wages to the troops had been assigned to pensions for those who had petitioned for them.

Therefore, as Jacob represented the state of Ireland in 1612, the king had won the war but squandered the peace. The most evident proof of this truism was that the cost of governing Ireland continued to draw upon the English exchequer, and the second was that the country remained insecure because the army had been disbanded before the leaders of the Irish population had become reconciled to the loss of their former glory. Then, as he gave flight to his imagination, he portrayed good order being continuously threatened.
by ‘those natives here who pretend themselves to be lords of countries; who being a conquered nation, by nature rebellious, hating the English, spurning and repining at our government, infected with treasonable plots from beyond the seas, and longing for the day to regain their ancient liberty (as they term it) if they should once see his Majesty’s forces utterly withdrawn’ would immediately seek to recover their lost authority ‘and grow insolent and fall to burning and spoiling the king’s subjects’.22

Jacob identified several solutions to the problem but two dominated his recommendations. The most immediate was that the king should retain ‘a continual standing army’ in Ireland so that potentially rebellious lords would ‘see the king’s power too mighty for them’, and the second was that all such potential rebels should be rooted out and replaced with loyal English subjects. When it came to identifying whom he had in mind, Jacob listed lands in Counties Limerick and Tipperary where ‘ancient English colonies’ had once dwelt but where Irish septs, such as the O’Kennedys, now held sway; the Irish inhabitants of Idough in County Kilkenny; the Irish septs who lived on the former inheritance of the duke of Norfolk in County Carlow; and those who dwelt in Ely O’Carroll in King’s County. These territories, he stated, all lay together ‘in one main continent by themselves’. Besides this swathe of lordships in the Irish midlands, Jacob made specific mention of Carbury in County Cork, O’Rourke’s lordship in County Leitrim, and the lands of the O’Flahertys in County Galway. This long list indicates that Jacob visualized a plantation of all the lands outside Ulster that remained in Gaelic possession.23

What Jacob stated in general terms was articulated in relation to one particular lord, Sir John Mac Coghlan of Delvin Mac Coghlan in the King’s County, by Matthew de Renzy, a German adventurer who had become a naturalized Englishman with ambitions to become a planter in Ireland. De Renzy had set his sights on gaining possession of Mac Coghlan’s lands in a plantation of the western section of King’s County, abutting the river Shannon, that he had been persistently advocating from 1613 to 1620. The correspondence of de Renzy on the subject of plantation, and his more detailed invective on the barbarism of the Irish and how best to civilize them, have survived by chance, which suggests that similar overtures were then being made to government officials in Ireland and England by private individuals who also fostered ambitions to procure land at the expense of vulnerable Irish lords. De Renzy’s opinions of the tyranny of Mac Coghlan, of his support for the Catholic Church, and of the necessary animosity of people brought up in Gaelic society towards English civility and the Protestant religion, was based on close observation or espionage, and was designed to

22 Sir Robert Jacob to ?, 29 Oct. 1612 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15,058); Jacob to [Northampton], 12 Apr. 1613/14 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15,050).
23 Sir Robert Jacob to ?, 29 Oct. 1612 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA, 15,058); Jacob to [Northampton], 12 Apr. 1613/14 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15,050).
legitimize the confiscation that would lead to his own enrichment. Like others who strove to justify doubtful acquisition, de Renzy made reference to international example. However, in supporting his case that ‘the government of the English was ever yet too soft or too careless’ in promoting its reform ambitions in Ireland, he chose an unusual precedent when citing how the ‘Danes and Norwegians . . . were ancient conquerors over this land’, and a topical one when referring to the Spaniards’ recent treatment of the ‘Moors left in the kingdom of Granada’. The expulsion of the Moriscos convinced de Renzy that if the king of Spain had succeeded in becoming ruler of Ireland, he would have expelled the Gaelic population who were analogous to the Moriscos, and sent them ‘to look out for new found land’.24

General arguments, like those of Sir Robert Jacob, and particular exhortations, such as those by Mathew de Renzy, were designed to encourage the government to take advantage of the commission for defective titles not, as had originally been intended, to consolidate Irish lords in the ownership of their property, but to compel those who did not have good title to their estates to surrender all of them to the crown. Then, if they co-operated in these surrenders, they would receive back a sizeable portion—perhaps two-thirds of the whole—which they would be obliged to divide into tenancies-in-chief, thus leaving the remaining portion for the crown to assign to deserving Protestant servitors who would become sounding posts for the government in these previously disloyal areas.25

The general procedures that the officials favoured were that Irish lords who acknowledged the crown’s title to the lands they occupied would suffer the loss of but one-quarter of their estates, while those who forced the crown to press its claim through the courts would be deprived of one-third of their property if crown title was eventually established. This endeavour to establish crown title to land, which Jacob wished to pursue in a systematic fashion, was, ostensibly, with the purpose of ending the ‘slavish dependency’ of the Irish population on their ‘tyrannical land lords’. This, said Jacob, had been ‘the principal cause of the often revolts of the Irish in times past’ because the ‘inhabitants of the country’ had no choice but to follow their lords into military action since they ‘had no certain estates in any of the lands which they possessed’. The introduction of Protestant proprietors into the localities would also, according to this analysis, create the conditions whereby the Reformation could finally succeed, because Protestant ministers would now be appointed and supported where previously ‘the poor people (who were as sheep without a shepherd) [were obliged] to attend popish priests

25 For the practical application of these theories see McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester, 96–7; Victor Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 1616–28; A Study in Anglo-Irish Politics (Dublin, 1998), 130–47.
and to go to their masses having no manner of service said in their parish churches'.

This stratagem for undermining the position of provincial Irish lords who had been promised security under Mountjoy’s settlement of the country was strongly supported within the administration in Dublin, and was eventually permitted by officials in England, presumably because those affected by the proposed plantations were not able to muster sufficient strength to oppose it. Therefore, plantations of the kind favoured by Jacob and de Renzy were successively imposed between 1610 and 1622 upon a sequence of Gaelic lordships stretching from north County Wexford in the south-east corner of the country, to Leitrim in the north-west, but concentrated upon the surviving Gaelic lordships of the midlands. Much has been made by historians of the insufficiency of these settlements as compared with formally planned schemes and it has been pointed out that those English officials who benefited from the schemes did not always reside on their properties. Such criticism is summarized by Aidan Clarke, who says of these plantations that they were nothing but ‘a new, predatory form of surrender and regrant directed towards the enrichment of the New English’.

Predatory they undoubtedly were, and English Protestant servitors were certainly the principal beneficiaries of these lesser plantations. Moreover contemporary witness, such as the observation in 1622 of Sir Francis Blundell (himself a notable landowner in Wexford and client of the duke of Buckingham), seems to offer authority to Aidan Clarke’s appraisal. Blundell asserted that the arrangement recently made in Longford and Ely O’Carroll did not deserve to be called ‘a plantation, but a show of something where nothing is done’, with the grantees willing only to ‘scramble for the rents’ while they lived in England and Scotland ‘without making any plantation at all’, and he considered what had been attempted in County Leitrim, and in the lesser lordships in King’s and Queen’s County and in County Westmeath, to be no better. However, in all these instances, Blundell acknowledged that the plantations were still at a preliminary stage and were encountering legal opposition, especially from Sir John Mac Coghlan, and his offputting statement concerning the recent plantation in Leitrim and the midlands may well have been to discourage a close investigation by the commissioners lest they

26 Letters of Sir Robert Jacob, 12 Oct. 1612, and 12 Apr. 1613/14 (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS HA 15,058, 15,059), and see also Mac Cuarta, ‘Mathew de Renzy’s Letters’, 142–4 where de Renzy also reveals his optimism that the social change that would be effected through plantation would also make way for religious reform of the young.

27 Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 219–22; quotation p. 222; there are some Chancery cases for the years 1627–34 concerning the failure of planters in these areas to fulfil their obligations, see Jane Ohlmeyer, ‘Records of the Irish Court of Chancery: A Preliminary Report for 1627–1634’, in Desmond Greer and Norma Dawson (eds.), Mysteries and Solutions in Irish Legal History (Dublin, 2000), 15–49; I am indebted to Jane Ohlmeyer for a typescript of this paper while the book was still in press.
discover the interest held by Buckingham which, as we know from the work of Victor Treadwell, the favourite wanted concealed. For all of that, Blundell could be optimistic because these lesser plantations were never intended to be merely exploitative, and he may well have recalled the exhortation of de Renzy that the availability of land in Ireland should encourage people in an overpopulated England to send ‘over colonies upon colonies to stock this kingdom with [their] own people’. De Renzy had also decreed that the responsibility of servitors who received grants of land was ‘to plant’ them ‘wholly with English and other loyal nations’ and to leave none of the Irish ‘amongst them to disturb their good intent and meaning’.28

Apart from such rhetoric, Blundell was aware from the plantation in County Wexford, in which both he himself and Sir Robert Jacob, and many supporters of Chichester, had been grantees, what could be achieved through such informal procedures. In Wexford, he asserted, 16,000 acres of land had been assigned in parcels of 1,500 and 1,000 acres to ‘undertakers’ who ‘were all servitors, men of good ability, and such as knew the danger of the work; who looking more to their safety than to their present profit [had] built, according to their conditions, many fair and strong castles, houses, and bawnes upon their proportions and thereby made that part of the country strong, and defensible against any Irish enemy’. Build they certainly did, but the cost of this building must have been largely borne by the efficient exploitation of the natural resources of the area, especially timber, which, as was noted in Chapter 2, was already being undertaken by Henry Wallop in the sixteenth century, but which was greatly accelerated once the Wexford plantation was established. In the light of this experience it was still possible for servitors in Ireland in 1622 to advocate informal, rather than formal, plantations as best suited to Irish conditions. These, as they would have seen it, had drawn upon the talent of those most dedicated to upholding the Protestant interest in Ireland, and it was plantations such as this which held out the best hope that Spenser’s ambition to have the entire country subjected to plantation would be realized.29

The success which the servitors attained in subverting the promises made by Mountjoy to the lesser Irish lords was no more than they expected, but the element of Mountjoy’s settlement which the servitors found most objectionable, and which they feared would prove most durable, was the

28 Sir Francis Blundell, ‘There have been Six Plantations Made in Ireland since the Memory of Man’ (Maidstone, Kent Archives Office, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,540).
arrangement he had put in place in Ulster and particularly in the lordship of Tyrone. Their expectation that the settlement would endure was based partly on their respect for the intelligence and capability of their old adversary Tyrone, but they also appreciated that Devonshire, in his capacity as a privy councillor, would defend the agreement on which he had staked his reputation. The servitors were correct in this latter calculation, and, while Devonshire lived, Tyrone had found him his ‘very good lord’, ready to defend him at court against every challenge to his authority. This still did not prevent servitors, both individually and collectively, from attempting to subvert the position of both the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, and their endeavours in the years down to 1605 paved the way for their success in making life unbearable for these lords the moment Devonshire lost his influence. The assault against the power of the earls was many-faceted, and involved co-operation between servitors who held positions or property in Ulster, officials at the centre of power in Dublin, churchmen who had ambitions to make the established Church a reality in Ulster, and former subordinates of the earls who welcomed the prospect of being released from their authority.30

Those servitors who held positions within Ulster were principally the captains of the garrisons for which land had been specifically set aside from the earls' patents. These officers, in their capacity as landowners, aspired to be appointed as sheriffs and justices of the peace as the structure of English government was imposed on the former Gaelic lordships. Then, having attained that ambition, they set about identifying concealed land within the two lordships which belonged rightly to the crown, and which might be used for inviting yet more servitors to take up residence within these two lordships. The specific properties they identified were fishing rights on lakes and rivers within the two lordships, and former monastic land to which the crown might claim title because of the dissolution of the monasteries by Irish parliamentary statute during the reign of Henry VIII. A series of legal challenges and investigations ensued, leading ultimately to the suggestion that title to the disputed properties should be established by an inquisition by jury. This decision produced the demand, articulated by Richard Hadsor, a London-based Old English lawyer, who held a brief from the government on this issue, that the lordships of Tyrone and Tyrconnell should be made into shire ground and ‘subdivided into seignories, manors, and freehold estates amongst the gentry and inhabitants of that country, without which no trial in law can be held’. When this was identified as official policy, it became the responsibility of Sir John Davies, in his capacity as solicitor general, to see to it that this

30 For an unpublished study of this entire episode see Nicholas Canny, ‘The Government Reorganization of Ulster, and the Position of Hugh O’Neill, Earl of Tyrone in Regard to it’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1967); Tyrone to king, 17 June 1606 (SP 63/218/71).
apparently reasonable requirement was met.\textsuperscript{31}

Before Davies had an opportunity to fulfil his responsibility in this matter, circumstances in Ulster, and in Ireland generally, had been altered dramatically, first by the appointment of George Montgomery, dean of Norwich, to be bishop of the three dioceses of Derry, Raphoe, and Clogher, which covered much of the lordships of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, and second by the succession of Sir Arthur Chichester to the governorship. Montgomery, once he took up residence in Derry, set about identifying and laying claim to the ecclesiastical lands of his three sees, while Chichester, advised by Davies, issued a proclamation on 11 March 1605 which reiterated the pardons granted to former rebels under the Act of Oblivion of 1603. This proclamation further decreed that no grants made by the king to any person in Ireland had cancelled any ‘lawful freeholds and tenancies’ that any individuals had previously enjoyed within those territories, but that such individuals remained ‘the free, natural, and immediate subjects of His Majesty’ and were not ‘to be reputed or called the natives or natural followers of any other lord or chief-tain whatsoever’.\textsuperscript{32} At the same time the claims to church lands advanced by Montgomery forced the two Ulster lords on to the defensive over an issue where royal sympathy would always lie with the bishop, while the proclamation, which claimed to enjoy the king’s approval, bolstered a commission of inquiry into all grievances and disputes in Ulster conducted during the summer of 1605.

The government’s legal case, which seems to have been formulated by Davies and for which he seems to have won the agreement of the king, was that an injustice had been done when patents had been devised for Tyrone and Tyrconnell because they had been granted outright ownership of their entire lordships in complete disregard of the property and political rights of lesser lords, and of members of their own ruling families, all of whom had been ‘ancient tenants and freeholders . . . by descent for many hundred years past’.\textsuperscript{33} It therefore became the purpose of the judges on the Ulster circuits of assize, which were authorized by the king’s commission, to persuade or oblige Tyrone and Tyrconnell to surrender the lands which were being claimed by the Church, and to facilitate the dismemberment of their estates into freeholds and tenancies-in-chief.\textsuperscript{34}

These official endeavours met with the strident opposition that might have been expected, and as Davies prepared the government brief for restructuring Gaelic Ulster he suggested that some of the lesser lords in the province had

\textsuperscript{31} ‘A Discourse Presented to the King’s Majesty Touching Ireland by Richard Hadsor’ (SP 63/216/64).

\textsuperscript{32} Proclamation by the Lord Deputy and Council, 11 Mar. 1605 (SP 63/217/17).


\textsuperscript{34} McCavitt, \textit{Sir Arthur Chichester}, 97–9.
customarily been independent of any outside authority until they had been compelled to concede overlordship to the O’Neills and the O’Donnells during the course of the Nine Years War. In order to support this proposition, Davies made use of the fears and ambitions of Donal O’Cahan, the estranged son-in-law of Tyrone, and supported O’Cahan in processing a legal challenge through the Dublin courts to Tyrone’s claim to enjoy superiority over him. The earl was sufficiently astute to recognize the enormity of this threat and already in December 1605 was complaining both to the king and to the earl of Salisbury about ‘sundry busy headed persons’ who had ‘so pried’ into his title to his estate that he could ‘assure’ himself of nothing unless King James reiterated ‘the royal meaning’ of the patent he had granted him. Time was to reveal that his fear was well founded, and when Davies was processing O’Cahan’s suit Richard Hadsor in London was aware that this was merely a test case because not only O’Cahan but also ‘Shane Mac Bryan, and Art O’Neill, grandchild to Turlough Luineach O’Neill, late O’Neill, [were] fit to be considered with portions of the countries and lands which their ancestors and they possessed’. These grants, said Hadsor, would make them ‘his Majesty’s immediate tenants and exempted from Tyrone’. And if these claims were upheld in Tyrone, the claims to independence from Tyrconnell’s overlordship that were being made by such chieftains as Sir Niall Garbh O’Donnell and Sir Cahir O’Doherty would have been conceded without contest.

We can well imagine that officials in Dublin had scant respect for those Gaelic chieftains whose independence they were promoting, and it is clear that Davies had nothing but contempt for O’Cahan whom he regarded as a drunk. The officials, however, became enthusiastic sponsors of the lesser lords and for two reasons. First, they recognized that if they could establish a claim to freeholds for these lesser lords at the same time as they distinguished estates for the Church, the scope of land granted to Tyrone and Tyrconnell under their respective patents would be reduced considerably in size, thus producing a curtailment in their political and social influence. And then, if the lesser lords were found to have a legitimate claim to the lands they occupied, there would have been an opportunity, when granting them patents for their estates, to reserve some property for the crown, thus creating the opportunity to interlace what previously had been an almost purely Gaelic area with a group of loyal subjects. The end to which they were working was fully appreciated by Salisbury who marvelled how they were attempting ‘by a Christian policy, without rigour or exorbitant charge, to work some of those happy effects in the land of Ire which are found in the land of promise’.

35 Tyrone to King James, 6 Dec. 1605 [SP 69/217/86, 87]; Tyrone to Salisbury, 6 Dec. 1605 [SP 69/217/88].
36 Richard Hadsor to Salisbury, 23 Sept. 1607 (SP 69/222/141).
37 Salisbury to Davies, undated (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 14,106).
It would seem, therefore, that the model to which the government was working in Ulster in 1605 and 1606 was an arrangement similar to what was being contemplated for the Gaelic lordships of north Wexford and the midlands. More immediately, officials had been striving with some considerable success to compel the Gaelic landowners in Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan to agree to a similar segmentation of their lordships, and they considered themselves in a position to recommend a final conclusion to the negotiations with the landowners in Monaghan. There was also a possibility that the government would attain its objective in Tyrconnell because the earl there was clearly running into serious financial difficulty and, on his own admission, was ‘already brought to a very low ebb so [he was] not able to maintain the countenance of the dignity of an earl’. Indeed word had reached the government that Tyrconnell, together with Cuonnaught Maguire, was finding it difficult to survive in Ulster and was about to abandon the effort to become a soldier or pensioner in the service of the king of Spain; something that has recently been confirmed by documents in the Spanish archives.38

Tyrone was in quite different circumstances however. Apart altogether from the fact that he was an older man whose military career was over, government officials were invariably impressed by his efficient management of his affairs. Then also, while defeat in the O’Cahan affair would have been a major reverse to him, Tyrone was not resigned to such an outcome, and had won a major victory over his adversaries when King James agreed to resolve the dispute in a hearing before his own person, with both parties present, rather than have it settled by the courts. Then, if the outcome did not satisfy Tyrone, he said he would ‘choose’ to reside in England in the royal presence where he would ‘dwell with His Majesty upon such means as His Highness [would] be pleased to allow’ him. Here Tyrone was anticipating King James’s resolve to have ‘Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English, divers in nation, yet all walking as subjects and servants’ at his court. If he was thus to become a courtier, Tyrone would, presumably, have left the management of his Irish affairs to his heir Hugh, baron of Dungannon, for whom he was negotiating a marriage with a daughter of the earl of Argyll, and who, as a man still in his prime, would have been better able to absorb the changes required by the government. If this intention had been realized Tyrone and Dungannon might well have become Hibernian specimens of King James’s ‘British’ subjects.39

39 Official suspicion of the plans of Tyrconnell and Maguire was first mentioned in Chichester and Council to Privy Council, 12 Sept. 1606 (SP 63/219/104), and for Tyrone’s reaction to the rumour see Chichester to Salisbury, 26 Jan. 1607 (SP 63/221/11); Tyrone to King James, 17 June 1606 (SP 63/218/71); speech of King James to parliament, 31 Mar. 1607, in, King James VI and I; Political Writings, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1994), 169; on the marriage negotiations see Davies to Salisbury, 12 Sept. 1607 (SP 63/222/133).
Under these various circumstances, Chichester and his officials in Dublin, together with their clients in Ulster, were confident that they would soon have an opportunity to revise drastically Mountjoy’s settlement of the Tyrconnell lordship, as a preliminary to restructuring the settlement in all of Ulster. They also expected that in the course of doing so they would have occasion to erect colonies which, as Chichester and his Council were careful to point out, would include Scottish as well as English settlers who would introduce ‘obedience, peace, civility, and plenty’ into an impoverished area.40 The officials were hopeful, but less confident, that a similar opportunity would arise to restructure the lordship of Tyrone, but they were certain that they would be in a position to enforce some significant changes there also. All these plans and aspirations of the officials in Dublin were suddenly cast to the winds when word reached them on 7 September 1607 that Tyrone, Tyrconnell, and Cuconnaught Maguire, together with their families and households, had abandoned the country and taken ship from Lough Swilly three days previously. The officials were unsure of their destination but they supposed it to be Flanders where they might establish contact with the Irish exiles, including Tyrone’s son Henry, who had entered the service of the king of Spain.41

The initial reaction of the Dublin officials to the Flight of the Earls, as this episode is known to Irish historiography, was circumspect, since they feared that they would be held responsible for any malconsequence, such as a breach in England’s peace with Spain, that might result from it. However, once it became apparent that no such outcome was in prospect, and once it emerged that the only concern of King James was that it should be made manifest ‘to the world’ that he had always treated the earls justly, and especially so in religious matters, the officials set themselves to consider how this unexpected outcome might be turned to their advantage.42 It was clear to them that there was now a far better prospect of promoting a plantation in the two lordships than previously, and the only outstanding question was the extent to which the government would be required to accommodate the surviving Irish lords in any scheme of resettlement.

In this respect, the ambitions of the officials were circumscribed by their previous stratagems and undertakings whereby they had supported, if not fabricated, the claims of the lesser lords in Ulster against those who had now fled. However while the senior officers believed they had a moral obligation

40 Lord Deputy and Council to the Lords, 30 Sept. 1605 (SP 63/217/63).
41 The causes of the Flight of the Earls are not relevant here, but for the differing opinions on whether the lords were effectively driven from the country, or went with the intention of returning with military support from Spain, see Nicholas Canny, ‘The Flight of the Earls, 1607’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 17 (1971), 370–90; Kerney-Walsh, *Destruction by Peace*; John McCavitt, ‘The Flight of the Earls’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 29 (1998), 159–73.
to persist in their support of those they had previously encouraged to challenge Tyrone and Tyrconnell, this view was not shared by those who were operating on the ground in Ulster, who now treated their erstwhile allies with disdain. Trouble quickly ensued between crown officers and the local lords, with Niall Garbh O'Donnell, Donal O'Cahan, and Cahir O'Doherty being successively held in suspicion by the authorities, until Sir Cahir O'Doherty burst into open revolt in February 1608.43

These disputes caused little concern to, and were even welcomed by, the officers who believed they could turn these emergencies to their advantage, and they recommended that no mercy be shown to any lord who was guilty of any rash action. Their attitude was typified by Sir Thomas Ridgeway, who, after the rebellion of Sir Cahir O'Doherty was well under way, made it clear to Niall Garbh O'Donnell, whom he addressed in minatory tones in the third person, that they ‘neither fear[ed] Sir Niall O'Donnell, nor need[ed] him if he be ill affected, or if he come slowly or too coldly on’, but that they would ‘love him as long as he loveth the king’. The choice, as Ridgeway put it, lay with Niall Garbh himself because while the English had ‘but a little army’, they had ‘a great God, a good cause and a mighty King’.44 The same smug assurance characterized the attitude of Sir Robert Jacob who, in writing to Sir John Davies in London in January 1609, after the last embers of O'Doherty’s revolt had been quenched and the malcontent himself put to death, informed Davies that those who had remained in Dublin had enjoyed ‘a merry Christmas’, equal to any in London, with ‘dancing, masking, and a play by the tailors of St. Patrick’s most tailorly acted before the king’s deputy’. Their only concern, he said, was what should become of Sir Niall Garbh O'Donnell, who, at this point, was a prisoner with other Ulster lords in Dublin Castle, while they also ‘long[ed] to know in what sort they [would] establish the north’.45

Sir Robert Jacob and his fellow officials in Dublin did not, as it happened, have long to wait before their curiosity was satisfied. The O'Doherty revolt had served to erode whatever confidence the king and his advisers had in the lesser Ulster lords, and the fate of Niall Garbh O'Donnell, Donal O'Cahan, and the other Ulster lords who had been arrested on suspicion of complicity in O'Doherty’s revolt was to spend the rest of their days as unconvicted prisoners in the Tower of London. Most of the lands which these lords had expected to hold directly from the king were eventually added to those of O'Doherty and the lords who had fled the country in 1607, all of which had been declared confiscate to the crown. Moreover, as Jacob fully realized,

43 On O'Doherty's revolt see McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester, 140-8.
44 Thomas Ridgeway to Sir Niall O'Donnell, 2 May 1608 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15, 713).
45 Sir Robert Jacob to Sir John Davies, 16 Jan. 1608/9 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15, 957).
Note: There was no premeditated pattern to this sequence of plantations dating back to the mid-sixteenth century. However, seventeenth-century officials were tempted to discern a pattern where there had been none at the outset, and to propose schemes to introduce plantations into those areas which were previously free of plantation.

MAP 4.1. Plantations in Ireland before 1622
Davies’s purpose in London in the winter of 1608–9 was to offer advice on the preparation of the greatest colonization scheme that the crown had yet contemplated and which resulted in the long hoped for plantation of Ulster. Thus, as a consequence of accident as well as design, that element of Mountjoy’s settlement of Ireland that had appeared most secure in 1603 was that which was to be completely undermined only five years later.

4.2. THE PLANTATION OF ULSTER: THE THEORY

While it is true to say that, in 1608, there was unanimous agreement in official circles in both Dublin and London that a plantation should be established in Ulster, there was yet no clear view on what form the plantation should take. The first problem was that while the sudden departure of the great Ulster lords, and their subsequent attainder, had removed the linchpin on which the earlier settlement of the province had rested, it was not at all clear that the king and the English Privy Council were ready to meet the cost of any ambitious scheme of colonization. A second, and related, difficulty was the extent to which the government was legally or morally bound by the encouragement it had recently given the lesser lords in the province to oppose Tyrone and Tyrconnell, and the promises they had made to them for doing so. If they were to live up to these promises and expectations it was obvious that there would be scope for no more than a limited plantation in Ulster.

The second of these problems was the one first addressed by the Dublin government in July 1608, when it placed most of Ulster under effective martial law and when it dispatched yet another investigating commission into the province.46 The purpose of this commission, which had completed its report by September 1608, was to establish what plausibly might be claimed for the crown as a consequence both of the Flight of the Earls and of O’Doherty’s revolt. The commissioners were aware that the efforts of 1605–6 to advance the position of ‘freeholders’ relative to that of the chief lords within the Gaelic system had been at an advanced stage in Counties Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, and while the government had concluded a binding agreement only in County Monaghan, those who were to have been established as tenants-in-chief and freeholders had been identified in all three counties. Equally well, the commissioners of 1608 were conscious that several individuals within the lordships of Tyrone and Tyrconnell had been promised favour by the government in 1605 and 1606, besides Sir Henry Oge O’Neill and Turlough Mac Henry O’Neill of the Fews who already held patents for their lands.

46 For the work of the commission see esp. proclamation by lord deputy and council, 18 July 1608 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS A237, fo. 115); and ‘Certain Notes and Remembrances Touching the Plantation and Settlement of the Escheated Lands in Ulster, Sept. 1608’ (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS A237 fos. 117–28).
A further issue that was not specifically within any commission’s brief, but that was probably in the mind of Lord Deputy Chichester in 1608, as it certainly had been in 1606, was how the scheme being negotiated for the western and central parts of Ulster would relate to social arrangements in Counties Antrim and Down, lying east of the river Bann. Chichester was familiar with those counties and their inhabitants because he had been based there during the later stages of the Nine Years War, and he was especially approving of the efforts of James Hamilton, a Protestant Scottish favourite of the King, to establish a plantation of ‘civil people’ in Upper Clandeboy and the Great Ards, and of some ‘English gents and officers’ who were similarly engaged in the Lower Clandeboy; all, proclaimed Chichester breezily, was ‘without grudge or offence to any of the Irish lords or gentlemen formerly pretending title to the same’. However Chichester was less happy with the grant of the Route and the Glens of Antrim that had been made by King James to the Catholic and Scots-Gaelic lord Sir Randal Mac Donnell, who was married to a daughter of Tyrone and who was considered responsible for decapitating the corpse of Chichester’s brother Sir John Chichester, who had been killed in a skirmish with the forces of Sir James Mac Donnell in 1597. It had seemed to the lord deputy in 1606 that Sir Randal should be treated no differently from any Gaelic Irish lord in the province, and Chichester further believed that it was within his power to make Mac Donnell taste ‘the sour of his deserts’, because, since his estates had not been ‘sufficiently passed in law . . . there [would] be means found to enforce him to what is fitting for the better settlement thereof by creating sundry of the ancient inhabitants to be freeholders immediately from the king . . . and yet leave large quantities of land to himself’.  

While conditions in east Ulster were still a matter of concern to Chichester in 1608 he was forced to disregard them because the most pressing problems concerned the area west of the Bann which needed to be subjected immediately to some form of outside authority. Moreover, at this juncture, Sir Randal Mac Donnell reopened his contact with the king and in July 1610 was granted a fresh patent for all his estates by the English Privy Council as a reward for his surrender of nine townlands, in the vicinity of Coleraine, which were required to facilitate a more formal plantation scheme. For these reasons, the commissioners of 1608 devoted themselves to a general survey of that part of Ulster which lay to the west of the river Bann (but excluding County Monaghan where previous government undertakings were too far advanced

47 McCavitt, *Sir Arthur Chichester*, 6–7; genealogy of the earls of Donegal (Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, div. 2, no. 250); Chichester to Salisbury, 14 June 1606 (SP 63/218/70); on the activities of Hamilton and the English gentlemen to whom Chichester made reference see Raymond Gillespie, *Colonial Ulster: The Settlement of East Ulster, 1600–41* (Cork, 1985), 41, 50–1.

to be cancelled) to identify what might be claimed by the king and what was rightfully the land of the Church. At the same time, in an accompanying series of ‘Notes and Remembrances’, Chichester offered his personal opinion on what shape the plantation should take.

Because the suggestions made, in 1608, by Chichester differed considerably from those that emerged in the final plantation programme, historians have represented Chichester as a moderate who was willing to be more accommodating towards the native population than his lieutenant Sir John Davies, who is credited as the principal author of the scheme that eventually issued from London.49 A close reading of the evidence does not support the case for an essential difference of opinion between Chichester and Davies over how the native population should be provided for within the plantation. The commissioners of 1608 concentrated on describing conditions within the area to be planted and they identified the ingredients for stability that would be required before any plantation could proceed. In the course of doing so, they identified those natives who could expect to be granted title to the lands they occupied, and they offered an opinion both on the merits of their claims and on their appropriateness for grants of land. To this extent, the commissioners were doing no more than establishing the prerequisites for security and good order for the projected plantation, and they set about their work on the clear understanding that the final scheme would be decided upon by the king and his principal advisers.

On the positive side, the commissioners established, and this was commented upon specifically by Chichester, that most of the inhabitants in Ulster lived together in villages and townships ‘after the manner of His Majesty’s civil subjects in other parts of this kingdom’, and that the social disorder so frequently associated with Gaelic society was due to the habit of people departing from these permanent settlements to follow their ‘creaghts’ (caéraigeacht, herds of cattle with their attendants) into mountain pastures during the summer months. This practice was condemned, as it had been by all previous English commentators, as inimical to good order, and Chichester proceeded from the assumption that the primary purpose of any plantation was to establish coherent towns and villages where the population would be obliged to reside permanently and where trades and ‘such things as are requisite and necessary for a civil life would be fostered’.50

Therefore, as they proceeded about their task, the commissioners identified places within each county which were strategically placed for the establishment of corporate towns in which garrisons might be placed, side by side with artisans and merchants, until ‘the country begins to settle in civility’.

49 This point has been aired both in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 201, and in McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester, 149–68.
50 ‘By the Lord Deputy and Other Commissioners at Armagh’, signed only by Chichester (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS A237, fo. 116).
Then, when discussing what might be done with individual Irishmen who expected preferment, Chichester took account of their behaviour during the Nine Years War and the recent O'Doherty’s revolt, and also of their general disposition and capability. It was only then that he weighed the merits of the various options that were open to the government in providing for them, and he left the final decision to the king. Typical of his reportage was that relating to Henry and Conn O’Neill, two surviving sons of Shane O’Neill. These, ‘especially Henry’, were described as ‘civil and discreet men’ who enjoyed pensions from the crown, and who had been settled temporarily in Fermanagh on the lands previously occupied by Cuconnaught Maguire. Chichester thought that, if the king considered them ‘worthy the cherishing’, the two might be either settled permanently in Fermanagh or be given a grant of land in County Armagh. Otherwise, he recommended that they be ‘removed clean out of Ulster’, to be compensated possibly with ‘a seignory in Munster’.  

More generally, Chichester had little positive to say on any of the natives who expected preferment in either of the former lordships of Tyrone or Tyrconnell, other than those few who had proven their loyalty to the crown during O'Doherty’s revolt. However, he was not satisfied that even these could be relied upon into the future and, as in the case of Turlough and Niall Mac Art, the grandsons of Turlough Luineach O’Neill, Chichester believed they would never be content with anything that was reasonable. Even as the commissioners identified the very small number of people for whom the government had a moral obligation to make a provision, Chichester recommended that, where these or their heirs were unreliable, the government might temporize rather than issue them with patents for their lands. In this category were Sir Donal O’Cahan, Sir Oghy O’Hanlon, and Sir Niall Garbh O’Donnell. The latter, who was in prison when the survey took place, had foolishly neglected to take out a patent for the land he had been promised because he had hoped to negotiate the entire lordship for himself. Now, Chichester recommended that the government enter into no binding agreement with him since his life and liberty were at the king’s disposal, and his son was a ‘dangerous youth’.  

Donal O’Cahan was in a similar position to Niall Garbh, but, instead of supporting the claims which Chichester and Davies had so recently championed, the governor now announced that ‘it was thought that neither Tyrone nor O’Cahan had any good and lawful state’ to the lands they had been disputing. Generally, Chichester seemed happy to see O’Cahan out of the way since he believed he would not be satisfied with the two-thirds of the lordship that the crown might allow him, ‘nor as I think the whole’. The only

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52 Ibid.
moral consideration, in Chichester’s mind, was that some estate should be
provided to Donal’s brother Manus O’Cahan ‘and some few others’ whom
he had ‘found honest in this last rebellion’. The position of Sir Oghy
O’Hanlon was more analogous to that of Niall Garbh than to Donal O’Cahan
in that he had made his peace with the crown when it mattered, but then
neglected to take out a patent for his estates when it had been offered to him.
This, in Chichester’s opinion, had been foolish, but he did not now think
O’Hanlon should be given a second chance since he was ‘an old lame man
of weak judgement’ who was ruled by his wife, a sister of Tyrone, who was
as ‘malicious and . . . ill affected to the king’s government and country’s refor-
mation as her brother’. Another mark against O’Hanlon was that his ‘only
legitimate son’ was in hiding, having been involved in O’Doherty’s rebellion.
Under these circumstances, Chichester suggested that the government
provide a living to Sir Oghy for life only, after which Chichester hoped ‘there
may be no more O’Hanlons . . . lord over the rest, but that that country may
be disposed of to the best affected of the septs and to other civil men’.53

These other civil men to whom Chichester referred were settlers, and it
was pragmatic considerations, rather than any issue of principle, which guided
him to suggest that provision be made for the lesser septs. Their claims to
freehold status were, he asserted, ‘not justifiable in law’ and he recommended
that they be included within the plantation scheme merely because it would
prove ‘hard and almost impossible to displant them’. He was more explicit
on this issue when it came to discussing the heads of the principal septs who
had customarily lived under the Great O’Neill, ‘who were all in Tyrone’s last
rebellion’, and who still had ‘hearts and minds alike’. Despite this, he advised
that they be generously ‘provided for and overmastered’ because, being a
‘warlike people and many in number’, they would otherwise ‘neither be ruled
nor removed’.54

Chichester’s recommendation was, obviously, motivated by realism rather
than by generosity, and his attitude towards all elements of the Gaelic popu-
lation of Ulster was as contemptuous in 1608 as it had been in 1602, when
he had referred to them as beasts in the shape of men. He was cautious, quite
simply, because his experience in dealing with a parsimonious English govern-
ment did not suggest that it would now suddenly underwrite the expenses
that a comprehensive plantation would require. Therefore, as he penned his
recommendations, he assumed—and perhaps hoped—that the most that
could be expected was a plantation scheme that would rely on the private
investment of ‘well chosen undertakers’ who ‘next to the privy council and
officers of the state’ would be ‘captains and officers of the army who [had]
served in those parts’ and who were ‘yet poor and not able to manure and

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
settle any great quantity of land’. The essential contribution of these militarily expert people of modest means would be to ‘be seated in the places of most danger and of best advantage for His Majesty’s service and defence of the rest of the undertakers’. To illustrate what he had in mind, Chichester recommended that all of the O’Doherty lordship of Inishowen should go to one person and soon it transpired that this one person was Chichester himself.

If, as Chichester understood it, these soldier planters were going to be the only extra military support that the plantation could count upon, we can readily understand why he was more concerned to make generous provision for those natives who were most likely to challenge the settlement, rather than those who were most worthy of reward. Otherwise there was no hope that undertakers would be induced to invest in the buildings, towns, and enclosures that were required to provide Ulster with a civil appearance. A further consideration which advised caution was that it was only when local dissidents had been placated, and when ordered conditions ensued, that the government might hope to devise ‘a new allotment to the Bishops and Church, as if His Majesty were to begin a new plantation in some part of America, from which it doth not greatly differ’. 55

Therefore, Chichester’s advice in 1608 for a generous treatment of those natives who would otherwise prove to be its most formidable opponents was pragmatically rather than ideologically motivated, and it is possible that his recommendation would not have been the same if he knew that a different kind of plantation was in prospect. While thus depriving Chichester of the role of ‘good Englishman’ that some Irish historians would accord him, he did strike an original note when he recommended that Scottish as well as English Protestants should be invited to become undertakers in Ulster. This proposal may have been designed to appeal to the Scottish king and if so it proved immediately successful since King James, who previously had favoured a cautious course in all matters concerning Ireland, suddenly made the Ulster plantation a pet project which was assimilable to, if not a replacement for, his aspiration to create a greater Britain.

While Chichester’s suggestion that Scots be invited to participate in the Ulster plantation may explain this change of attitude of the king towards his Irish responsibilities, there was more to Chichester’s proposal than pandering to the king’s prejudices. Essentially, the part which Chichester foresaw the Scots playing in the Ulster plantation was consistent with his attitude towards lowland Scots and Scotland ever since he had first become involved with Ulster affairs. Chichester’s appraisal of 1608, that Scots were especially suited to

55 ‘Certain Notes and Remembrances’, Sept. 1608, fos. 117–28; a much shorter, and heavily annotated, working copy of this document appears in Moody (ed.), ‘Ulster Plantation Papers’, 281–6; the quotations in the several paragraphs above are all from the manuscript text in the Bodleian which is more comprehensive and is probably closer to Chichester’s opinions in the aftermath of O’Doherty’s revolt of 1608.
‘plant’ a town in Strabane and to ‘make it pretty although it was all burnt to the
ground by O’Doherty’, followed logically from his previous endorsement of the
endeavour of James Hamilton to establish a Scottish community in Upper
Clandeboy and the Ards. It may have been Hamilton’s success there which had
inspired Chichester and his Council, in 1605, to suggest that Lifford, Derry, and
Coleraine be taken out of the hands of Irish lords and be ‘replenished . . . with
merchants, tradesmen, and artificers from England and Scotland who must be
commanded by authority to come over and [be] compelled to remain’. Chichester,
himself, reiterated this when suggesting, a few weeks later, that Scots as well as English be considered for freeholds in Ulster.56

However, while crediting Chichester with being precocious in suggesting
that Scots be involved in the Ulster plantation, this again can be attributed
to practical rather than ideological motivations. Coming as he did from
Devon, Chichester would have known little of Scotland, but his military
posting in north-east Ulster during the later phase of the Nine Years War,
where he was put in charge of amphibious attacks across the Bann and Lough
Neagh into the heartland of Tyrone, made him quickly aware that Ulster
and Scotland were, in several respects, part of the same polity and economy.
Their unity was symbolized by what was effectively a permanent settlement
that had been established along the Antrim coastline (very much against the
wishes of Queen Elizabeth, but permitted by James VI and I) by the Mac
Donells (or McDonalds) of Kintyre and the Isles. These had been pushed
off their ancestral lands in Scotland by their traditional rivals the Campbells
of Argyll, who portrayed their McDonald rivals as ‘the schoolmasters and
fosterers of all barbarity, savageness and cruelty’, addicted not only to rebel-
lion within ‘this continent land and the isles, but ever . . . assisters of the
northern Irish people dwelling in Ireland in all their rebellions’.57

The Mac Donnell alliance had certainly proved useful to Tyrone and Hugh
O’Donnell who, during the course of the Nine Years War, had exploited the
historic Scottish link to the full, both by hiring mercenary soldiers from the
highlands and islands of Scotland, and by cementing what Jane Dawson has
referred to as a ‘Gaelic international’ through several marriages between
Ulster and Scots-Gaelic ruling families. However the association between
Ulster and Scotland was not purely cultural or confined to the Gaelic areas,

56 ‘Certain Notes and Remembrances’, as above; Lord Deputy and Council to the Lords, 30 Sept.
1605 (SP 63/217/63); Chichester to Salisbury, 5 Oct. 1605 (SP 63/217/60); this evidence contradicts
the opinion of the usually careful Revd George Hill who portrayed Chichester as hostile to Scottish
involvement in the plantation, George Hill, An Historical Account of the Plantation in Ulster at the
Commencement of the Seventeenth Century, 1603–22 (Belfast, 1877); a more accurate estimate of Chichester’s
position is given in Michael Perceval-Maxwell, The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I
57 D. Masson (ed.), Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, vii. 1604–7 (Edinburgh, 1885), 749; the
family were referred to in Scotland as McDonalds but in Ireland as Mac Donnells, or even Mac
Connells; on this subject see Jane H. Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms:
and merchants in the Scottish towns on the west coast had made money by supplying munitions for the army of Ulster during the Nine Years War, and by transporting, and sheltering in Scotland, English soldiers who had deserted from their units in Ulster. The connection extended also to the political because, as was noted, Tyrone fostered relations with King James VI, even at the height of the war, and he seemed about to stage a diplomatic revolution in 1607 with the Argyll marriage alliance which was so widely broadcast by Tyrone that there was not ‘any Irishman in the north that [had] not heard of this intended match’.58

Once Chichester was appointed to his Ulster post, he took stock of this situation and he seems to have been the first English official, with the possible exception of Captain William Piers, who gave serious consideration to turning this connection to England’s advantage rather than seeking, by strong-arm methods, to sever it. Circumstances favoured Chichester’s ambitions because, as the death of Queen Elizabeth came closer, King James wished to consolidate his claim to succeed to the English throne by co-operating with his English cousin in her war against the Ulster lords. This belated concern of the king that he should be seen to be living by his stated principle that every ruler should count ‘a rebellion against any other prince a crime against’ himself, as well as the perspicacity of Chichester and Mountjoy in Ulster, explains the series of proclamations issued by the Privy Council of Scotland in 1601 and 1602 on the subject of the continuing conflict in Ulster. These threatened dire punishments on the magistrates of the burghs of the west, ranging from Ayr to Glasgow, if they continued to put ‘profit before the king’s honour’ in their ‘daily transport’ of ‘men munition, armour, poulder, and bullet’. Those being assisted by the towns had, they insisted, not only ‘betrayed . . . the liberty of their native country’ by offering fidelity to a foreign monarch, but had also invited to Ireland ‘great numbers of Jesuits, seminary priests, and other avowed Papists common enemies to all Christian government’ whose ‘vicinity’ to Scotland presented ‘ane imminent danger as well to the libertie of the trew religion as of the crownis and estait of this haill Ile of Britaine, quahairof Ireland is a proper dependance’. Even more dramatically, in January 1602, the duke of Lennox was appointed to raise soldiers in Scotland to assist Queen Elizabeth against the Ulster rebels, and arrangements for enlisting a group of highlanders for this purpose were quickly put in place because of the king’s amity for Queen Elizabeth and because ‘of his awne enteres, rycht, and appeirance to that land’.59

59 On William Piers and Ulster see Chapter 2 above, pp. 85–90; King James VI and I, ed. Sommerville, 32; royal proclamations, 11 June 1601, 1601/2, 28 Jan. 1602, 31 Jan. 1602, in D. Masson
If Chichester was able, before 1603, to exploit the contiguity of Ulster to Scotland with a view to advancing the aspirations of the king of Scotland as well as those of the queen of England, he had a responsibility to do so thereafter when the two monarchies of England and Scotland were united in the person of James VI and I to become ‘the invincible monarchy of Great Britain’. Almost immediately, a correspondence opened between the Privy Council of Scotland and the Council in Dublin about matters of mutual concern, and the two councils were indirectly connected through their common monarch who was now resident in London. The initial intention, once peace had been established in Ireland, was to exploit the military and naval resources that were available in either kingdom for the benefit of both. Evidence of the new spirit of co-operation was provided at the time of the Flight of the Earls when the Privy Council of Scotland issued a proclamation, within two weeks of the event, directing that the refugees, who were intent on ‘some treasonable design against His Majesty’s estate and country’, should be placed under immediate arrest should they disembark in western Scotland.

On the military front, Thomas Phillips at Coleraine wrote urgently for arms to the Privy Council of Scotland, calling ‘Haist, Haist Haist’, on the outbreak of O’Doherty’s revolt. At the same time, in May 1608, King James directed that a stop be put to the recruitment of Scottish soldiers for continental service since they were required for the dual purpose of the ‘intended subduing of the Isles’ and the ‘suppressing of our rebels in Ireland’. Andrew Stewart, Lord Ochiltree, in his capacity of lieutenant of the southern and northern isles and with the aid of naval support from England and an expected military expedition from Ireland, was intent, in 1608, on launching an expedition aimed at fashioning the western islands into a ‘civil society’ when he was dramatically instructed to divert his energies towards Ulster to assist in bringing O’Doherty to heel. Then also, as in 1607, the towns of the west were instructed to arrest any of the rebels who might be fleeing from Irish justice, and they were advised to be particularly watchful for O’Doherty’s foster brother, the unmistakable Phelimy Reaugh Mac David, a man ‘of mean stature, strongly made, a great hairy blackish beard, his head inclining towards baldness, and about the age of forty years’. Presumably, Phelimy was not hiding in Scotland since no claim is recorded for the price of £200 put on his balding pate. However, 200 of Ochiltree’s recruits did make it to Carrickfergus and ultimately to Dungannon, although it is doubtful...
that they were men saved from continental service since Chichester consid-
ered them to be but ‘young lads, and all for the most part so badly clothed
and armed as lichtelie the like [had] never been suffered to pass in any former
musters here’. Their presence was, however, of sufficient value to warrant reciprocation, and in July 1608, with O’Doherty’s insurrection safely behind him, Chichester dispatched Captain Richard Bingley with a galley to serve for three months in the expedition to the Isles on the strict understanding that he should return immediately in the event of any foreign attempt on Ireland, in which case Chichester would expect assistance from Scotland.63

These references to the wide range of political contacts forged between the government and population of Scotland and those who served the crown in Ulster will explain why Chichester was insistent that Scots be included within whatever settlement would eventually be decided upon for Ulster. His enthusiasm was not necessarily shared by those English servitors who had had no associations with Ulster or Scotland and, if we are to judge from the opinions of Matthew de Renzy, some of the Protestant community in Ireland were opposed to giving any foothold in Ireland to any Scots. The justification for de Renzy’s opposition was that the Scots, although incorporated within the multiple kingdom of Great Britain, still had the facility to have ‘a king of themselves’ which, if it should at some time occasion war between England and Scotland, would enable the Scots, who had ‘a great foot already in the north (so near to their own home)’, ‘to trouble England’ not only across the border but also from an Irish base, thus ‘mak[ing] the way to further ruin’. Therefore, de Renzy thought it important that the Scots should not be allowed to become ‘masters of Ulster’, and he suggested that, if favour were to be shown them at all, it was ‘fittest’ that they should be ‘planted in Munster and the English in Ulster’.64

It is likely that people in England, as well as some in Ireland who were more influentially placed than de Renzy, shared his opposition to the Scots being included within a plantation scheme for Ulster, and readers of Edmund Spenser would have had reason to question the appropriateness of Scots for any civilizing mission. However, those who were involved in decision-making in England were not in a position to voice their objections once the king saw the merit of providing opportunity for his countrymen. Moreover Sir Alexander Hay, secretary to the Scottish Privy Council, was immediately enthusiastic about Scots being included in the plantation. The possibility of becoming involved in plantation in Ulster aroused wide interest in land-hungry Scotland, from which people were already moving in large numbers to settle on the properties in Counties Antrim and Down that had come into English and Scottish possession. In order to stake a Scottish claim to the new

64 ‘Mathew de Renzy’s Letters’, ed. Mac Cuarta, 121.
opportunity that was emerging, the Privy Council of Scotland issued a proclamation, to be published in ‘all places needful’ on 28 March 1609, inviting ‘His Majesty’s ancient and native subjects’ to become partners with the English within the proposed plantation of ‘the north part of the kingdom of Ireland’ which was designed ‘for establishing, justice and religion within the same boundis, as for planting of colonis therein, and distributing of the same boundis to lawful, answerable, and well affected subjects upon certain, easy, tolerable, and profitable conditions’. The response was so enthusiastic that the Council in Scotland proceeded immediately to draw up a list of seventy-seven people with their sureties for whom they advanced a claim to 141,000 acres of Ulster land. This procedure was ultimately disallowed, and the original Scottish list was disregarded when it was decided that patronage should rest in the hands of the king, rather than with the Scottish Privy Council, and that the great seal of England should be the instrument for approving grants in the Ulster plantation.65

Despite the fact that the original Scottish list of undertakers was discarded in favour of a composite list of ‘British’ undertakers (which featured only eighteen of the original seventy-seven among the fifty-nine Scottish names that featured on this new composite list) there was no retreating on Scottish involvement in the Ulster plantation. Therefore, the first distinguishing feature of the Ulster plantation was that it was to be a ‘British’ effort, and it was so pronounced by the king who took particular pride in ‘this Plantation’ as being ‘the greatest moate that ever came in the Rebels eyes’. King James also recognized the plantation as being the first enterprise of his united monarchy which drew on the resources of all the inhabitants of ‘this grettist Iland of the world’.66

An unforeseen consequence of the Scottish pre-emptive strike was that the entire enterprise came to be directed and supervised by the king himself through the English instruments of government that assumed responsibility for business that concerned all of the three kingdoms. And, once this decision was taken, it followed logically that the plantation should be hierarchical along characteristic classical lines, such as had been advocated for Ireland initially by Sir Thomas Smith, and subsequently by the planners of the Munster plantation during the sixteenth century. The most prominent advocate of classical procedures and justifications on this occasion was Sir Francis Bacon who, both in his general reflections on plantations and in his particular advice on the Ulster plantation, always portrayed colonization as a classic


66 King James VI and I, ed. Sommerville, 196–7; the hyperbolic phrase was employed in the Scottish Proclamation of the Union of the Crowns, 15 Nov. 1604, in Masson (ed.), Register, vii. 16–17.
civilizing enterprise. Those Scots who were interested in the Ulster plantation, both the king and his Scottish coterie at the English court as well as those who remained in Scotland, were as conversant as any English person with the justifications for colonization that could be drawn from, or imposed upon, Greek and Latin texts. Therefore classical and religious legitimizations for their participation in the Ulster plantation also flowed readily from Scottish pens, as they identified the Ulster enterprise as an extension of the efforts that had been pursued by lowland Scots through the centuries to extend their authority over the Gaelic population of the highlands and islands; a task that had become more urgent with the progress of the Protestant Reformation in the Scottish lowlands.

Looked at from this perspective, the Scottish participation in the Ulster plantation can be seen as a continuation of the recent efforts of Scottish lowlanders defined by King James to ‘reforme and ciuilize the best inclined’ of the inhabitants of the Isles who were ‘alluterly barbares’ by ‘planting colonies among them of answerable In-lands subjects’ and by ‘rooting out or transporting the barbarous or stubborne sort, and planting ciuility in their rooms’. Plantation in Ulster was, like that in Scotland, to be directed from the top, and the methods that were then employed in Scotland might also have seemed appropriate for what lay ahead of any Scots who would go to Ireland. The royal commission that was granted to Lord Ochiltree (who was soon to be one of the major beneficiaries in the Ulster plantation) for his mission to the Isles of 1608 vested him with extraordinary powers to bring people to obey his authority, and for those who refused to anwer his summons, he had authority to ‘hunt, follow, and pursue with fire and sword and all kinds of extremity and to repel and hald them, their wyffis, and bairnis out of the country’. And, as Jane Ohlmeyer has suggested, the principal explanation for the translation, in 1610, of Andrew Knox, bishop of the Isles, to the diocese of Raphoe in Donegal was related to his previous work. For his Scottish endeavour, Knox was credited with ‘reducing of the ignorant and wicked people of our Isles to the acknowledging of God and obedience of the King’s Majesty’, while on his appointment to Raphoe he was given responsibility for having the ‘ignorant multitude . . . reclaimed from their superstitious and popish opinions and reduced to the acknowledging of God and his true worship’.

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68 King James VI and I, ed. Sommerville, 24; see also Jane Ohlmeyer, “Civilizing of Those Rude Parts”: Colonization within Britain and Ireland, 1580s–1640s’, in Canny (ed.), The Oxford History of the British Empire, i. 124–47.

69 Royal Commission to Lord Ochiltree, 21 June 1608, in Masson (ed.), Register, viii. 113–14; and
If English and Scottish theorists favoured a centrally organized plantation, there were two elements who expressed their doubts over its merits. Many senior officials in England remained conscious of the continued drain that the cost of governing Ireland placed on the English exchequer, and their unhappy experience with the Munster plantation, which in the words of Francis Bacon had ‘given more light by the errors thereof, what to avoid, than by the direction of the same what to follow’, did not inspire confidence that this new venture would produce the financial dividends that would be required if it was to proceed.70 The other doubters were servitors in Ireland, whose position had been stated by Chichester and whose views were represented in England by Sir John Davies.71 These knew well that classically organized plantations, such as had been attempted in Munster, would provide scant opportunity for people, like themselves, with slender purses. Their preference was for loosely structured schemes, such as they were then contemplating for Wexford and such as Chichester had adumbrated for Ulster, where the principal asset required of the planters would be the wealth of their experience rather than ready cash. A plantation of this kind would also have been preferred by servitors because it would be more permissive than a classical model concerning the retention of natives as tenants, which was a vital consideration for those who had no estates in England or Scotland from which they might draw tenants.

The difficulties presented by these apparently irreconcilable positions were overcome by two innovatory adjustments to what was being proposed by the various interested parties. The first of these was intended to make it possible for servitors to play a major role in the plantation, such as had been denied them in Munster, without impeding the hierarchical structure that a model settlement required. What made this possible was the stipulation that servitors might be granted proportions as equals with undertakers provided that they showed deference to a few specially chosen English and Scottish undertakers of high social standing who would have leadership roles in designated areas of Ulster. The second innovation was intended to overcome the financial difficulty that a model plantation would inevitably present. This was the decision to draw upon the civic-spiritedness and the cupidity of the principal London merchant companies by persuading them to assume responsibility for planting one entire county and to erect fortified trading ports at Derry and Coleraine.72 Once these resolutions had been accepted, the planners

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71 On this point I differ fundamentally from the interpretation advanced by John McCavitt who sees a clear rift between the priorities of Chichester and Davies; McCavitt, Sir Arthur Chichester, 149–68.
72 A Collection of Such Orders and Conditions as are to be Observed by the Undertakers . . . of the Escheated Lands in Ulster (London, 1608); printed in Hill, Plantation, 80–8; 7 Apr. 1610, ‘Conditions to be Observed
quickly agreed to a scheme of plantation in which all the interested parties (except, of course, the native population of Ulster who had not been consulted) could acquiesce.

The features of the scheme are well known, and can be briefly summarized, before we proceed to consider the factors that influenced this formulation. The lands which had previously been designated for the use of garrisons remained intact, as did the estates that had been passed by letters patent to Sir Henry Oge O’Neill and Sir Turlough Mac Henry O’Neill of the Fews and their heirs. To these lands, which were exempt from plantation conditions but which were still vital to the plantation arrangement, were added those lands which would be identified as having formerly been ecclesiastical lands, which were to be put aside for the benefit of the Church, and also O’Doherty’s lordship on the Inishowen peninsula which was assigned in its entirety to Sir Arthur Chichester. All the remaining land surface of Counties Donegal, Fermanagh, Coleraine, Tyrone, Armagh, and Cavan became subject to plantation and was to be assigned to new owners in ‘proportions’ of 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 acres of profitable land, each allocation having a proportionate assignment of waste land and bog.

The recipients of these proportions were to be of three kinds. The first category was to be made up of English and Scottish ‘undertakers’ who were to be landowners of considerable means who would ‘undertake’—hence their designation—to build defensible buildings on their property, to remove the existing occupiers from their estates by a designated date, and to populate their lands exclusively with English or Scottish Protestant tenants. The obligation of each undertaker, in this respect, was not unlike the model that had been designed for the guidance of undertakers in Munster, since the essential stipulation was that the undertaker would induce forty-eight adult males who were to be organized into ‘20 several families at least’ to join him in the venture. The principal of these families would obviously be that of the proprietor himself, which was to be located on a demesne of 600 acres, on which he would build a dwelling of stone or brick surrounded by a strong court or bawn. Then he was to settle four fee-farmers on holdings each of 120 acres; he was to appoint six leaseholders on farms each of 100 acres for terms of twenty-one years or three lives; and he was to introduce at least eight other families ‘of husbandmen, artificers, or cottagers’ the size of whose holdings was to be at the discretion of the proprietor. 73

Undertakers from particular regions of England and Scotland were to form


73 Form of Bond for Performance of Conditions of Plantation by British Undertakers [1610], in
themselves into companies or ‘consorts’ which were to be placed under the general supervision of nominated undertakers who were, in effect, to be the leaders in the plantation, and it was ultimately accepted that these might hold in excess of a ‘great proportion’ of 2,000 acres.

The second category was to consist of servitors—people who had served the crown in Ireland in a civil or military capacity—who, by definition, would be mostly English. These were also obliged to build defensible buildings on their properties, and were encouraged, but not obliged, to place English and Scottish tenants on their estates. It was assumed that most of these servitors would be former officers in the army, and that many of their tenants would be former soldiers, and these were therefore to be assigned properties in strategically key locations where they could both provide protection for the ‘British’ colonies that would be introduced by the undertakers, and monitor the activity of the third category of grantees who were natives.

Those who fell into this third category were individuals who could lay claim to previous landowner or freehold status in Ulster and who were considered deserving either by the king or the Dublin government. These were obliged to comply with the same building conditions as the undertakers and servitors and were to assign their property by lease to tenants who, it was expected, would be natives, and to promote ‘tillage and husbandry after the manner of the English Pale’.

All grantees were to pay stipulated annual rents to the crown, and undertakers and servitors were obliged, from the outset, to take the oath of supremacy, to take up residence by a specified date, and they were permitted to sell their properties only to other Protestants. There were no such religious stipulations binding on native proprietors, but they were to hold their estates by knight service tenure, rather than by free and common socage by which the undertakers and servitors held their lands, so it was implied that the heirs of the initial grantees would have to take the oath of supremacy before their title to their inheritance would be passed by the crown. Then the final element in the scheme was put in place when the entire County of Coleraine, to which was added a barony of Tyrone and the nine townlands of County Antrim that Randal Mac Donnell had surrendered, was placed in the hands of the London companies who agreed to plant the entire area—soon to be designated County Londonderry—according to the conditions binding on undertakers, and also to build defensible port towns at Derry and Coleraine located strategically at the mouths of the two waterways that drained the area being planted.74

Moody (ed.), ‘Ulster Plantation Papers’, 196–7; we can presume that these stipulations were for each allocation of 1,000 acres.

74 The best recent discussion of the plantation conditions is in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 197–202; see especially the map, devised by Robert Hunter, pp. 198–9; see also the ‘Orders and Conditions’, in Hill, Plantation, 80–8, and Moody (ed.), Ulster Plantation Papers'.
It is evident that a plethora of influences went into the fashioning of the plantation scheme that emerged as a ‘Project of Plantation’ in Ulster, but it is possible to decipher the taxonomy of theoretical foundation for the plantation even if we cannot distinguish the inputs of particular individuals. The most persistent influence derived from the classical notion that the plantation should be organized along hierarchical lines and should be primarily concerned with the creation of a colony composed entirely of civil people from the metropolis. The requirement for hierarchy, as was noted, was met by the proprietorial role assigned to a few designated undertakers, and all other undertakers were to form themselves into ‘consorts’ under the tutelage of these natural leaders. Then for the constitution of exemplary communities, the condition requiring undertakers to populate their lands exclusively with British Protestant tenants was intended to provide for the creation of colonial nuclei which were considered the essential conduits of civility in any plantation.

The second presupposition that impacted on the formulation of the plantation scheme can again be traced to classical models but also to previous experience with plantation in Ireland. This was the belief that the plantation would foster an urban and enterprising culture which would again fulfil an exemplary as well as a wealth-creating function. This expectation was met by the requirement that, as well as constructing defensible buildings on their particular estates, the undertakers would develop a chain of corporate towns throughout the plantation for which there would be ‘a levie or prest of tradesmen or artificers out of England to people those towns’. Then the commercial ports of Derry and Coleraine were to become the capstones to this civic creation, because, through their contact with the London companies, it was expected that these towns would provide access to the London market for the agricultural commodities and manufactured goods produced by the entire settler community.

The third consideration that determined the thrust of the ‘Project for Plantation’ was the missionary impulse that inspired all plantation efforts of the early modern period. This explains the insistence that adequate provision be made for the Church so that the religious reformation of the country, which was seen to have been neglected up to that point, would have a fresh start. To this end, those lands and ecclesiastical rights which had traditionally belonged to the Church in Ulster were identified before any planters took up occupancy of their land, and it was stipulated that each Proportion in the plantation should become a parish, and that every such parish would surrender 60 acres for every 1,000 acres of plantation land to provide a glebe for the rector of the parish, who would also enjoy tithes from agricultural

75 ‘The Project of Plantation’ was a more detailed order issued towards the end of 1608 and is printed in Hill, Plantation, 90–116.
produce. Then also, to satisfy this missionary imperative, yet further property was distinguished in the plantation for the endowment of a grammar school for each of the six plantation counties, and of Trinity College, Dublin, which was expected ‘to furnish the Churches of Ulster with sufficient incumbents’. Therefore the way was being prepared for a renewed missionary endeavour in Ulster which it was thought would produce rapid results once the proclamations prohibiting Catholic clergy were enforced and once those of the native population who were being integrated into the plantation scheme were compelled to attend Protestant services.

The fourth factor that shaped the plantation policy for Ulster was the experience with plantation in Munster. Here there were some projectors such as Richard Spert, recently brought to our attention by Raymond Gillespie, who believed that plantation in Ulster should be a slavish imitation of what had been attempted in Munster, but altogether more influential on the formulation of policy for Ulster was what had been written on the shortcomings of the Munster plantation by such authors as Spenser, whose *View* was in the possession of several of the designers of the Ulster plantation. 76 Here the concern was that of degeneration, and steps were taken to ensure that the plantation should be a coherent formation and not a sequence of colonies scattered throughout an area that was still predominantly Irish. This requirement was met by the legal fiction, formulated by Sir John Davies, that the entire land surface of the six designated counties was in the possession of the crown as a result both of the treason committed by the lords who had fled and joined O’Doherty in rebellion, and of the Act of Attainder of Shane O’Neill that had been ratified by the Irish parliament in 1567. Thus, with few exceptions, it became possible to remove those natives who were considered worthy of reward from the lands which they occupied, and to assign them plantation proportions elsewhere in the six escheated counties where they would not necessarily have access to their customary tenants. Then, in relocating these landowners, consideration was also given to the future security of the province, so native proportions were assigned in proximity either to the existing garrisons, which were to be retained in Ulster into the foreseeable future, or to the proportions of the servitors whose special function within the plantation was to be a garrison without pay.

The fifth and most compelling authority for the formulation of plantation policy was the expectation, associated with all European colonization endeavours in ancient and modern times, that the plantation should fulfil a civilizing function and avoid inflicting harm on weaker members of the indigenous community who were deserving of the king’s support. It was obvious that this requirement would be facilitated by the removal of those who, by their past

76 Raymond Gillespie, ‘Plantation and Profit: Richard Spert’s Tract on Ireland, 1608’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, 20 (1993), 62–71; copies of Spenser’s *View* were in the possession of George Carew and Arthur Chichester and it was certainly read by Davies, and probably by Bacon.
behaviour, had shown themselves to be opponents of reform, and so it was stipulated—in a passage that might have been taken from either Spenser’s View or a proclamation of the Scottish Privy Council—that those who had been ‘swordsmen’ should be ‘transported into such other parts of the kingdom, as by reason of the waste lands are fittest to receive them, namely into Connacht and some parts of Munster, where they are to be dispersed and not planted together in one place; and such swordsmen as have not followers or cattle of their own, to be disposed of in his Majesty’s service’. Then, by persisting with the notion that Ulster, like Munster and Connacht, had more land than the population could profitably occupy, it was stipulated that those of the farming population of the province who were to be removed from the lands of the undertakers could be adequately compensated on the proportions of the natives, on the estates of the Church, on the glebes of the parish clergy, and on the ‘portions of such servitors as are not able to inhabit their lands with English or Scottish tenants, especially of such as know best how to rule and order the Irish’. Thus, as in the case of the Munster plantation, the concept of ‘vacant land’ was invoked to legitimize the entire enterprise, and Thomas Blennerhasset, who was one of the most vigorous propagandists for the plantation, spoke not only of ‘goodly Ulster [which] for want of people [was] unmanured’, but suggested also that the total population of Ireland was little more than ‘three hundred thousand souls besides children (which are no less in number)’.\footnote{Project for Plantation}; Thomas Blennerhasset, A Direction for the Plantation in Ulster (London, 1610), sig. A2, D.

This summary will go some way towards explaining the broad tapestry of influences that went into fashioning the plantation scheme that was launched upon the province of Ulster in 1610. Because there were many principles and interests to be satisfied, some of them contradictory, what emerged as the ‘Project for Plantation’ was a consensus document (albeit one to which the native population of Ulster was not a party) rather than the product of any single mind. As such it was not regarded by anybody as fully satisfactory and it is significant that Francis Bacon’s ‘Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland’ was offered as a critique of the ‘Project’ in the hope that the king could be persuaded to introduce some last-minute modifications which would bring what was a promising strategy to become a perfect one. There were, as was to be expected, unstated tensions concerning the relative balance between Scots and English in the plantation, but the fundamental ideological divide was, as it had been at the time of the Munster plantation, between crown servants in Ireland who believed that the work of plantation should be left in the hands of people, like themselves, with knowledge and experience of the country, and individuals at court who believed that the task should properly be the work of ‘undertakers’ after the
principle, best stated by Bacon, that plantation should ‘be an adventure for such as are full, than a setting up of those that are low of means’. 78

However while most participants in the negotiating process had reservations over points of detail, all seemed satisfied that the scheme that had been agreed upon would meet the essential objectives of providing for the better security of both Ireland and Britain, of enhancing the wealth of both kingdoms, of advancing the reputation and honour of the king, and of improving the condition of the people of Ireland. This last objective was to be measured in spiritual as well as material terms, and all participants in the discussion were satisfied that they had devised a unique arrangement for bringing the truths of religion to a people who, as the theorists represented it, had, through no fault of their own, previously suffered in benighted ignorance. Thus, as Francis Bacon sought to refine the scheme of plantation, he expressed himself confident that it would result in Ireland having a population which, through both conversion and intermixture of settlers from outside, would become capable of exploiting the rich natural resources of the country so that it would soon become ‘another Britain’. As he expounded on the merits of the enterprise, Bacon suggested to King James that he should bring to mind the harp, ‘that glorious emblem or allegory’ of Ireland, with the assurance that he, as king, was about to ‘join the harp of David, in casting out the evil spirit of superstition, with the harp of Orpheus, in casting out desolation and barbarism’. It was against these standards that Bacon, and presumably King James, believed that the progress of the plantation in Ulster should be measured.79

4.3. THE PLANTATION OF ULSTER: THE PRACTICE 1609–1622

Once the principles of the plantation were agreed upon, the government in Ireland was given immediate responsibility for putting principle into practice. By the close of 1608, a ‘book’ had been compiled of the precise boundaries to the lands that had come into the possession of the crown in each of the six escheated counties. This exercise had deliberately made use of existing townlands and demarcations rather than the time-consuming scientific measurement of the land that had been attempted in Munster, but a new dimension to surveying was added with the preparation of coloured maps to describe what belonged to the different interests. This, and further diocesan surveys, distinguished secular from ecclesiastical lands, and the way was thus prepared for the committee in London to assign the property to the different categories of grantees in each of the six escheated counties except Coleraine. This county, as was noted, was augmented at the expense of its neighbours to become County Londonderry, and, in January 1610, was passed

79 Ibid. 171–2, 174.
to the London companies, with the exception of some assignments to
deserving natives and a large parcel, in the vicinity of Limavady, to the
servitor Sir Thomas Phillips.80

While this preliminary work was under way, steps were taken to rid the
country of ‘active and seditious persons of the Irishry’ and 1,300 of them were
rounded up and sent not, as had been originally proposed, to live in Munster,
but rather shipped by Captain Richard Bingley, in August 1609, to serve in
the army of Sweden. These, it was hoped, could be used to uphold the
Protestant interest in Europe instead of fighting for Catholicism in Ireland,
and it was intended to have a further thousand men ready for dispatch
the following summer.81 Therefore, by May 1610, all was in readiness for the
handover of their designated properties to the new owners, both natives and
newcomers, and a commission, under the command of Lord Deputy
Chichester, devoted the summer of that year to assigning estates and
removing the natives who had been in occupancy up to that time. The revo-
lutionary impact of what was being effected was blunted by the permission
granted to those holding by undertaker conditions to retain the existing native
tenants on their properties until 1 May 1611, and even then the undertakers
were expected to effect a change of occupancy only on a phased basis.82

The close interest taken by the government in what it regarded as a novel
experiment in social engineering was sustained until 1622. This was no less
than would have been expected by the planners, and Francis Bacon had
recommended that progress be monitored by a special council for the plan-
tation, analogous to the council for Virginia which had been established as
recently as 20 November 1606 and augmented on 9 March 1607, and by a
standing commission whose members would be based in close proximity to
the plantation. These recommendations were generally observed, and the
particular concern of Bacon, who was as interested in colonization in Ireland
as in Virginia, was that the progress of the plantation should be closely moni-
tored in its early years. This stipulation was rigidly adhered to through a
sequence of reports detailing how the work of the plantation was proceeding.
The first of these, under the direction of the former Sir George Carew (now
Lord Carew, and soon to be earl of Totnes), was conducted a year after first
assignment, in July and August 1611. Carew and his associates did not visit

80 Eoin Mac Neill and James Hogan (eds.), ‘Ms. Rawlinson A 237, A Book of the King’s Lands
... 1608’, Analecta Hibernica, 3 (1931), 151–218; on provision for the Church see, for example, ‘The
Report of the Jurors at Dungannon on the Ecclesiastical Rights of Several Bishops in County Tyrone,
22 Aug. 1609’ (Huntington Library, Hastings MS 78); on developments generally, Moody (ed.), ‘Ulster
Plantation Papers’.
81 ‘A Book of Entries in Brief of Letters Received from the King’s Majesty and the Lords of
Council’, 3 Aug. 1609 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS 149, fo. 43v); McCavitt, Sir Arthur
Chichester, 147–8, 160.
82 The details of the plantation and the various deferrals over the removal of the natives are given
in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 202–3.
all the proportions of the plantation and they did not visit County Cavan at all, and their principal source of information was the oral witness of county sheriffs and military officers. This was nonetheless sufficient for their principal purpose, which was to report on which of the proprietors had taken up occupancy and how they had set about their task of building, stocking, and populating their estates.83

The superficial character of this report did not satisfy the king, who demanded another survey which was conducted between 2 February and 25 April 1613 by Sir Josias Bodley who had been director general of fortifications in Ireland since the previous December. This survey had the merit of being based on eye witness evidence by an expert observer. Again, like the Carew report, it listed those planters who had arrived, but it broke new ground in seeking to explain what had happened to the property of those who had failed to materialize, and its real achievement was that it detailed how the proprietors had met their building obligations, while Bodley also estimated the number of English and Scottish tenants that had been introduced on the several proportions.84 Bodley conducted a second survey in the autumn of 1614 but only a fragment for one county appears to have survived. Therefore the next report on the progress of the plantation that is available to the historian is that conducted by Captain Nicholas Pynner between 1 December 1618 and 28 March 1619. This survey addressed the same questions as Bodley had posed in 1613 and, in that sense, it facilitates a fairly accurate measurement of the progress of the plantation between 1613 and 1619.85

Despite evidence of real progress, especially on building, King James was unhappy with what he learned of his plantation, and was especially aggrieved over the retention of native tenants by most undertakers, contrary to the conditions of their grants. Moreover in 1622 there was a renewed possibility of war with Spain, and crown advisers gave thought to the security of Ulster, and of Ireland generally, in the event of such an eventuality. Therefore Pynner’s report precipitated another more detailed investigation, that of the


85 Pynner’s survey is printed in Hill, Plantation, 449–590.
commissioners of 1622, which looked into all the plantations that had been authorized for Ireland up to that date, as well as into the management of Church and state by those who were appointed to uphold the interest of the crown in Ireland. This, as it transpired, was the last of the comprehensive surveys of the plantation, but a muster of some of the Ulster counties which was conducted about 1630 has been exploited by some historians to garner some further evidence on the extent of British settlement in the province at that date.

Since these sources have formed the basis of most appraisals of the organic development of the plantation and of a British settler presence in Ulster, little remains to be done other than to summarize the conclusions of the distinguished workers in the field, and to augment their conclusions on the basis of evidence emanating from some estate records that date back to these early years of the plantation. If, for the moment, we disregard the special provision made for the London companies, the number of grants made to English undertakers was fifty-one while fifty-nine assignments went to Scottish undertakers. Individual grantees were incorporated within clusters, called consorts, under the supervision of a chief undertaker, and each consort was directed to a specific barony. The allocation of these properties and the resulting English and Scottish character of given areas has been mapped out by several historians, who have concluded that while there were marginally more Scottish than English undertakers in the plantation as a whole, the choice baronies went to the English, and the English undertakers, with an average income of £200 a year were wealthier than the Scots whose average


87 Muster roll of Ulster, c1630 (BL Add. MS 4,770).

88 The mapping of the scheme of the plantation has been done effectively by Robert Hunter in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 198–9; Perceval-Maxwell, Scottish Migration, 366–71; Philip Robinson, The Plantation of Ulster: British Settlement in an Irish Landscape, 1600–1670 (2nd edn. Belfast, 1994), 84, 93, 94.
income was about £150 per annum. These relativities were no more than a reflection of the wealth of the two kingdoms, and the common characteristic of the two groups was that the overwhelming majority had previous experience as owners and managers of land. One apparent advantage that the Scots had over the English was that the majority came from two concentrated areas in the east and west of the central lowlands of Scotland and many Scottish undertakers were previously acquainted or were even kin, while the English came from all parts of their kingdom stretching from East Anglia to the north-west.89

There were fifty-five assignments made to those who fell into the category of servitor, and their total allocation amounted to 54,632 acres. These were a diverse group ranging from the chief officers of state in Dublin, such as Chichester and Davies, who received extensive grants in prime locations, to two Scots who were designated servitors, to the poorer captains in the army who received small grants in strategic locations, sometimes intermixed with the grants made to the natives. However some baronies were specifically designated for the use of servitors.90

There were twenty-six major assignments, equivalent to large undertaker or servitor grants, made to individual Irish beneficiaries, but these included Sir Turlough Mac Henry of the Fews, and the heirs of Henry Oge O'Neill, who had taken out patents before the plantation, as well as Connor Roe Maguire who had been promised a patent. These twenty-six allocations amounted to 56,490 acres of land, some grants being for a single life only. Then a further 37,523 acres were assigned in relatively small units to make freeholds which would be held either individually or collectively by the principal members of the Irish septs whose persistence was of such concern to Chichester. This brought the total native assignment in the plantation to 94,013 acres, as opposed to 160,500 acres to undertakers, 54,632 to servitors, 74,852 acres to the Church (with smaller allocations for the free schools and Trinity College, Dublin), 45,520 acres designated for plantation by the London companies, and 12,548 acres for the use of forts and corporations.91

These figures indicate the altogether greater range of outside influences that were deployed in this plantation than in the Munster settlement. However, as was the case with Munster, the ultimate success of the scheme hinged on the endeavours of the undertakers, especially if the London companies are considered within this category, and one disturbing feature of the


evolution of the plantation from a government perspective was the failure of so many of the original undertakers to endure as planters. Philip Robinson has calculated that only twenty-nine of the original assignments to English undertakers remained in the hands of the original grantees (or their heirs) by 1619, and that only twenty-six of the fifty-nine Scottish undertaker families were still on the ground in Ulster at that date.92 The government interpreted this as evidence of failure, and the other major complaint of the government, as it considered the sequence of reports it had commissioned, was that those undertakers who remained committed were failing in their effort to attract the requisite number of British settlers to their properties and were retaining Irish tenants in defiance of persistent official demands that they be removed.

There is little certainty about the precise number of British settlers in Ulster previous to 1622 but the one unassailable fact that emerged from successive surveys was that most undertakers continued to retain native tenants, which suggests either that suitable tenants from England and Scotland were not available or that British proprietors preferred Irish tenants. The undertakers were so flagrant in their delinquency that it was finally conceded in 1621 that they might apportion one-quarter of their estates to natives, thus retaining the required civil enclave on the remaining three-quarters. The other factor that emerges from the surviving evidence is that incoming settlers had minds of their own, and, like their counterparts in Munster of thirty years previously, could not be retained on poor-quality land, or persuaded to remain in locations that were remote from port towns or navigable rivers. This point was put emphatically by John Leigh who had acquired an undertaker’s proportion in County Tyrone by purchase from Sir Francis Willoughby. In alluding to the building and settlement he had done on 1,000 acres of his proportion, Leigh insisted that the boggy mountain land of the other 1,000 acres was ‘so bad . . . that no British tenants will be drawn to inhabit upon it upon any terms or conditions’.93 Such experiences suggest that estimates of gross settler numbers have little meaning because tenants were not distributed evenly among the undertakers, and their survival in particular areas was as much a reflection of tenants’ appraisals of the economic potential of those areas as it was of the conscientiousness of individual undertakers. Nor were British tenants settled only on undertaking proportions. Some of the more enterprising servitors were as successful as any undertaking in attracting and retaining English and Scottish tenants, and, as we shall see in Chapter 8, some Irish landowners had, by the 1630s, and possibly earlier, come to see the merit of displacing their native tenants to make room for English tenants.

While, therefore, the gross estimates of English and Scottish settlement figures tell us little of what was happening on the ground, they do help us to

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93 Ibid. 91–128; ‘The Humble Petition of John Leigh, Esq.’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii).
situate the plantation effort in Ulster in the context of other plantation endeavours of the early modern period. For this purpose, the surveys which are most helpful are Pynner's of 1619 and that of the commissioners of 1622, because these were both based on eyewitness inspection and, in the case of the 1622 survey, some evidence exists on how the surveyors checked the information that was presented to them in the certificates of the proprietors, or their agents, against the actuality of building and settlement on individual estates.\textsuperscript{94} Therefore, because of the thoroughness of the work of both surveys it seems safe to accept their estimate of a maximum of 6,402 adult British males on the plantation lands by 1622, with perhaps a further 500 adult males on church lands. The difficulty for the historian is to distinguish between Scots and English among these 'British' settlers, and to convert fairly reliable figures for adult males into estimates of total migration. In the first of these respects, Perceval-Maxwell's method for distinguishing Scots from English seems to bring us as close to the truth as we are likely to get, so we must concede his claim that 3,740 of these were Scots, which leaves us with 3,162 adult Englishmen in the escheated counties in 1622. Then, if we accept Perceval-Maxwell's suggestion, which is based on archival investigation, that there were three British women for every four men present in the plantation, the gross British figure of 6,902 adult men implies that a total adult British population of 12,079 had taken up residence in the escheated counties of Ulster before 1622.\textsuperscript{95}

This movement of 1,000 adults a year was substantial by the standards of most European migrations to colonial destinations of the early modern period, and it becomes even more so when we consider that at least 4,000 adult Scottish males (making 7,000 adults) had moved to Counties Antrim and Down during these years, and that a significant English migration into Munster and parts of Leinster was under way at the same time.\textsuperscript{96} When all of these movements are taken into account, the total annual human flow from Britain to Ireland falls within the range of that from Spain to the New World which averaged 2,583 a year during its sixteenth-century phase. The movement to Ulster and elsewhere in Ireland was, admittedly, sustained for little more than a decade, but it is nonetheless remarkable when we consider that the total population of Britain was less than half that of the Iberian peninsula. The migration was also distinctive in the high percentage of women it

\textsuperscript{94} Certificates survive only for Counties Tyrone and Armagh, but we can assume they were compiled for all six counties. The certificates for these two counties are especially interesting for the marginal notes where the commissioners challenged the claims being made by the planters (NLI, MS 8.014 vii, viii, and ix).


\textsuperscript{96} On the Scottish migration to Antrim and Down see Perceval-Maxwell, \textit{Scottish Migration}, 229–51; Gillespie, \textit{Colonial Ulster}, 46–63; we should note that the figures for Antrim and Down come from the muster for 1630 rather than from a 1622 calculation; the subject of English settlement in Munster and elsewhere will be discussed in Chapter 6 below.
included, since the female component of the migration to New Spain did not exceed one-third of the total in any year and was usually considerably less. Except for the earliest decades of settlement, the passage from Spain to the New World was, despite the distance involved, regular, secure, and predictable, and most who went there were going to take up employment in cities with developed infrastructures of a European kind. Passage from Scotland to Ulster was short and relatively safe, but any English person contemplating a journey from, for example, East Anglia, faced a land journey across England and Wales before taking a sea voyage to Dublin or some other port on the eastern, northern, or southern coasts of Ireland and then a second, and very uncertain, overland expedition to, possibly, Donegal or Fermanagh.

Few English people have left details of travel to Ulster, but the ordinary settler would have had to endure greater travails and uncertainties than did the high-ranking George Canning who made his first journey to Ulster in 1614 as an agent of the Ironmongers’ Company of London which had, at that point, been involved with the plantation for four years. Canning left London on 30 September and travelled overland to Chester which he reached by 2 October. No shipping was available there so he made his way to the small port of Hilbree where he waited for a passage from 14 to 21 October when he got on board the *Bride of Derry*, presumably a craft belonging to one of the London companies. This got him to the port of Derry three days later, and he finally reached his destination at Coleraine on 26 October, precisely four weeks from the time he had left London. People who were less influential than Canning would not have had access to such ready passage, so it is reasonable to suggest that a migratory passage from the south of England to Ulster would have taken scarcely less time than that which was to be followed by approximately 21,000 from that area of England to New England during the single decade of the 1630s. The sea passage from England to Ulster, which was subject to storm and never far distant from rocky coasts, was no less hazardous than the ocean crossing to New England. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that, both in terms of its size, social and sexual composition, and duration, the migration from England to Ireland, which was at its peak during the 1610s and 1620s, was almost a prelude to the Great Migration of the 1630s to New England. It would have differed from that principally because it was not inspired by the same religious intensity, and because those English who migrated to Ulster were immediately obliged to associate, in some fashion, with their Scottish fellow planters.

Apart from the uncertainty of the journey, those who did go to Ulster to become tenants during these decades had no assurance that adequate housing would await them, and they had to endure the uncertainties of the seasons and the climate which brought snow and wind in winter and rain at all times. Both Thomas Perkins and George Canning, who served successively as agents
for the Ironmongers’ Company, complained that their work came to a standstill during the long dark days of an Ulster winter, while in summer they were reliant upon native guides to show them over the property. Even then, Perkins remarked in August 1614 that his progress was hindered because of the ‘rain which made great rivers . . . full of difficulty and danger in this country for want of boats and bridges’. Then also Thomas Blennerhasset’s depiction of the Ulster plantation as a frontier zone was a reflection of a reality that was experienced by a great number of settlers. He advised settlers to be constantly on guard, with weapons in hand, against ‘the cruel wood-kerne, the devouring wolf, and other suspicious Irish’ who, despite having ‘put on the smiling countenance of contentment’, did ‘threaten every hour’.97

If King James and his advisers were the first to consider the plantation in Ulster as a colonial enterprise, analogous to activities in New Spain and in Virginia and to what would soon be under way in New England, they had an unrealistic expectation of the plantation, based, presumably, on the theories of the armchair colonists who appear to have been most influential in devising the scheme. Because he became increasingly concerned over the reports of progress that reached him, the king’s assurance to Chichester in 1611, when he appointed his first investigating commission, that he was sending Carew ‘not as a visitor or syndic to inquire into the faults of you and others who serve us’, quickly gave way to complaints over ‘a general backwardness and slack proceeding in the plantation’ and a ‘general concealment of their neglects’ by the planters, with every participant seeking ‘to transfer the faults and omissions therein to other men’. All subsequent investigations were, consequently, with the purpose of identifying failings and shortcomings and punishing the transgressors, and successive historical appraisals of the Ulster plantation have been coloured by the jeremiads that were the outcome of these investigations.98 It is intended here to correct this negative impression by drawing attention to the conscientious efforts that were made by some of the planters to meet the conditions that had been imposed on them by people who knew little of the reality of colonization.

The group most frequently faulted for their shortcomings as planters in Ulster were the London merchant companies who, as it happens, invested more time and money in the plantation than anybody else. They were naturally aggrieved at the criticism of their endeavours, and they had all the


more occasion for grievance because they became involved in the first instance only out of a sense of obligation to King James and because they had been persuaded that they had a moral obligation to assist in the advancement of religion and civility. When, in 1609, Mayor Sebright of London had sought to satisfy the king’s demand by persuading the principal merchants of the city that they should collectively invest in the Ulster venture, he had to exhaust the entire repertoire of justifications for colonization, ranging from Roman and medieval civilizing precedent to the economic benefit of plantations, before he had made a case that he believed would prove convincing for his colleagues. He obviously realized that the principal appeal of Ulster to practical businessmen would be the plentifulness of unexploited resources that were either expensive or not available through existing trading networks. Thus he portrayed Ulster as a region that was not only naturally fertile but close to the ‘great and profitable fishings . . . in the next isles of Scotland where many Hollanders do fish all the summer season’, while he praised its location for making it ‘ready for traffic with England and Scotland’, and ‘open and convenient for Spain and the Straits, and nearest for Newfoundland’.99

Once they became involved in the plantation, some of the merchants wished to abandon the high principles and rigid plans that had been laid down by the idealists, in favour of reaping an immediate profit by whatever devices seemed feasible. These, however, found themselves bound more by contractual conditions in Ulster than in their manifold and far-flung business enterprises, because the government was relentless in supervising a scheme in which the monarch himself took a personal interest, and which was regarded as strategically important for the security of both Britain and Ireland. There was, therefore, no escaping the heavy outlay associated with the plantation’s building programme. Under the conditions that were agreed upon, each of the twelve principal companies in the city was obliged to construct castles and churches on its individual estate, after the manner of the undertakers. Then also they were required to contribute to a joint fund that would go towards building towns at Derry and Coleraine which would be defensible from sea and from land. Their responsibilities to build towns with elaborate fortifications were of a kind that would have been assumed by the state in any other European colonizing enterprises of the early modern period, and the companies claimed to have spent £69,416 on buildings alone by 1626. This figure is consistent with the calculations of the late T. W. Moody which show that the companies had collectively spent £62,000 on their two towns of Derry and Coleraine by 1635, plus a minimum of £22,000 on build-

99 Mayor Sebright to Ironmongers, 1609 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (1), fos. 0–3); some sense of the chords that Sebright needed to strike to win support from his merchant colleagues will be gained from Grassby, The Business Community, 234–68; this section of the chapter is an expansion on what was published as Nicholas Canny, ‘Fashioning “British” Worlds in the Seventeenth Century’, in Nicholas Canny, Joseph F. Illick, Gary B. Nash, and William Pencak (eds.), Empire, Society and Labor: Essays in Honor of Richard S. Dunn, special supplemental issue to Pennsylvania History, 64 (1997), 26–45.
ings on their estates throughout the county. Some impression of the scale of this monetary outlay which the London companies found themselves contracted to engage upon is conveyed by placing it against the figure of £8 million which, according to Richard Grassby, was invested by English people in all joint-stock exploratory, colonial, and commercial companies between 1575 and 1630, or his indication that only about ten individuals in the London business community between 1600 and 1660 were worth more than £100,000 at some point in their careers. In the light of such a massive investment it is unsurprising that the physical appearance of Derry and Coleraine earned some compliments for the merchant companies and they may have gained some peace of mind when, by 1626, their investment in building the two towns began to generate a rental income of £1,062 18s. 8d. per annum. However the companies were still being criticized by successive investigations into the plantation for their failure to meet their obligations on their rural estates, and the continuing outflow of funds for this purpose drove all of the companies to near desperation, and their exposure to criticism and even prosecution was heightened by the pressures which the companies imposed upon their agents to increase income and reduce outlay.100

The activity of each company was monitored by a supervisory body representing the collectivity which, in turn, answered to the crown. The management of the London companies’ Ulster business was therefore highly bureaucratized, which means that more details have survived on the day-to-day activity of this dimension of the Ulster plantation than any other. The arrangements put in place by the individual companies were similar with the company appointing an agent to look after its affairs in Ulster. This agent then worked under the direction of a nominated member, or members, of the company in London and required the approval of a supervisor for his every action. Then, in London, the members of the individual companies who were given responsibility for their Ulster business maintained informal contact with each other, and on the occasions when agents returned to report directly to their employers they were sometimes called upon to offer advice also to other companies. The frenetic energy that was expended by all companies on the development of their rural properties in Ulster will be revealed by an examination of the endeavours of two companies, the Haberdashers and the Ironmongers, and this too will explain some of the stratagems that

were devised not only by the London companies but by all planters, to overcome the difficulties that arose.

The Haberdashers were identified as one of the more negligent companies in meeting the plantation conditions on their estate which lay in the barony of Loughinsholin to the south-west of Coleraine close to the banks of the river Roe. A survey of the property in 1614 revealed that it generated an annual rent of £222 6s. 8d., with ‘much’ of its fifty-six townlands containing ‘very good ground as well for corn and meadow and pasture’. The more mountainous townlands were found to be good only for grazing, but the property was considered satisfactory in all respects except that it contained no wood that would be useful for building, ‘wattles excepted’. The company did not even put itself to the cost of paying a specific agent but hired the services of Tristram Beresford, who represented the general interest of all the companies at Coleraine. Beresford made tenancy arrangements with John Cooke and Edward Warren, two English traders already settled in Thomas Phillips’s town of Limavady, but otherwise he maintained native tenants on the estate. When pressure mounted on the company to meet their building and tenancy conditions and when they came to realize, in 1616, that they had fallen so far behind the other companies that they could never hope to catch up, the committee in London contemplated further prevarication by retaining on short leases such of the natives ‘as will be conformable in religion’. The hope of the company at that juncture was to sell the estate ‘within a few years’ by which time they expected its value would have increased because their ‘neighbours’ would have ‘planted’ their lands with British tenants ‘and made out estates’. Despite this resolution to cut their losses, the Haberdashers had, by 1623, laid out a total of £1,124 on the estate, which was the accumulation of a steady outflow of small amounts of money, similar to what all the London companies would have spent, on surveying the property, commissioning maps, and establishing precise boundaries both between the proportion and that of its neighbours, and between the several townlands within the proportion. Money also went on fees for Beresford and his assistants, and on such commodities as lead, nails, glass, iron, and armour, all of which had to be shipped from London. However, the biggest single outlay was on the construction of their castle and a watermill for which they maintained a detailed listing of expenditure on materials and workmen’s wages. Even with that done, the company had to face the prospect of building a church and some houses in the hope that this would attract English tenants to settle on the property.


102 Copy of letter to Mr Beresford, 28 May [1616]; ‘At the Court of Assistants . . . Company of
By way of contrast the Ironmongers’ Company proved conscientious and, from the outset, employed agents of their own to whom they sent specific directions concerning both their building and tenanting obligations. The Ironmongers’ proportion lay due south of Coleraine on the west bank of the river Bann, and, for all their seriousness, it seemed initially that the Ironmongers would do no better than the Haberdashers because their land contained no stone that was suited to building, and it first seemed that the cost of transporting building stone even a short distance overland would prove prohibitive. Their first agent, Lieutenant Thomas Perkins, believed he had a solution to the problem when he discovered clay suited to the making of brick on the property and he offered to enter into a contract with the company to manufacture brick on site, while he also suggested that they should substitute the ‘substantial oak’ that was available locally for the freestone that would normally have been required for the surrounds of doors and windows. The Company, which was anxious about involving itself in yet further cost, responded by dismissing Perkins from his post, and in characteristic London business practice, they replaced him with George Canning, who was not only a member of the company but a brother of the person assigned to supervise its interest in Ulster. 103 Canning immediately questioned the merits of brick for the ground level of a castle, but he too was forced to delay the construction work because of the scarcity of good building stone in the area. Even when building was under way in 1615 he feared it might prove ‘necessary to frame your buildings round because the stone is so bad it will not make Quynes for the corner’. Then while he awaited instruction from London, he assembled whatever materials were available locally such as lime, slates, and sawn timber, and he investigated the availability and the charges of the tradesmen from London who were clustered in the towns of Derry and Coleraine, awaiting contract work from the various merchant companies, and any other planters, who they knew were all required by the terms of their grants to build castles and houses by specified dates. 104

Because his company was the Ironmongers, Canning had ready access to supplies of weapons for defence and such provision for building as saws, shovels, pick-axes, hatchets, iron bars for windows, hinges, locks for doors, hammers, and other utensils. 105 Then, with this material at hand, Canning,

Haberdashers’, 30 July 1623; both in Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/33; Account for Building a Castle and a Watermill on Lands Belonging to the Haberdashers’, 1616 (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/60, no. 1).


104 Report of George Canning, 9 Aug. 1615 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (t), referred to hereafter as Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 69–70); report of George Canning, 16 Oct. 1615 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 73v–74v).

105 Furniture sent by the company to George Canning (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fo. 70v); the builder of the castle was Richard Symson, whose doubtful recommendation was that he had built the castle for the Mercers’ Company which had collapsed for lack of lime in the mortar. This may
on his own initiative, contracted with Abraham Wott and Edward Elice, two carpenters based at Coleraine, to construct a village of six two-storey timber houses with brick chimneys, close to the site of the proposed castle at Athgeave, and these were ready for occupation before the castle itself. He took particular pride in this development and described the progress and building methods in precise detail: the houses he said were made of ‘half timber’, by which he meant ‘timber sawed to 5 or 6 inches square, and 5 inches square between each piece, and between those nogged, as we call it, with short pieces of cleft oak driven hard between and plastered, so it is very strong and equal to stone building’. He soon had reason, after the first winter storm of December 1615, to question the durability of his buildings because they were stripped of some of their slates, while the temporary thatched houses constructed by the English workmen were ‘torn almost naked’. After this experience he was forced to acknowledge that the humble hovels of the Irish, although not appropriate to civil living, were better suited to the environment than the houses of the English. ‘The Irish’, he said, ‘build low that a man may reach the top with his hand and covered with turf and straw together bound on with ropes of straw and wattles so the winds little trouble them’.106

Attention is devoted to the endeavours of George Canning on the Ironmongers’ proportion not only because of the unique wealth of detail they provide, but because they convey an impression both of the extraordinarily high cost associated with plantation in Ulster, and of the time and thought invested in the enterprise, at least by the conscientious Ironmongers’ Company. The accounts of George Canning show that, besides the rents he collected locally, he received £615 from the parent company in London between 24 September 1615 and 11 August 1616 of which £593 had already been spent even before the castle was furnished and ready for habitation.107 The accounts also indicate what a hive of industry Athgeave and its vicinity became while the construction programme was under way. Besides the carpenters, masons, and slaters who were employed on site, there were teams of workers employed in digging foundations, groups of artisans were cutting and shaping timber in the woods, and gangs conveying materials by water from Coleraine and overland by cart from the quarries, brick kilns, and lime kilns on the estates of other London companies. Skilled artisans were obviously the most highly paid workers, but the breakdown of costs was not always as one would expect. The charge for bringing iron by sea from London to Coleraine was only £1, and there was a further ‘boatage’ charge of five

shillings for bringing it from Coleraine to Athgeave, but Mr Warner, an English merchant based at Coleraine, imposed a levy of five shillings a day to have his team draw goods the short distance from the river bank to the castle. Even here Canning was fortunate in having carts available to him, unlike Mr John Leigh who claimed that his building costs in his inland proportion in County Tyrone were higher than those for any other undertaker because he had been constrained to carry his timber, lime, and ‘hewing stones’ at least 12 miles ‘at garron’s tails over filthy boggy mountains’.

The commitment of money and time associated with taking possession of their property and meeting their building obligations explains why the London companies and their agents were not better able to meet their obligation of settling their property with English and Scottish Protestants. That they were slow to meet their obligation in this respect does not mean that they were unaware of it. George Canning addressed the question from the moment of his arrival, not least because it was only by having tenants on the property that it would generate an income which would subsidize his building costs. For this reason he moved immediately to enter into short contractual terms with the existing Irish and Old English tenants, and he also urged his superiors in London to have the plantation conditions altered so that Irish tenants who took the oath of allegiance and went to church might be retained on the property. When no concession was made and when the company was facing criticism, if not a financial penalty, for failure to meet its tenancy requirements, his superiors in London suggested he should himself bring over artisans from London who would work on the construction of the castle and who ‘after or rather presently may set down upon our land as tenants’.

Canning, so preoccupied with his building programme, never saw himself becoming an active recruiter of personnel. He was also aware that attempts to recruit tenants from among the English and Scots who were already in Ulster would prove futile because money in Ireland was ‘very precious’ and potential ‘takers of land’ who were able to obtain leases at the bargain price of seven years’ purchase were ‘very unwilling’ and ‘for the most part . . . unable, to disburse money either for [entry] fines or purchase of land’. In the circumstances, Canning got over the problem by contracting with those artisans, based mostly in Coleraine, who were engaged by him on his various building works and who were able to invest some of the money they received in wages from him to improve the estates he assigned them as freeholders on the company’s proportion. Typical of the contracts entered into


109 Commission to George Canning and his instructions, 2 Nov. 1614 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 49v–50v); report of George Canning, 9 Aug. 1615 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 69–70); report of George Canning, 30 Mar. 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 122v–125v).
by Canning on behalf of the company was that of 2 June 1615 with Roger Holden of Coleraine, Sawyer. Under this arrangement, Holden was assigned, at the annual rent of £7, a lease of two named townlands on the Ironmongers’ estate for a term of thirty-one years or three lives. Holden, for his part, was permitted to sublet the property only to English or Scots ‘according to His Majesty’s book of plantation’ and he was required to ‘enroll any such estate in the book of the Company’s Manor’. To make way for his subtenants, Holden was ‘obliged’ to ‘expel and put out of the said lands all the Irish tenants upon lawful warning’. Furthermore, Holden agreed, under bond, to build by 1 August 1616 two houses of ‘brick, stone or timber after the English manner’, and also to ‘enclose a garden, orchard, and homestall with ditching and quickset about each house’, and he was required, within three years, to have subdivided and enclosed with quickset the entire two townlands.\(^{110}\)

A series of similar contracts quickly followed, and Canning was able to report in June 1616 that he had made settlements with nine named Englishmen and also with four Scotsmen. One of the Scots had ‘given [him] the slip’, but the other three were building on their tenancies, even if not up to the standard of the English. As a consequence, Canning looked forward by that Michaelmas to having not only a castle with an adjoining village of six houses ‘completed outwardly’, but also to having twenty-one houses built by tenants including six built together ‘which is a great town in this country’. By then, he was confident the Ironmongers would have met all obligations and have ‘a good plantation’, and he himself was resolved not only to continue on the property but ‘to have my wife and family out of Warwickshire, for me thinks it is uncomfortable living as I do’.\(^{111}\)

An even greater measure of Canning’s confidence was that he then opened overtures with the company to have a manor court created and to have himself appointed steward of the manor so ‘the poor tenants shall be freed from many molestations they are now put to by the county sheriff and their bailiffs’. These pleas were interspersed with reference to the daily assaults on the settler community by alienated natives, but this was as a preliminary to his ultimate request, which the company conceded in August 1617, that he be appointed tenant of the castle, lands, and manor of the Ironmongers’ Company. Then Canning was assigned a lease of the whole proportion, in which the company had by then invested in excess of £2,000, for an annual rent of £150, provided he fulfilled the outstanding contracts to pay the annual

\(^{110}\) Report of George Canning, 30 Mar. 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 122r–25v); ‘Articles of Agreement 2 June 1615 between George Canning Agent for the Ironmongers and Roger Holden of Coleraine, Sawyer’ (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fo. 69r v); further articles of agreement between Canning and his individual freeholders are detailed individually (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 78r–100v).

\(^{111}\) Report of George Canning, 8 June 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 134r–135v); report of same, 30 Mar. 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 122r–125v).
crown rent, to repair, glaze, and furnish the church that already existed on
the property, and to retain a minister at £20 a year.112

This arrangement was obviously satisfactory from Canning’s point of view
because he had acquired, at an apparently bargain price, a property which
was a going concern and on which the principal capital investment had been
made by the company and the freeholders. The company might also have
regarded it as reasonable because since Canning was one of their own
members they could expect that they would indeed, over time, receive a
return in rent of the money they had invested, while they could reasonably
hope to enjoy royal gratitude for their conscientious involvement in the plant-
tation. And most particularly, they could anticipate immediate relief from
further outlay since responsibility for the plantation seemed to be taken over
by Canning. The company, as we shall see in the next chapter, was to be
disappointed in all of these expectations, but even if we ignore what lay in
the future it is obvious that there was something both artificial and fragile
about the arrangements Canning had put in place. The buildings were
tangible enough, but the merit of those he had chosen as freeholders was that
they had money to invest in their properties rather than that they would be
caring, resident, tenants. Indeed, the fact that most of them were busy arti-
sans or merchants in Coleraine suggested that they would not be active on
their estates, and an even less hopeful sign was that some of them were simul-
taneously engaged as tenants by other merchant companies on their
proportions.

Canning himself acknowledged the superficiality of the arrangements he
had put in place when he admitted he ‘could hardly hold [the] tenants to
keep their bargains’. Moreover, the tenant-lists compiled from year to year
show that while the principal tenants of the various townlands were changing
steadily from Irish to British the actual occupancy of the land was more
constant as these new chief tenants retained most of the existing farmers as
subtenants on their lands. Thus, for 1616, it appears that while Canning had
placed eighteen tenants who were English or Scottish, there were still 129
Irish subtenants retained by these British tenants, while ten Irish chief tenants,
who had been accepted as deserving freeholders by the government, still held
leases on the property.113

None of this satisfied the spirit of the plantation, but Canning had chosen
to meet the building requirement in full and the tenanting expectation in
part, in preference to totally satisfying the tenanting requirement and
neglecting the stipulations which related to defensible buildings. His choice

112 Canning to Ironmongers from Barton in Warwickshire, 15 Mar. 1616/17 (Ironmongers’
Letterbook, fo. 119); agreement, 14 Aug. 1617 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 173–174).

113 Considerations for Ironmongers’ proportion, 2 Apr. 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos.
125v–126v); ‘Takers of Land According to the Report of Mr. Alderman Proby Being at Athgeave’, 14
Aug. 1616 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fos. 147–150).
would have been easy since it coincided with his own long-term interest to acquire a property with a fully developed infrastructure. However it does seem that he was contemplating the alternative course in January 1615 when he indicated that he had to decide between entering into agreement with English or Scottish tenants. Neither, he remarked, would accept leases for a shorter term than thirty-one years, and the English were not agreeable to pay the rents being sought if they were also required to bear the cost of building on their properties. However, even though Scots were more readily available and ‘willing to give better rents than the English’, Canning opted for a primarily English settlement because he doubted the Scots would ‘perform so good building’. Furthermore, when he took account of the ‘catching after tenants’ that was prevalent in Ulster, he thought it ‘not fit’ to make agreements with any ‘that will condescend to indifferent conditions and covenants’, obviously because they would subsequently be seduced by better terms.\textsuperscript{114} Even then he accepted some Scots tenants on the property, and it is likely that, when the government later came to insist on compliance with tenancy requirements, Canning and his freeholders would have welcomed yet more Scots both as tenants and subtenants. If he did so, then this one sector of the plantation by the London companies in Ulster that once seemed set to become a transplanted English society was transformed into a ‘British’ community in embryo characterized by an English proprietor, with his English chief tenants, enjoying a supremacy over Scots and Irish tenants and subtenants.

If the community that emerged over time on the Ironmongers’ proportion might be described as ‘British’, then we are safe in describing the society that ultimately developed on the Haberdashers’ lands as a Scottish world in miniature. The initial problem of the Haberdashers derived from their own neglect in developing an infrastructure, other than a castle and a mill, that would prove inviting for tenants, and from their almost total disregard for tenanting requirements. When it was brought home to the company that they, with the Clothmakers, had been isolated as ‘being most backward’ in complying with plantation conditions, the company in London wondered pathetically if the ‘natives’ on the land might not have ‘some poor houses wherein our people may lodge until they be better fitted’. Even then, they thought it would prove ‘impossible’ to procure tenants of ‘any sufficiency’ in London, ‘men being so loathe to remove from hence that have any good means to live here’. Therefore, in desperation, as an official investigation by Aldermen Proby and Springham was pending, the company struck on the idea of leasing the entire property to any one individual who was willing to fulfil the contractual obligations attaching to the property. Their first hope was ‘a Scottish lord Sir Robert Maxwell who married Sir Hugh Montgomerie’s daughter’. The

\textsuperscript{114} Report of meeting with George Canning, 5 Jan. 1614/15 (Ironmongers’ Letterbook, fo. 51v).
company was coy about its reason for rejecting Maxwell and his offer, and had resolved to build some small houses at £5 or £30 per house and also a church ‘for it will be a good inducement to draw over English inhabitants if they may have churches near them furnished with a good minister’. Then suddenly, in 1617, all talk of further building was abandoned when another Scottish gentleman, Sir Robert McClelland of Bomby, expressed interest in the proportion. After hard bargaining, McClelland acquired the property for an annual rent of £350 with a down payment of £1,000 to cover the first three years’ rent, and the agent was instructed to assist McClelland in taking over possession ‘without any prejudice against him or his nation’. This magnanimity was, however, qualified by the directive that the agent should secrete the lead which had been set aside for the roofing of the church thus leaving it to McClelland to complete that building at his own charge.

Immediately following his acquisition of the property, Sir Robert McClelland, later Lord Kirkcudbright, lavished the attention on the property that was required to bring it into conformity with official requirements. In doing so, he populated it with tenants whom he attracted directly from his own place of origin in Scotland, and who brought subtenants with them, or else he contracted with Scottish tenants already in Ireland. It was made clear to these tenants that it was Scottish cultural norms that obtained within the environment into which they were being introduced. This was symbolized by the ‘tack’ (lease) drawn up in December 1617 between Sir Robert McClelland and Garvin Kelso of Hollywood in County Down. Kelso agreed to come with his tenants from his present residence in Clandeboy but the tenancy which he was assigned was described in ‘Scots measure’ and the rent was ‘the sum of seven score of marks Scots money’.

The terms must have proved attractive to Kelso because when a roster of the ‘British’ habitation on the Haberdashers’ proportion was made available to the governors and committee for the City of London’s plantation, the third name to appear in a list of forty-four ‘British’ tenants was Garvin Kelso, who was credited with having built, planted, and enclosed the ballyboe of Grannen and introduced four or five undertenants there, all of them armed. Of the others identified as being on Sir Robert’s property, surnames such as McClelland, Hanna, Campbell, Wilson, Murray, and Hewson indicate they were Scots, and John Liston who had ‘the caring of the said Sir Robert’s sheep’ was probably also from Scotland. However we cannot with certainty establish if the Martins, Smalls, Moores, Pattons, Crosbys, Boles, and Hares

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115 Letter to Beresford, 10 May 1615; letters to Beresford, probably 1616 (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/33, at back of document, fo. 1 from end ‘and’); same to same, 28 May [1616] (RH 15/91/33, fo. 2 from end).

116 Adrian Moore to Beresford, 9 Aug. 1616, and same to same, 23 Apr. 1617 (ibid., fo. 2’ from back); abstract of covenant with Sir Robert McClelland (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/59, no. 4).

117 Copy of tack, Dec. 1617 (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/59, no. 2); ‘tack’ is Lowland Scots.
who feature on the list were Scots, or English, or even Irish, while Sir Robert’s
stud mares, kept on the ‘two Gortcarberyes’, were ‘looked to and kept by
Scottish and Irish people who are provided with some small dwellings upon
the same who are provided by the said Sir Robert with arms’. The labourers
in the twelve cottages in the vicinity of Sir Robert’s castle were not named
but they were described as ‘British’ and it was claimed that they were armed
and went to church. It was said of the twenty-eight or thirty ‘householders’
who resided in stone and timber houses in a village within a half-mile of the
castle that they were ‘all of them Britains and goeth to church’. However a
list of twenty-nine of their names, starting with Robert Heigh, minister,
including Alexander Glendening, gent., and John Forsythe, chirurgeon, and
concluding with Sandy Patton, blacksmith, and John Mc Murchie, tailor,
suggests that these ‘British’ were overwhelmingly Scots. There is no doubt
about the nationality of the six freeholders, nor of the further six people
‘retained on the property in the nature of copyholders’, because their precise
place of origin in Scotland was given. It is therefore possible that the only
three freeholders on the property who were not Scots were the three Irish
people who had been so nominated by the government and whose leases
remained valid under McClelland.

These details on the habitation on McClelland’s property suggests it was
almost entirely a Scottish community. It was certainly so to the extent that
there were hardly any English present there, and Sir Robert strove to sustain
the impression that it was almost entirely Scottish when he withheld the
names of the undertenants retained by his principal tenants, on the grounds
that they were ‘not in my rental book in regard they pay me no rent but to
the chief tenants and freeholders’.118 This, and the further disclaimer that he
did not have access to ‘a copy of the seniscalls leet roll where they and every
one of them are named and called every court leet’, was disingenuous, because
the surviving rent roll for 1623 indicates that the undertenants of the part of
the estate managed directly by McClelland himself were Irish and, in many
instances, the same people who had been chief tenants when the
Haberdashers had managed the property.119

Despite the fact that Irish people may have constituted a numerical
majority on his land, the enclave developed by Sir Robert McClelland on
the Haberdashers’ proportion was unquestionably Scottish in its orientation.
McClelland himself retained his estates in Scotland while developing this and
other properties in Ulster, and moved regularly between the two, sometimes
leaving his daughter Marion McClelland in charge of the Irish estate. Then,

118 ‘An answer to the Governors and Committee for the City of London’s Plantation in Ireland . . .’ (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/32, no. 2); ‘The names of the Freeholders . . .’ (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/33).
119 ‘The May Rents Received since Sir Robert’s Going’, 6 June 1623 (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/60); rent roll from All Saints 1616 to All Saints 1617 (SRO, RH 15/91/35, 1r–4r).
as is evident from Marion’s account of disbursements from the Irish estate in 1623, there was a regular passage of messengers between Scotland and Ulster, and the payment of £1 6s. ‘for klipeing’ McClelland’s ship indicates that he aspired to manage his Irish and Scottish interests as parts of a single economic unit by sailing between them. The disbursements also show that most of the skilled, and some of the unskilled, work on the Ulster property was done by Scottish labourers, while those Irish workers who were retained, except the stud farmers, were assigned unskilled tasks. Thus Adam and George McClelland were paid £3 ‘for ploughing the wheat land’ while the payment of £2 to the Irishwoman Grissell O’Cassedy was ‘for weeding the corn at Ballycastle’, and a further payment of 15s. went to her ‘for getting her part of the hay’. Some of these payments also reveal how McClelland and his agents were striving to reshape the environment by promoting improvements. A payment of £3 10s. was recorded to Mr Robinson ‘for measuring your land’, and one of £2 18s. to ‘the sawyers for sawing the timber at Articleane’. At the same time, some of McClelland’s Irish retainers fell short of what was expected of them. A payment of 12s. was made, presumably with some reluctance, to Grissell O’Cassedy ‘for the house she should have set up’, while an outlay of £5 10s. was recorded ‘for Therlagh Mac Teigg’s pardon’. The account also records the improvement in civil living that came to Ulster with McClelland’s arrival: a payment of 5s. was made on McClelland’s behalf ‘to Mr. Campion the preacher’, while the more substantial sum of £9 1s. 6d. went to ‘Mr. Godfree of London for your daughter’s stuff for her gown and lace’.\(^\text{120}\) This latter entry might suggest that London was the arbiter of fashion in matters sartorial, but it was so in little else in this Ulster outpost of western Scottish rural society. Indeed, if we are to judge from the experience of the household of Sir Claud Hamilton of Scawfield in Lanarkshire whose Ulster property lay in the barony of Strabane in County Tyrone, even the diet of a Scottish planter’s household would have been decidedly Scottish, with breakfast consisting of liberal helpings of bread and bere (barley), and the midday repast frequently including lambs’ puddings and dishes of ‘droppid eggs’.\(^\text{121}\)

This story of the different routes by which two proportions were brought to conform with the conditions of the Ulster plantation serves to illustrate just how taxing, and indeed unrealistic, these conditions were. The building requirements, as it happens, came within the compass of both London companies because, as wealthy trading companies, they commanded the requisite

\(^{120}\) ‘Disbursements since Sir Robert’s Going’, 29 May 1623 (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/60).

\(^{121}\) The information on diet comes in a household account relating to the year 1629 and at the end of a document concerning the estates of Sir Claud Hamilton who had died in 1614; ‘Accounts of the Irish Estates of Sir Claud Hamilton of Schawfield’ (Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, div. 2, no. 5); dropped eggs, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* which mistakenly considers this a 19th-century coinage, were fried or poached eggs.
financial resources and credit to acquire the materials and skilled labour necessary to that purpose. Even then, building on the Londoners’ proportions did not always proceed without disasters, and as George Canning was making plans for his castle at Athgeave he became aware that the more ambitious pile built by the Mercers’ Company on their proportion had collapsed because they had not used sufficient lime in the mortar. The London companies also had an advantage over all others in having at their disposal vessels that they could divert from other trades to sail regularly to Derry and Coleraine, and they were able to induce a group of artisans to build those towns and fortifications and then to reside there and sell their services not only to the London companies but to any planter who could afford to hire them. However, while able to meet the building requirements, neither company was proficient at recruiting settlers, and while Canning did muster sufficient individuals to enter into formal leasing contracts with him this was to comply with the letter rather than the spirit of the regulations. Thus, although the population on the proportion was technically English when he took the property off the Ironmongers’ hands, it was essentially Irish in composition, since the English freeholders were artisans based in Coleraine who also held leases on other proprietors’ estates.

The difficulties which the London companies encountered would have been no different from those facing any other proprietor, and the reasons why so many who were nominated as undertakers later withdrew from the effort, or defaulted on their contracts, must be due to the fact that the problems associated with the plantation were insuperable for all but the very wealthy or the very committed. The wealth variable would explain why the London companies did better than most undertakers where building was concerned, and why, among both English and Scottish undertakers, those who could not muster significant resources had not done much, by 1622, to meet their building obligations other than to construct earthen bawns, reinforced with stone and lime. And at the tenant level it was wealth, as much as different traditions of vernacular architecture, which explains why English tenants built better houses than Scots. However, while many Scottish undertakers may have experienced difficulties in meeting the costs of building, they were altogether more proficient than the English in settling their properties with the requisite number of ‘British’ tenants and this too can be illustrated and explained in the case of Sir Robert McClelland.

McClelland, whose career has been traced independently by Robert Hunter and Michael Perceval-Maxwell, had been interested in the Ulster plantation from the outset and had been assigned the large proportion of the Rosses in Donegal as an undertaker in the plantation. He made no effort to develop this property, presumably because he lacked the means to do so, and he leased it almost immediately to a fellow Scot, Archibald Achenson, who had a seignory of his own in the Fews in County Armagh. In the meantime,
McClelland became associated with Sir Hugh Montgomery, one of the more successful private planters east of the Bann, and married Montgomery’s eldest daughter Isobel, with whom he received four townlands in the vicinity of Lambeg, County Antrim, as a dowry. There, he built a dwelling house and introduced ‘British’ tenants before he ‘returned home to Scotland to bring over his family, friends and followers to inhabit there’. When he returned to Ulster he found that his house and property had been taken over by an English officer, Captain Humphrey Norton, but McClelland was not deterred and, working in conjunction with his father-in-law, expanded his holdings east of the Bann through foreclosure on the mortgages he had extended to some of the O’Neills of that area. McClelland held this property until 1622 when he assigned it on lease to a fellow Scot, Sir James Hamilton, then of Bangor in County Down. Also, in 1612, McClelland, again in association with a group of Scots, including the ubiquitous Sir Hugh Montgomery, had taken a lease of diocesan land from the bishop of Clogher. 122

It was seemingly these combined holdings which gave McClelland the collateral to bid for the Haberdashers’ proportion in 1616 and then subsequently for the adjoining Clothmakers’ lands which he also acquired. These properties probably proved more appealing than the Roses for McClelland, because they already had the costly infrastructure in place. Another consideration, which may have been of equal importance to McClelland, was that the Londoners’ property was only a short distance by water from his Scottish estate in Kircudbright, and it was even nearer to his lands east of the Bann from where, as was noted in the instance of Garvin Kelso, he was able to draw some Scots who had made their homes there over the previous decade.

If, in the matter of settling his lands with British tenants both quickly and in depth, we might regard Sir Robert McClelland as exemplary, he was only marginally more proficient than other enterprising Scottish proprietors who were generally better than English planters in bringing settlers from their places of origin to their estates in Ulster. Indeed, as in the case of George Canning, many English proprietors failed to attract any English tenants to Ulster and sought to comply with the plantation conditions first by making contracts with English people who were employed elsewhere in the province but who had the means to invest in buildings and other improvements, and then by augmenting their numbers by making terms with Scots who were already in the locality. Some of the Scots who were available to become tenants seem to have made their own way into Ulster, others were lured by better terms from the estates of the proprietors on whose Ulster lands they had originally settled, but most Scots in Ulster were brought directly from

122 Hunter, ‘Plantation in Donegal’; Perceval-Maxwell, Scottish Migration, 173–83; Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, 140; undated draft of petition of Sir Robert McClelland to the king (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/40, no. 18); copy indenture, 1622 (SRO, RH 15/91/50, no. 1); copy indenture, 22 Aug. 1612 (SRO, RH 15/91/39, no. 1); pre-nuptial contract, 2 May 1612 (SRO, RH 15/91/12, no. 3).
their home villages by proprietors who wished to settle them on their recently acquired estates. Since this latter was the principal source of ‘British’ tenants for the Ulster plantation it goes without saying that Scots proprietors always had an advantage over their English counterparts who had to meet their obligations either by bringing tenants into Ulster from England or from elsewhere in Ireland, or by tempting existing British tenants to desert neighbouring proprietors.

Sir Robert McClelland was especially advantaged because he had a sailing vessel to convey people directly from Kircudbright to Coleraine. Proprietors who did not have ships of their own to transport their families and tenants had to bid for whatever berths were offered by the boatmen in the towns of the west coast of Scotland, unless they could match the political clout of James Hamilton, earl of Abercorn, who, in 1612, received royal authority to requisition any ship on the west coast of Scotland for his regular passages between Ulster and Scotland because, with pirates in those waters, it was ‘not fitting that he should adventure himself in any ordinary passage boat’. The space requirements on ships for less exalted Scottish planters was such that, by 1612, the ‘passage’ to Ireland had become ‘a common and ane ordinary ferry’. This proved a great boon for the boatmen who were able to demand ‘extraordinary freights’ from the ‘undertakers in the plantation in Ireland’ who had occasion to transport ‘very frequently numbers of men for labouring the ground, and many bestiall and cattle for replenishing the same’. This initial burst was followed by a more regular traffic as many, like McClelland, travelled singly to Ireland to identify the prospects that were available and later returned to Scotland and persuaded their wives and families to join them in Ulster. Sir George Hamilton of Greenlaw, who had held land in Strabane from an early date, was one such. A payment of 40 shillings made by him in 1621 ‘for all the bairnes fetched between Scotland and Ireland and their entertainment on the way’, and a further payment ‘for the same bairmes’ entertainment in their meat, clothes, learning and all furnishing from August 1620’, suggest that it was not until then that he decided to make his home in Ulster rather than in Scotland.

The ready availability of Scottish tenants does much to explain why almost every English proprietor in Ulster accommodated some Scottish tenants on his estates, while the ‘British’ tenants on Scottish estates were usually of their own nation. However, many of these English landowners entered into

123 Warrant of Council to the earl of Abercorn citing royal authority of 26 Jan. 1612; petition of Abercorn et al., 27 Oct. 1612, in Masson (ed.), Register, ix. 327.
124 Income and outlay of Sir George Hamilton, 1620 and 1621 (Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, div. 2, no. 5); the certificate for the Hamilton estate in 1622 is also in NLI, MS 8,014 ix.
125 ‘This generalization is based on the certificates submitted by the planters in Tyrone and Armagh to the commissioners of 1622 (NLI, MS 8,014 viii, ix); for an example of a well-settled English proportion with some identified Scots see the return for ‘Mr. Geo. Ridgway his Proportion of 1,000 acres Called Ballemackyll’; for a less frequent example of a Scots proprietor having some English tenants
contracts with Scots against their better judgement, and only because English tenants were not available at the moment when plantation proprietors were being pressurized to remove the Irish from their lands. This decided preference for English over Scottish tenants may have owed something to cultural prejudice, but the reasons given by Canning for his reluctance to accept Scots was that they seldom had the money to pay entry fines and improve the property. Indeed, English proprietors had such a poor opinion of the economic prowess of Scots tenants that they preferred to retain existing Irish cultivators over displacing them to make room for Scots. This desire might have been in direct conflict with the ideology that justified the plantation but it made good economic sense. Essentially, the cost and disruption associated with switching from Irish to Scots was not justified by any possible benefit that would come from the change since the agrarian expertise of the farming population of lowland Scotland was not significantly more advanced than that of native Irish cultivators. Both had endured in societies where the bulk of profit from their labour in the fields went in rent and service to the owners of the soil, and their living conditions, including their housing, were of a rudimentary kind. Both peoples were expert in pastoral farming, which was concentrated on the upland, and cultivated significant quantities of grain, especially oats, on the more fertile lowland, which went towards making porridge and oaten cakes that constituted an important element of the diet of both Irish and Scottish rural populations.¹²⁶

The difficulty which Canning and other English proprietors in Ulster experienced in attracting expert cultivators from England as tenants is explained by the fact that such English people of the early seventeenth century who might have considered improving their lot by moving to Ireland had a wide range of choices open to them. As they weighed up the merits of their various options, relatively few wished to go to war-scarred Ulster, which was in the process of being torn from its Gaelic past, over the lush farm lands of Munster and Leinster, each of which provinces had a developed urban network and a significant English-speaking population which made them clearly recognizable as part of the inheritance of an English monarchy.¹²⁷ Consequently, of those English who did settle in Ulster, relatively few of them, with the possible exception of demobilized soldiers, came from farming backgrounds.

¹²⁶ On agrarian conditions in Scotland see Ian Whyte, Agriculture in Seventeenth Century Scotland (Edinburgh, 1979); on Scottish diet see Alex J. S. Gibson with T. C. Smout, Prices, Food and Wages in Scotland, 1550–1780 (Cambridge, 1995); more generally Jenny Wormald, Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland, 1470–1625 (London, 1981), 160–76.

¹²⁷ This point will be developed in Chapter 6 below.
Rather, many who appear as English tenants in the various investigations into the progress of the Ulster plantation had first arrived in the province as artisans or professionals, and great numbers of them continued to pursue those callings, and sometimes remained based in the nascent towns of the province, even as they held leases of plantation land. The tenantry procedures followed by George Canning whereby he persuaded artisans in Coleraine to become freeholders, have already been noted, and the commissioners of 1622 found that similar practices were widespread. For example, the notes of the commissioners on the certificate proffered them by Mr Anketell, agent on the plantation of the dowager countess of Castlehaven, mentioned that one freeholder lived in England and another in Munster, but that one Richard Walker was parson of a neighbouring parish and dwelt in ‘Omey town’, that one Thomas Byrd resided in Fermanagh where he also held property, and that one William Hamilton dwelt in Strabane where he was provost.\(^{128}\)

Yet Scots tenants were readily available to English as well as Scottish proprietors in Ulster, because few other opportunities in Ireland were open to them: Scots poured into Ulster quite simply because this was the first career opportunity, besides mercenary soldiering on the Continent or peddling on the north-eastern fringes of Europe, that promised to release many Scottish people from the grip of endemic poverty. It must be noted that those Scots who made the move to Ulster were not an undifferentiated mass of humanity. There were, as we said, probably three women for every four men who made the journey to Ulster, and the social gradations that were included in the group are suggested by the range of weapons that were reported by those Scottish proprietors who returned detailed certificates to the commissioners. Thus, for example, the list of those who had settled on Sir Archibald Achenson’s estate in the Fews in County Armagh distinguished between the very few who were armed with a sword, a ‘piece’, and a horseman’s lance, the small number who possessed swords and horsemen’s lances, the greater number who had swords and pikes, and finally the unfortunate George Bell who was armed ‘with a fork only’. And planters like Sir John Drummond, who had difficulty in attracting any ‘British’ tenants to his estate, strove to deceive the commissioners by having ‘Redshanks’—highland soldiers—pose as lowlanders.\(^{129}\)

Even as they undertook the journey to Ireland, the Scots were still handicapped by their poverty, and it emerges from the unique set of certificates from the commissioners’ report of 1622 for Counties Armagh and Tyrone.

\(^{128}\) ‘Notes upon Mr. Anketell’s Certificate’ (NLI, MS 8,014, viii).
that some of the Scots who were granted tenancies were in fact artisans who would have been especially valued by landowners either because they already had some cash in hand or because they were capable of generating a secondary income from the pursuit of their crafts in Ulster. Thus after Andrew Stewart, Lord Ochiltree (by this time Baron Castlestewart in the Irish peerage), had identified thirteen ‘frie holders who had their tytill mediatlie from [him] self’, all of them relatives of his own or gentlemen, and a further eleven leaseholders, all (except Nicholas Greg who leased ‘one milne’) described as ‘gent.’, he provided a third list of twenty-nine individuals who were described by him as ‘the lace holders and indwellers of my tolbud and tanlands annext to it dwelling about the church’. Of these twenty-nine, only three were described as gent., two were isolated by the commissioners as being Irish, and all of the remaining twenty-four were either described as ‘tradisman’ or were identified with particular trades ranging from weaver, to ditcher, to shoemaker, to tailor, to carpenter, to gardener, to butcher, to maltmaker, and to schoolmaster. In thus developing Stewartstown, while he still retained many Irish as cultivators of the soil, Lord Castlestewart was endorsing the observation of Sir James Craig, a fellow Scot, who reported to the commissioners that ‘the British did increase his Majesty’s profit more by their industry and virtue than by their yearly rents’ since industry and virtue promoted building, fishing, tanning, and iron-making ‘whereby the people are put to work and kept from idleness: the one being a means to make the common-wealth to flourish and the other a consuming moath’. But if wealth creation was the principal reason for establishing Stewartstown as a proto-industrial settlement, it seems that the artisans who took up occupancy there also leased parcels of Lord Castlestewart’s land, and replenished his rent roll from the profits of their crafts.

If there was little economic benefit accruing to proprietors from the acceptance of former Scottish rural workers as tenants on their Ulster properties, people in Scotland nonetheless did everything to overcome perceived Scottish deficits. They did this by joining in what might be described as a national effort to ensure that Scots could take full advantage of the unprecedented opportunity for social and economic advancement that was being made available to them in Ulster. Evidence of a commitment to the Ulster plantation at the upper reaches of Scottish society is contained in a series of letters of 1610 from the Scottish Privy Council to Lord Deputy Chichester extolling the merits of several of those who had been granted land in Ulster, pointing out how the apparent shortcomings of some were outweighed by their other merits, and requesting assistance for them. The solicitude of the Scottish Privy

130 ‘My Lo. Castle Stewards Certificate’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii); see also the return of his agent Go Walker.
131 Sir James Cragg, ‘his General Observations Concerning the Undertakers of Ulster’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii).
Council was sustained beyond the moment of the emigrants’ departure, as is made clear by their complaint over an attack made by Rowland Savage of Portaferry upon Alexander McDowell who had moved with his family from Kildonnell to settle in County Down. This ‘haynous offence’, they insisted, required ‘exemplary punishment’ or it would be a ‘mighty discouragement’ to undertakers.

While the Scottish Privy Council thus kept a watching brief for their countrymen in Ulster, the best evidence of broad-spectrum Scottish support for the enterprise in Ulster is the enthusiasm with which Scots came forward in 1609, and again in 1610, to enlist as undertakers in Ulster, and in the willingness of an altogether greater number of Scots, from the urban middle class as well as from the petty gentry, to give financial guarantees for those who wished to become planters. Finally, the ultimate proof of Scottish enthusiasm for the project at all reaches of society is the migration of thousands of people from Scotland to Ulster, and we can take it that significant numbers of those also raised loans in their home localities before they made the move. And as this migration was taking place, Ulster, and the resources it promised, entered almost casually into the consciousness of Scots, as is made clear by the directive given by the town fathers of Edinburgh in 1612 to Mungo McCall, merchant, that when he next travelled to the ‘west parts of the realm’ he should establish ‘where timber may be had in Ireland or elsewhere for the kirk roof of this burgh’.132

Despite this keen Scottish awareness of the opportunities offered by the plantation in Ulster, which was matched by no equivalent enthusiasm in English society, much of the Scottish involvement continued to be dogged by financial difficulty which, in turn, influenced Scottish participation in the plantation. When Patrick Vaus applied to become an undertaker his principal guarantor for the fulfilment of his plantation conditions on 1,000 acres in County Donegal was William Stewart of Dunduff, who was both a planter himself and a ‘cautioner’ for yet other planters, including the impecunious, but well connected, Lord Ochiltree who was seeking to repair his depleted fortune from the Ulster windfall. This arrangement of one planter serving as security for others was hardly a recipe for success, and when Vaus and William Stewart both ran into difficulties their properties fell to the Murrays who had been second guarantors of the Vaus transaction, and the lands of both Vaus and Stewart thus became absorbed into the thriving plantation estate of John Murray, earl of Annandale.133


The expansionist disposition of Sir Robert McClelland suggests that he, at least, was solvent, or made money to cover his costs as he proceeded from one assignment to the next. His apparently cautious attitude towards the acquisition of the Haberdashers’ proportion conveys the impression that he was reluctant to take more than one step at a time. This slow pace may, however, have been dictated by his Scottish moneylenders rather than by his own inclinations, because it was revealed in 1638, when McClelland drew up his will, that his Ulster lands were still heavily encumbered ‘by contract, bonds, bills, recognizances, statutes, judgements or other ways whatsoever’ to James Murray of Edinburgh, merchant, John Browne of Newbotell in Scotland, gent., Jennot King of Edinburgh, widow, and James Lone of Edinburgh, gent. It was left to his nephew, William McClelland of Maghera, to whom he willed the Clothmakers’ proportion, to redeem these debts and to pay an annuity of £50 to his widow. This implies that this particular property stood as security for the rest, but the original debt was probably incurred when McClelland attempted to establish himself in the Rosses of Donegal, and his mortgaging transactions with Irish landowners who were in financial difficulty may have been with a view to making a quick profit that would enable him to escape from the clutches of his Scottish creditors. It does seem that McClelland’s dealings with the O’Neills of Clandeboy proved profitable and paved the way for his acquisition of the Haberdashers’ proportion, but his exploitation of Irish landowners’ weaknesses did not stop there because his will listed debts, valued at about £500 sterling, owing to him from two Connacht proprietors, Lord Viscount Mayo and Lord Viscount Taaffe. Could it be that McClelland was driven by his own indebtedness to the very moment of his death to be constantly on the lookout for fresh opportunity even if it involved the possible expansion of his extensive landed interest in Ulster southwards into the province of Connacht?

The fact that some planters, English as well as Scots, were short of money or heavily in debt resulted in a dereliction of responsibilities towards the plantation and frequently in a withdrawal from the scheme. As proprietors admitted failure, their lands were usually taken over by others; either neighbours who wished to extend their holdings or landowners to whom they were indebted. The rate of failure has yet to be traced, but recent research by Jane Ohlmeyer suggests that some insights on the subject may be gleaned from the records of the Irish Court of Chancery. The obvious consequence of the collapse of some planters was the emergence of a few very large estates whose size far exceeded anything envisaged by the planners of the plantation. Where this occurred, the newly acquired portion tended to be populated

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134 Abstract of the covenant between Sir Robert McClelland and the Clothmakers (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/91/59, no. 4); ‘Copy of Testimony of Sir Robert McClelland, baron Kircudbright’, 31 Dec. 1638 (SRO, RH 15/91/37, no. 3); Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, 121–2.

135 Ohlmeyer, ‘Records of the Irish Court of Chancery’.
almost entirely with Irish tenants, but the commissioners of 1622 were understanding about such aberrations when there was evidence that the proprietors had been scrupulous in the observation of plantation conditions on their original estates. A typical example comes from the properties of Sir William Stewart in County Tyrone. That which he obtained as a Scottish servitor and that which he purchased from Edward Kingswell were, according to himself, better built upon and tenanted than the property of any undertaker in Tyrone, and the commissioners considered them ‘well planted’ because they ‘saw here at least fifty Scottish men on horseback’. However Sir William was the first to admit that no effort had been made to meet plantation conditions on the property which he and the deceased Sir Claud Hamilton had jointly purchased from James Haige in the barony of Strabane.136 The repetition of this process throughout the plantation meant that not even the best-managed properties in Ulster were without some native tenants, because it was the owners of the best managed estates who most frequently acquired the property of those who had failed most dismally to fulfil their plantation conditions. Moreover even when Irish were not actually settled on estates they were, as the commissioners of 1622 complained, being permitted by the undertakers and their tenants ‘to graze upon their lands, dwelling in other places’.137

Another unforeseen development that resulted from estate failures was that, due to the operation of Scottish credit networks, whenever the failed proprietor was a Scotsman his property went, almost invariably, to whichever Scot had stood security for him. However when English proprietors, whether servitors or undertakers, failed as planters their lands did not necessarily fall to other Englishmen, and Scots therefore also acquired some derelict ‘English’ properties. This trend meant that the percentage of Ulster lands in Scottish ownership increased beyond what had been originally intended, and as more sectors of the plantation fell under the control of Scots these areas tended to become Scottish in character. They became so because Scots proprietors usually appointed fellow nationals as freeholders who, in turn, assigned land to other Scots, or failing them Irish, as subtenants. There were therefore few English, besides Protestant clergy, resident in these areas, and even in the matter of ecclesiastical appointments the government, during the reign of James VI and I, frequently nominated Scotsmen as bishops to the dioceses in those parts of Ulster dominated by Scots. Where they did not do so, the proprietors frequently patronized preachers of their own choosing—like Sir Robert McClelland’s Mr Campion—to look after the spiritual needs of their settler community. The areas under Scottish control were further influenced

136 ‘The Names of the British Tenants . . . upon . . . Ballmecolough and . . . Ballyrannell . . . Belonging to Sir William Stewart’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii); declaration of Sir William Stewart (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); notes of the commissioners (NLI, MS 8,014 viii).
137 Report on natives and Ulster (NLI, MS 8,014 vii).
by Scottish culture because Scottish tenants, like Scottish proprietors, almost invariably married women from Scotland. That these women remained permanently in their new location is suggested by the significant number of Scottish widows among the ‘British’ population of Ulster in 1622; some of these were doughty ladies as, for example, the ‘widow McPatreek’, a subtenant to the freeholder Robert Montgomery on the estate of Archibald Achenson in County Armagh who kept in her house ‘a sword and a pike for her maid’.138

While on one level, the Scots carved out these Scottish microcosms, they strove also in the public arena to conduct business primarily with others of their countrymen. For instance, Sir Robert McClelland’s business associates were almost invariably Scots, and the same impression is conveyed by the detailed rental and account of the Hamilton estate that was compiled for 1614–15 on the death of the owner Sir Claud Hamilton (brother to the earl of Abercorn). The development of this property had hardly commenced when Sir Claud died but while most of the tenants were still Irish and his rents were collected in kind, the cattle sold off the land for money went invariably to people bearing Scottish names.139 Then when Sir Claud was taken seriously ill in Dublin in 1614, where he was to have attended the Dublin parliament and to have been inducted as a member of the Irish Privy Council, the stream of acquaintances, besides Scottish personal servants, who attended on successive days and nights at his death-watch were all Scottish gentlemen, with the sole exception of Christopher Hampton, the lord primate of Armagh, who was invited to be present only because he was ‘thought to have good skill in physic’.140 No such exception would have been made by another Scot, Lord Balfour of Clonawley, who, when advising the earl of Annandale on the management of his fishery in Killibegs in County Donegal, insisted that he should never ‘trust any English in that place’ since they would merely deceive him by ‘fair shows and protestations’.141

Yet however much people like Balfour might have wished for an exclusively Scottish world in Ulster this proved impossible. Their king, on whose support they ultimately relied, had taken up residence in London, and when he admitted Scots as equal partners with his English subjects in the Ulster plantation it was in a jurisdiction where the administration was under almost exclusively English control and where the state Church was Anglican in doctrine and organization. Thus, within the local context of Ulster, Scottish settlers had to show deference to the, usually English, bishops of the Church of Ireland while seeking to negotiate leases of land from them; they had to work closely with

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138 ‘Survey of the Manor of . . . Clancurry . . . Belonging to Sir Archibald Achenson’ (Dublin, NLI, MS 8,014 ix).
139 ‘Accounts of Irish Estates of Sir Claud Hamilton of Schawfield’ (Edinburgh University Library, Laing MSS, div. 2, no. 5).
141 James, Lord Balfour of Clonawley, to John, earl of Annandale, 20 July 1626, ibid. i. 169–72.
their English planter neighbours who dominated the local administration and defence of the province; and they had to accept that they would, for some time to come, be reliant upon Irish tenants or subtenants to provide them with an income from the lands they were seeking to develop in the province. At the same time, they had to establish and maintain contact with the administration in Dublin, which was overwhelmingly an English body at the outset of the seventeenth century, because this enjoyed considerable powers of patronage within Ireland. Therefore Sir Robert McClelland’s outlay associated with maintaining contact with his Scottish homeland was matched by the additional expense of sending his servant, John Pooke, on several expeditions to Dublin, and he had to make regular payments to a Mr Winslawe and a Mr Wamsley for ‘law business’, because it was English common law rather than Scottish law that obtained in Ireland. As the seventeenth century progressed, Scots with Irish interests, and certainly the heirs of Sir Robert McClelland, had also to maintain contact with the court of King Charles I where patronage became increasingly centralized. Therefore, despite the persistent endeavour to make particular areas of Ulster ever more Scottish, these attempts could never totally succeed because the Scots would, by definition, have to be subservient to English authority within a plantation that was designed to be ‘British’, and they were forced by economic circumstances to rely on native Irish to serve them or to pay them rent.

The fact that Scottish proprietors sought to keep their English neighbours at arm’s length provided those English planters who had, from the outset, been ill disposed towards the Scots with reason to resent their presence in Ulster. It goes without saying that this was not true of all English proprietors, and there were others, besides Sir Arthur Chichester, who recognized that a Scottish presence in Ulster was essential to the maintenance of an English and a Protestant interest in the province. One such was Sir John Clotworthy who, like Chichester, is usually identified as coming from the English southwest, although his early life was shaped more by England’s naval and military endeavours than by his family’s place of origin. His father, Sir Hugh Clotworthy, had served the crown for forty years, initially as a naval captain and then, accompanied by his son, in charge of a fort and boats in Chichester’s amphibious campaign on Lough Neagh during the closing stages of the Nine Years War. Here Clotworthy’s life blended with that of the future governor, and he would, like Chichester, have come to appreciate the extent to which the security of Ulster relied upon the maintenance of good relationships with Scots and with Scotland. However, where Chichester moved rapidly upwards in government service, while retaining and developing

143 Sir Robert’s principal estate in Ireland went to his daughter Marion and her husband Robert Maxwell, who was forced to become a petitioner at court to uphold their interests, see Robert Maxwell to Bishop of Derry, 14 Mar. 1639/40 (SRO, RH 15/91/20, no. 1).
extensive property in Ulster, John Clotworthy remained essentially an Ulster hand, whose only official income was a small government pension granted initially to Sir Hugh with reversion to himself.

John Clotworthy’s main interest was therefore in the lands which he had acquired in the private settlement of Counties Antrim and Down that was promoted jointly by Scottish and English adventurers. His principal holding was in the vicinity of Antrim town where most of his tenants were Scottish lowlanders with whose strong Calvinist attachment Clotworthy came to identify. It is no surprise, therefore, that Clotworthy became associated with those Scottish landowners in north-east Ulster who spilled across the Bann into the escheated counties, and especially with Sir Robert McClelland with whom he sometimes worked in political concert, as he had done with McClelland’s father-in-law Sir Hugh Montgomery. It was this association which led him, like McClelland, to take a lease of one of the proportions of the London companies; in Clotworthy’s case that of the Drapers’ proportion which he acquired for a term of sixty-one years.144

Attention is here devoted to Clotworthy not because he was typical but because his close involvement with Scots in the plantation contrasts with that of most English proprietors in Counties Tyrone and Armagh whose progress as planters we can establish from the certificates returned by them to the 1622 commissioners. These, with very few exceptions, break down into two clear categories. First there were impecunious men such as Anthony Cope, Francis Sacheverell, and William Grymes who sought to deceive the 1622 commissioners by submitting certificates of their performance which had no substance in fact, or by admitting that their properties were inhabited principally by Scots and by those they described as ‘conforming Irish’.145

At the opposite pole from such individuals who never had the capacity to meet the plantation conditions were the Irish officers of state and their close associates, notably Sir Thomas Ridgeway (then Lord Ridgeway) and his brother George Ridgeway, Sir William Parsons, Sir John Davies, Sir Richard Wingfield (then Lord Powerscourt), Sir Oliver St John (then Lord Grandison); and Sir Arthur Chichester (then Lord Chichester).146 These had been involved

144 Gillespie, Colonial Ulster, 42, 102, 121–2, 131, 146–8; Moody, Londonderry Plantation, 446; ‘The True State of Sir John Clotworthy Concerning his Pension’ (Oxford, New Bodleian Library, Banks Papers, Bundle 15, no. 15a, fos. 28–9); ‘How Sir John Clotworthy Doth and Did Hold his Land in County Londonderry’ (New Bodleian Library, Banks Papers, Bundle 15, no. 15b, fos. 30); ‘Propositions Made by Lord Kirkcudbright and Sir John Clotworthy’ (New Bodleian Library, Banks Papers, Bundle 6, no. 6, fos. 48–50).

145 ‘Certificate for County Armagh for Mr. Cope and Mr. Sacheverell’ (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); ‘A Note of the Names of the Tenants . . . of Lands within the Manor of Divereene and Dromnell’ (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); ‘Mr. Sacheverills Certificate’ (NLI, 8,014 ix); ‘Wm Grymes cert of the Proportion which was Wm Tiernin, 1,000 Acres Called Moyenner and Ballygallet’ (NLI, 8,014 ix).

146 ‘The Lord Ridgeway’s Proportion of Augher, 2,000 Acres Together with the Corporation Lands’, (NLI, 8,014 viii); ‘Mr. George Ridgeway his Proportion Called Ballemackyll’ (NLI, 8,014 viii); ‘The Manor of Parsonstown Being 1,000 Acres in Barony of Clogher, Being Sir William Parsons’
with the original survey of the escheated counties and had apparently then earmarked prime properties for themselves. All of them had striven to become model planters, and, by 1622, most of these had expanded upon their original allocations either by buying out the estates of close associates or other English grantees who had abandoned the effort, or through financial dealings with Irish proprietors; both with those who held estates for their lives only, and those who had run into debt.

None of these senior officials had, at the outset, commanded the means to become successful planters but they had been in the happy position of enjoying continuous income from public office which they could invest in their newly acquired estates, while, as has been demonstrated by Joseph McLaughlin, they could otherwise divert public funds to meet private ends. At the same time, they were privileged by having access to the many opportunities that existed in early seventeenth-century Ireland to become involved in speculative land ventures throughout the country, and the gains from these could serve as the collateral for raising loans for developing their extensive Ulster properties along plantation lines.147

It was these planter/officials, together with a few English undertakers who did not hold public office, notably Sir John Dillon and John and William Brownlow, who established coherent British communities in Ulster such as had been considered prerequisite for a successful plantation by the designers of the scheme.148 Some of these, notably Parsons and George Ridgeway, placed Scots and English side by side on their properties, but the names of the freeholders and tenants listed on other estates are so decidedly English that one historian has sought to trace the English county of origin of these settlers through a study of surnames. This exercise is possibly futile, since many of those English settlers in Ulster are likely to have been brought there from other estates in Ireland that were managed by these same proprietors rather than directly from the proprietors’ English place of origin. However the really distinctive feature of these dynamic English plantations, and that which made them exemplary, is the significant number of artisans noted among the settlers.

These artisans were, in several instances, settled together in proto-urban communities where they shared space with merchants and professionals.


148 ‘Sir John Dillon his Certificate’ (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); ‘Freeholders of Aghavillan and Brochus in County Armagh the Lands of Sir John Dillon’ (NLI, MS 18,650); ‘Tenants of Mr. Brownlowe 1622’, (NLI, MS 18,647); Raymond Gillespie (ed.), Settlement and Survival on an Ulster Estate: The Brownlow Leasebook, 1667–1711 (Belfast, 1988), pp. xi–xiii.
Some of these settlements at Augher, Dungannon, Clogher, Lurgan, and Benburb did subsequently become consequential trading centres, but their value in 1622 was based as much on their symbolic as on their commercial and strategic worth.\textsuperscript{149} Thus, in the certificate of William Brownlow, it emerges that one concern of his agent was to show that his settlement was focused on an urban centre when he drew a clear distinction between the forty-eight named householders, with occupations ranging from householder, to butcher, to joiner, to cooper, who were ‘joined together in a town called Lurgan in Clanbrassil near to the river’, and the forty-six tenants who had their ‘houses out of the town, but some 4 or 5 houses together’.\textsuperscript{150}

The inland urban centre which was described in greatest detail, both by the provost and by the commissioners, was the town of Dungannon which was identified as an unofficial capital of the plantation both because it had been at the centre of Tyrone’s power base during the war, and because Lord Deputy Chichester had claimed it, together with 1,640 acres, for himself. In identifying ‘the English and Scotts and Welche’ who inhabited the borough, the list began with the provost and twelve burghers, then identified the three clergymen, two schoolmasters, and the usher who resided there, then listed the thirty-one ‘English and Scottish dwellers and freemen of the same borough’, overlooked the ‘British’ servants of the town ‘although they be many’, and concluded with a list of thirty-five ‘Irish Protestant’ inhabitants of the borough, and ignored ‘many others being recusants inhabiting there to the number of forty households or thereabouts’. Then, in a complementary document which was ultimately incorporated into the commissioners’ report, a detailed description was provided of the buildings of the town, beginning with the church and steeple, and then proceeding in turn to describe the bawn with its dwelling house; the twelve houses of lime and stone each with at least six rooms; eight timber houses ‘of extraordinary strong and handsome cadge work’; the large house of lime and stone ‘with a strong pallizado of sawen timber’ which was ‘near adjoining’ the borough; and finally in turn the gaol, the sessions house, and the market house with a large hall and rooms overhead which could accommodate the judge, jury, ‘and country’.\textsuperscript{151}

The Scottish urban settlements at Stewartstown and Strabane could not match this grandeur, and if this description of Dungannon, and the descriptions provided of the other English boroughs, was intended to be exemplary

\textsuperscript{149} Besides in the certificates mentioned above information on the towns is to be found in ‘Petition of the Poor Tradesmen of Clogher’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii); ‘The Names of the English and Scotts and Welsche Inhabitants of the Said Burrowe [Dungannon]’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii); R. J. Hunter, ‘Ulster Plantation Towns, 1609–41’, in David Harkness and Mary O’Dowd (eds.), The Town in Ireland: Historical Studies, XIII (Belfast, 1981), 55–80.

\textsuperscript{150} ‘Tenants of Mr. Brownlowe, 1622’ (NLI, MS 18,647).

\textsuperscript{151} ‘The Names of the English and Scotts and Welsche Inhabitants of the Said Burrowe’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii); ‘A Particular of the Plantation Made by R.H. the Lord Chichester’, (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); Treadwell (ed.), The Survey of Armagh and Tyrone, 1622; Ulster Journal of Archaeology, 27 (1964), 149–50.
it proved effective. John Leigh, a former army captain turned planter, was able to identify but eleven freeholders on his proportion of 2,000 acres but he still mentioned in his certificate that he had ‘built good substantial houses after the English manner . . . with chimneys and lofts and . . . built together in the fashion of an English village’, presumably because he thought it would reflect well on himself.\footnote{152 ‘The Names of the British Tenants Inhabiting the Proportion of Sentonnight’ (NLI, MS 8,014 viii).} Novices in the plantation business were also much taken by the methods that had led to the success of the few conspicuously successful English proprietors. Sir Francis Annesley, who was secretary to the government, custodian of Mountnorris fort in Ulster, and himself one of the commissioners, had little to boast about concerning his own proportion of 1,000 acres on which he had planted but four named freeholders and ten leaseholders, since the buildings were declared to be even more decayed than when Captain Pynner had complained of their inadequate condition in 1619. Nonetheless, Annesley had been working assiduously, since 1611, to build up his Ulster interest both inside and outside the escheated counties, and, in the course of doing so, was following the proven path of his fellow officials by taking mortgages on the lands of Irish proprietors, principally Mac Cartans and O’Hanlons, for whom he negotiated loans through the Statute Staple of Dublin.\footnote{153 Francis Ansloe’s Proportion of 1,000 Acres’ (NLI, MS 8,014 ix); ‘Series of Financial Transactions of Sir Francis Annesley’, 1611–36 (Oxford County Archives, Annesley Viscount Valentia Papers, E/6/7/3D/2, 4, 6, 8 and E/6/7/2D, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7; and E/6/10D/4, E/6/7/3D/13); Jane Ohlmeyer and Éamonn Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 1596–1687 (Dublin, 1998), 58.} Not all Ulster proprietors of Gaelic ancestry went to the wall, and we learn from the work of Jane Ohlmeyer how the Catholic Randal Mac Donnell, first earl of Antrim, whose estates lay outside the confines of the plantation, sought to create a civil appearance on his property and to enhance his income by inviting both Scots and English Protestant tenants to take leases from him.\footnote{154 Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration.}

While the commissioners of 1622 were not sparing in their praise when they witnessed something commendable in the plantation in Ulster, their conclusions were essentially negative. The principal problems which they identified were three in number. They complained repeatedly of the extent to which the escheated counties remained under Irish cultural and economic influences, they criticized the failure of a great number of planters to meet even minimal building and tenanting requirements, and they despaired of the general failure of the planter community to proceed towards the ultimate justification for plantation which was the reform of the Irish population of Ulster in religion and civility. When they addressed the subject of natives, the commissioners usually meant those who were retained as tenants on the property of British proprietors, because they believed that it was only there that the reform was likely to be accomplished. Therefore they paid scant
attention in their reportage to those Irish lords who had been given grants of land in the plantation. The commissioners who inspected the plantation in Donegal did report on the buildings done by the Irish planters there, but an inspection of the certificates for Counties Tyrone and Armagh would leave one with the impression that no Irish proprietors existed at all since mention was made of only three beneficiaries, and this to the effect that they had accomplished little as landowners, and, in one instance, that most of the land had passed into the hands of English proprietors. The commissioners would probably have regarded such sales positively because their general observation was to the effect that assigning ‘great quantities of land to certain principal natives’ had been ill advised because it had perpetuated the ‘dependency of the mean sort of people upon the gentlemen . . . who [were] for the most part ill affected’ to the plantation effort, and the commissioners called for regulations to bring an end to such ‘dependency’ and to force ‘the common people by necessity to leave victualling the idle and loose persons’.155

The commissioners of 1622, whose endeavours will be analysed in Chapter 5, therefore saw their inspection as useful to the extent that it provided an opportunity for a renewal of effort to attain a laudable purpose. They did make due allowance for commendable effort by the few, but their overall assessment was that, despite careful planning and extraordinary expenditure, the plantation that had emerged in Ulster was not qualitatively different from what had been accomplished through the more casual plantation efforts in other parts of the country. To this extent they were concluding that the ideological justification for the plantation—the commitment quickly to replace desolation and ‘barbarism’ over an entire swathe of the province of Ulster with cultivation and civility—had been lost sight of. Therefore, as they reflected ruefully on the opportunity that had been missed, they were forced to consider the achievements in Ulster in the same context as the despised plantation efforts in Longford and Ely O’Carroll which were smaller in scale, and altogether less ambitious. The failure in both instances, it seemed to the commissioners, could be attributed to negligent undertakers who had left the ‘country more waste and unpeopled than they found it’. In Ulster, this negative aspect was symbolized by the presence at Tullahoge—‘where the great O’Neill was wont to be chosen’—of the Scotswoman Mrs Lynsey, widow of Robert Lynsey, whose only attempt to meet the plantation conditions was ‘a bawn of sods on the top of the hill . . . but no gate to it nor inhabitant nearer than the foot of the hill . . . only that there is a small frame of timber erected within the bawn for a little dwelling house but without walls or covering, and no use made either of that or the bawn’. The destruction of the stone inauguration chair of the O’Neills had been a matter of much satisfaction to Mountjoy when he had penetrated the heart of Tyrone’s territory in the

155 ‘Commissioners Report on the Natives in Ulster’ (NLI, MS 8,014 vii).
summer of 1602, and the commissioners’ encounter with Mrs Lynsey served as a grim reminder that the planters had, as yet, erected nothing substantial on the foundations of what had been destroyed. However, while downcast, the commissioners, and the government to which they reported, never countenanced the idea that the policy of plantation had been wrong, and the question of how to remedy what had proven insufficient continued to preoccupy Irish politics and politicians who remained committed to the general strategy of making Ireland British for the two decades following the report of 1622.

156 Report of the commissioners of 1622 (BL, Add. MS 4,756, fos. 52r, 112v); for a contemporary portrayal by the map-maker Richard Bartlett of the inauguration chair at Tullahoge, and for an account of its destruction, see G. A. Hayes-McCoy, Ulster and Other Irish Maps (Dublin, 1964), 8–10, which includes a picture of the chair as delineated on his map by Bartlett.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Politics of Plantation 1622–1641

5.1. The Report of the Commission of 1622

It might be inferred from the occasional references that have been made to the work of the 1622 commission that it was concerned exclusively, or particularly, with the condition of the plantations that had been proceeded with in Ireland up to that date. The commissioners certainly devoted considerable attention to the Irish plantations, even to the point of dividing themselves into committees of inspection which traversed through the various plantations during the summer of 1622 to see what had been effected on the ground.\(^1\)

This, however, was but one aspect of a brief whose concern was primarily fiscal but which extended to all aspects of Irish governance, in Church as well as in state, since the accession of King James. Moreover the commission spent most of its time in Dublin where it had access to all civil, military, and judicial officers, and where it scrutinized the records and accounts particularly for the years 1614–21. There also, the commissioners required all bishops in Ireland to report on the condition of their diocese, and they invited individuals who harboured grievances over the workings of government, or who had suggestions to offer on how the administration of the country might be improved, to make submissions to them.\(^2\)

The commission was established primarily because debate in the English parliament of 1621 over the feasibility of England providing support to the...
elector of the Palatinate (the son-in-law of King James I) against the resurgent forces of the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs had confronted the more strident members of the English House of Commons with the reality that the government of King James could never pursue a serious foreign policy on the continent of Europe until it got its financial affairs in order. The resultant consideration of all aspects of the government’s outlay and potential income made it abundantly clear that the subsidy required by the administration in Ireland, which, as Joseph McLaughlin has calculated, amounted to an annual average drain of £47,170 upon the English exchequer between 1604 and 1619, was one of the prime causes of the government’s insolvency. The purpose of the commission which was created with the support of the English lord treasurer, Lionel Cranfield, earl of Middlesex, was, therefore, to explain the source of this seeming anomaly, and to discover some means whereby Ireland could bear the cost of its own government, and perhaps even yield a profit to the crown. The exhaustive investigations of the commission confirmed the suspicion that the costs of governing Ireland were inexplicably high just as the crown income there was inexplicably low, and several of the commissioners pointed to the widespread malfeasance and neglect of duty that had prevailed among the Protestant interest groups who had dominated Irish political life since 1603. However, while the work of the commission confirmed what reformers in England had long suspected to be the cause of their own domestic problem, the report was not officially published or publicly discussed nor did it give rise to the root-and-branch reform of government in the Irish Church and state that was warranted by the evidence that was brought to light. This failure to follow through on the findings of this comprehensive audit is accounted for first because those in both Ireland and England whose integrity was being called into question lobbied to have the commission disregarded. More importantly, as Victor Treadwell has detailed, these prevaricators in Ireland enjoyed consistent support from the royal favourite George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, who was concerned lest his carefully concealed support for some of the most corrupt administrators, and his use of them to build up an Irish patrimony both for himself and for several of the Villiers dynasty, would be exposed and ruin his credibility as an upholder of the royal interest. Another reason why nothing comprehensive was done was that those members of the commission who were shocked by their findings were more anxious to return to England than to assume responsibility for instituting a completely new frame-

that went into the making of the final report (NLI, MSS 8,013, 8,014); in a detailed chronicle of the day-to-day activities of the commission while in Dublin (Oxford, Exeter College MS 95); and in the surviving papers of Lionel Cranfield, earl of Middlesex and lord treasurer of England, with whom several of the commissioners, and some interested parties in Ireland, corresponded concerning the work of the commission (Maidstone, Kent Archives Office, Cranfield MSS); an edition of most of the above manuscript sources is being prepared for publication by the Irish Manuscripts Commission by Dr Victor Treadwell, but it had not been published when this chapter was being revised.
work of government in Ireland. Would-be reformers were also fearful to promote a root-and-branch reform of the administration in Ireland because a renewal of the traditional military hostility between England and Spain was becoming increasingly likely at the very time that the commission was completing its work. This created the ironical situation whereby the anti-Spanish party in England, who had called for the investigation of Ireland’s finances out of a desire to find money for war against Spain, were now forced to turn their backs on the reform that was shown to be necessary lest trouble in Ireland would counter a war effort on the Continent. And if all these reasons are not sufficient to explain why the findings of the commission were shelved, the final blow came with the disgrace in 1624 of Middlesex who had been primarily responsible for setting the commission to work. He lost his position either, as Victor Treadwell would have it, because he had come to know too much of Buckingham’s corrupt dealings in Ireland, or, as Joseph McLaughlin has suggested, because the retrenchments in the army in Ireland that Middlesex had insisted upon had so outraged the many officials in Ireland who had a vested interest in high military expenditure that they were only too willing to bring a charge against Middlesex of having rendered Ireland effectively defenceless at a time when war with Spain was threatening.3

However, while no executive action in Ireland was taken following upon the investigation of the commission, and while, as Victor Treadwell has shown, Buckingham saw to it that the report did not become the subject of a sustained English parliamentary debate, its findings did exert an immediate and continuing influence on English attitudes towards governing Ireland, and on the role of plantation in government policy for that kingdom. Moreover the commission’s work brought into focus the varying strategies on how the civil and religious reform of Ireland might be proceeded with, while its solicitation of the opinions of the various interest groups in Ireland on this question provided the king’s Catholic subjects in Ireland with an opportunity to vent their grievances. These latter had, of course, articulated their views during the course of the Irish parliament of 1613–14, but they had never succeeded in making a serious impression on the formulation of policy for Ireland, as their ancestors had done in previous centuries, once they had been

categorized as second-class subjects at the time of the Mandates controversy at the outset of the reign of King James.4

One critical outcome of the commission’s investigations for the future of plantation policy in Ireland was the tacit agreement among all shades of opinion in England that the position of chief governor in Ireland should be removed from the hands of those whose primary interest was in that kingdom. Consequently, after 1622, the monarch reverted to the practice of the sixteenth century when that position had normally gone to senior figures in England who were responsible both to uphold the interest of the crown and to arbitrate between the conflicting interest groups in Ireland. The proposition that only English-based people be considered for the post of governor of Ireland was never stated baldly, but it was conceded by the ageing King James, in 1622, that the reigning lord deputy, Sir Oliver St John (then Viscount Grandison), should be persuaded to resign. In the climate of 1622, Buckingham, who (to quote Victor Treadwell) had made Grandison his ‘first major official client’, could not be seen to be defending somebody who was known to be corrupt, although the duke probably did request the king that Grandison be permitted to resign rather than suffer the indignity of removal from office.5

The suggestion that only people based in England could be trusted to uphold the interests of the crown in Ireland was rejected forcefully by Protestant officials and planters in Ireland just as it had been by Old English Catholics of the sixteenth century. This explains why the Protestant leaders in Ireland continued, until the middle of the century, to canvass for the position on every occasion when a vacancy in the chief governorship was in prospect. However their lobbying made little impression in England, and Protestant servitors in Ireland never gained more than the temporary position of lord justice during those years.6 Therefore, while Grandison was not formally dismissed and remained in post until September 1622, it had been clear for several months before then that his governorship was doomed, and that a new mode of government was in prospect. Grandison’s successor became Sir Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland (an Englishman with a Scottish title, and already a client of Buckingham), who held office from then until the close of 1629, and he, in turn, was succeeded by Thomas, Viscount

4 Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 212–64.
6 There is explicit evidence of the aged Munster planter Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, lobbying for the position in 1631 and again in 1640; Cork to Sir William Beecher, 20 Mar. 1631 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 265); Walley to Cork, 12 Dec. 1640 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 21, no. 75); Cork had been jointly lord justice with Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely, 1629–32.
Wentworth (later earl of Strafford), who served as governor in Ireland from 1632 to 1641. This turn of events meant that the interlude, 1604–22, when the position of governor in Ireland was held by a Protestant servitor with a close connection with the country was followed by an interlude, 1622–41, when the post was held by an English Protestant whose primary loyalties were to England and the court.

This alteration in the mode of government can be attributed partly to the findings of the commission, and its work was destined to have an enduring influence over policy because both Falkland in 1622 and Wentworth in 1632 were aware of the details on Irish governance that had been compiled both individually and collectively by the commissioners. Most of these details concerned financial matters, but the criticism that was offered on the affairs of the army, the judiciary, the administration, and the Church culminated in the grand conclusion that, in spite of the best endeavours of the crown, no significant progress had been made to achieve the civil and religious reform of the country which had been identified, at the outset of the seventeenth century, as the principal objective of government. It was inevitable, because of the pivotal role that had been assigned to colonization in the general strategy for reform, that the criticism should extend to the plantations but, as with all aspects of the commission’s work, a range of opinions was offered on what deficiencies existed in the plantations and on what remedies were available. Each of these governors was therefore aware of the possibility of increasing crown revenue in Ireland through the promotion of reform, but each was also alert to the possibility that existed for advancing their own wealth in Ireland through the operation of the dubious practices that had enjoyed a free rein in Ireland for so long.7

The opinions advanced in 1622 were as various as the number of people who made comment on the subject, but they may be broken down into four distinct categories of responses; those made by English servitors in Ireland who had a vested interest in the plantations and who, for the most part, enjoyed the support of the duke of Buckingham; those advanced by those planters in Ireland—especially the undertakers in Ulster—who had been severely criticized by the commissioners because of their neglect of the conditions they had agreed to fulfil; those made by reforming officials and English parliamentarians who, generally, sought to advance the policies of fiscal rectitude favoured by Middlesex; and, finally, those made by Old English landowners who had suffered an eclipse in political power and influence during the reign of King James, and who grasped at this fresh opportunity to offer an opinion on the direction of public policy for Ireland.

Each of the four groups who volunteered opinions had different concerns, but all recognized that if their criticism was to have any impact, it would

7 Historians have been reticent about attributing knowledge of the commission’s findings to Wentworth but see Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 305–6.
have to proceed from the premiss that the policy of plantation, which had been embraced by the king for advancing reform in both Scotland and Ireland, was just, and potentially beneficial. There agreement ended, as will be clear from an elaboration of the four contrasting positions that were formulated. This elaboration will, in turn, serve to explain the subsequent differences over the formulation of policy for Ireland since the several opposing views articulated in 1622 were to surface repeatedly as the question of possible further plantations for Ireland became the most vexed issue of Irish politics during the years 1622–41.

The most strident of the servitor group was Sir Francis Annesley, one of the secretaries of state in Ireland who had come to power under Chichester but who, ever since 1616, had been a client of Buckingham. It was probably due to Buckingham’s intervention that Annesley came to be a member of the commission, but, once a commissioner, he was required to communicate his views to Middlesex. In doing so, he emphasized that the shortcomings in the plantation of Ulster were attributable entirely to the undertakers who had retained Irish tenants on their estates despite having been granted their lands by the king ‘as mere strangers upon mean rents, not for reward or merit, but by contract and express bargain to plant the same with British, and with proviso of absolute forfeiture if they should do otherwise’. Annesley then made it clear that he had striven, in vain, to convince his colleagues on the commission that a policy of forfeiture should have been enforced where the conditions had been breached, and he emphasized that it was only in the interest of collegiality that he had acquiesced in the compromise resolution that undertakers be permitted to retain native tenants on one-quarter of their lands. However, while conceding this point, he recommended to Middlesex that if the original contractual conditions were thus altered, the undertakers should be required to pay treble rent to the crown for their estates, but that if the undertakers decided belatedly to meet their contractual obligations they should be penalized only to the extent of having to pay double rent henceforth to the crown. The logic of this recommendation was that where neither compromise was complied with, the crown should, in the interest of advancing that ‘royal plantation’ in Ulster (as opposed to which all other plantations were ‘but shadows’), proceed to dispossess those who were in flagrant breach of their contracts. This would leave the crown in possession of confiscated estates which Annesley expected would be granted to people like himself who were more committed than the undertakers had been ‘to the establishment of peace and civility to posterity in that province which was the most barbarous, and from whence, before intermixture of British amongst them, did proceed the greatest mischiefs of this kingdom’. 

8 On the possible influences on the choice of commissioners see ibid. 186–98.

9 Sir Francis Annesley to Middlesex, 26 June 1622 (Maidstone, Kent Archives Office, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,462).
In making this last point, Annesley was reviving the Spenserian notion that the principal purpose of plantation was to establish the absolute domination of British settlers over all inhabitants in the areas being colonized. At the same time, Annesley was concerned to absolve servitors like himself from any blame deriving from the shortcomings of the plantation in Ulster, and he illustrated their commitment by pointing to the exemplary settlement that had been achieved by servitors in County Wexford which, in relation to its size, had more ‘good buildings [than] any territory in Ireland’. Annesley was also subtly suggesting that the financial difficulties of the crown in Ireland might be more readily resolved by a strict enforcement of the contractual conditions which the undertakers in Ulster had engaged upon, rather than by a curtailment of the salaries and pensions being paid to servitors in the army and the administration.\textsuperscript{10}

These points of Annesley coincided with the views of Sir William Parsons, the Irish surveyor general, in a discourse, ‘Reasons for the Plantations in Ireland’, which he composed in May 1622. Parsons, like Annesley, was also a servitor, a significant participant in several of the plantations, and a client of Buckingham who had done much to advance the interests of that duke in Ireland with his own. Again, it was probably due to Buckingham that he was included on the commission and he had advance notice that an investigation into the plantations would constitute an important part of the work of the commission since, in his capacity of surveyor general, he was required to provide the commissioners with details of all the plantations that had been proceeded with in Ireland since the reign of Queen Mary. His discourse obviously derived from that order, but it was carefully crafted to pre-empt any principled objection to further plantations and his discourse led cleverly to the conclusion that the happy outcome of the various plantations was proof that the ‘course seemed to be pointed . . . by the finger of God’. Lest his auditors should not be impressed with this eschatological divining, Parsons reinforced it with his pragmatic observation that in the ‘years since plantations began’ the king’s profits in Ireland had ‘almost doubled . . . in casualties, customs and rents’.\textsuperscript{11}

While Parsons focused on the plantations of recent vintage he emphasized that these were part of an English civilizing mission which dated back to the twelfth century. This, with its attendant plantations, had, he claimed, been revived, ‘plotted, and intended by those wise councillors of King Henry the Eighth who being for the most part Irish birth though English descent did truly discern the intestines of that wretched body as well appears in the council books in Ireland, but that king had such other interruptions as he could not purpose it’. This rewriting of the historical record to suggest that the policy

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

of plantation in Ireland was entirely of Old English provenance, as well as Parsons’s invocation of a Baconian medical metaphor to justify that policy, may have been to discredit any objections to plantations that might be advanced by Old English spokesmen. However, the contrast that Parsons developed between the supposed previous barbarism of the Irish with the civil condition that was emerging, and his further insistence that the Irish would ‘never of themselves come to any civil order’, was certainly with a view to encouraging the government to persist with the course of plantation to its ultimate conclusion, by which time the people in the unplanted parts who were still ‘barbarous and poor and apt to rebel’ would have been ‘made effeminate and rich [and] obedient to suffering’.

Then, with a view to clinching his argument in favour of further plantations, Parsons contended that, with the exception of those areas where ‘English and other people of substance’ had been encouraged to settle in plantations, ‘everything [in Ireland was] yet in the natural, little or no improvement made by enclosing, planting fruits, making meadows, and changing cattle, searching into mines or minerals, working the country commodities, bringing in trades, skilful ploughmen, traffic or learning’. This assertion made it possible for him to conclude that a policy of plantation was the only means of bringing order to a society like Ireland where ‘whole provinces’ were wont to renounce ‘their obedience, little weighing the king’s expense of millions in a season to make them quiet’. Then, recognizing that what he was recommending was open to the charge of being revolutionary, Parsons made it clear that what he had in mind for Ireland would have no justification ‘in England or any country governed by any certain law’.

Parsons’s eulogy could see no fault in plantations, and his discourse was a clarion call for the government to proceed with further schemes of plantation as a matter of policy. To the extent that Parsons was willing to acknowledge any shortcoming to what he was recommending or any defects in any of the plantations that had been effected to date, he, like Annesley, attributed these to human weakness, and most especially to undertakers who lacked either the means or the commitment to develop their estates to their full potential.

These critiques, which might be taken as typifying the servitor position, were hardly different from those of Sir Francis Blundell despite his claims to be the eyes and ears of the crown in Dublin. He was a relatively new arrival in Ireland but had been advanced rapidly to become vice-treasurer, and had been a grantee in the plantations in Wexford, Longford, and Leitrim. His discourse, lumbered with the cumbersome title ‘There Have Been Six Plantations in Ireland since the Memory of Man’, is so similar in structure to that of Sir William Parsons that it might almost have been modelled on it. Like Parsons, Blundell proceeded from the premiss that there was ‘no more easy
and honourable way to reduce that country to civility than plantations’, and he did not relent in this view even though plantations in Ireland had become ‘enemies to [himself] in [his] private profit’. However, as he proceeded systematically to assess the achievement of the various plantations that had been attempted since Queen Mary’s reign, he concluded that, with the sole exception of the Wexford plantation, all had fallen far short of expectations.\(^{14}\)

The most disappointing for him, because the most ambitious, was the plantation in Ulster, which Blundell described as ‘a project at the first if it had been well and roundly performed it would have proved a worthy work, and brought great good to the whole kingdom’. However he cited Pynner’s survey of 1619 to show that none of the undertakers had ‘excelled’ while many had been ‘so careless and negligent’ of their building and tenanting obligations that Ulster remained ‘a world of Irish’ with the settlement there no more than ‘a poor, ragged, quarter, plantation’ which, far from ‘giving succour to other parts of the realm’, had become a security threat with the ‘undertakers not able to defend themselves against their own tenants, if they should rebel, much less against a more potent enemy’. Thus, like his fellow servitors, he placed the failure to make any significant progress with the reform of Ireland firmly on the shoulders of the undertakers in the Ulster plantation, and little wonder since, some years earlier, Blundell had secretly procured, in return for an annual payment of £100, a grant of the fines which might be imposed on the undertakers for their failure to remove the natives from their estates. While criticizing the undertakers for their shortcomings Blundell obliquely made the case that small-scale plantations, such as he had been involved with in Wexford, and which were entrusted entirely to servitors, were both more effective and less expensive for the government than classic schemes such as had been attempted in Ulster.\(^{15}\)

While servitors might blame undertakers alone for shortfalls in the Ulster plantation, the English reformers and parliamentarians attributed some of the shortfall in the plantation effort to the negligence of churchmen and servitors who also had been entrusted with important roles in the plantation. The lawyer Richard Had sor, who was assigned a special role on the commission as an interlocutor with the natives in the plantation ‘because he understands the language’, and the Welsh clergyman Dr Theodore Price, who was the most expert commissioner on church affairs, had occasion, when reporting on the condition and grievances of the natives in Ulster, to launch an attack on the role played by the bishops in the Ulster plantation. The ‘general appearance’ of Ulster was, it was claimed, ‘yet no other but a very wilder ness’ because the planters ‘of all kinds’ had established at most a ‘small township’ on each proportion which was ‘scarce visible’, the proportion being

\(^{14}\) Sir Francis Blundell, undated, ‘There have Been Six Plantations in Ireland since the Memory of Man’ (Maidstone, KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,540).

\(^{15}\) Ibid.; Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 137–8.
‘wide and large’. Then, because no effort had been made to settle the Irish where they might ‘dwell together in . . . orderly form’, they were left ‘to wander with their cattle all the summer in the mountains and all the winter in their woods’ where they were guided by ‘some heads of septs, some chiefs of creats, and some principal followers to the rebellious lords’. No blame, claimed Hadsor, attached to those natives ‘of the best blood’ who had received grants in the plantation, because these enjoyed no ‘power with the Irish’ since they had been discredited within their own communities for having made their peace with the government ‘in time of war’.

According to this analysis, the Church was the only institution that might have done anything to effect the reform of the Irish. The clergy could have done so by granting ‘long leases or freehold for lives’ to native tenants on the bishops’ land where they would have been exposed to the educational and missionary efforts of Protestant schoolmasters and ministers. This would also have furthered the general plantation scheme because, once the Irish had been lured by favourable terms to settle on church lands, the undertakers’ proportions would then have been ‘emptied’ of the Irish tenants who enjoyed no legal existence there, and the undertakers would thus have been left with no choice but to settle English and Scottish tenants on their properties. This process had, according to Price, been defeated by the bishops who had granted long leases only to English tenants, and had retained the Irish but from year to year. Moreover, it was alleged that the bishops had hindered any remaining possibility for promoting religious reform by turning a blind eye to such abuses as lay impropriety, dilapidated churches, and plurality of benefices, which were widespread throughout Ireland because of the poverty of the Church, but which were unpardonable in Ulster where generous provision had been made for the Church under the plantation settlement. Such abuses, together with ‘divers strange customary tithings . . . demanded by the clergy and denied by the laity’, served, it was claimed, to drive the Irish population away from the Church and even from civil society.

Price and Hadsor were so fixed on this view that we can credit them with the general criticism of the clergy in Ulster, incorporated into the 1622 report itself, for their failure to offer hospitality which they could well afford and which was considered ‘a thing much tending to the advancement of religion, especially in this kingdom’.  

The undertakers could take scant solace from the fact that the clergy were being lumped with themselves in this vituperative attack launched by the

16 ‘Report of the Work of the Commission’, 10 May 1622 (Oxford, Exeter College MS 95, fo. 52); ‘Abstract of Six Letters Received from Ireland’, 8 July 1622 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8.433); ‘Reasons to Induce his Majesty to Command a Settlement of the Natives of Ulster’ (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7.535); ‘Plantation’ (KAO, Cranfield MS, ON 7.544); ‘Report of the 1622 Commissioners’ (BL, Add. MS 4,756, fos. 19–19); I assume that the unsigned documents on the role of the ‘natives’ and the ‘church’ in the Ulster plantation were authored respectively by Hadsor and Price since they had particular responsibility on the commission for these matters.
reformers against the Ulster plantation. Therefore, when the Scottish planter Sir James Craig was summoned before the commission to state the undertakers’ case he rushed to defend the Ulster plantation in general and, more particularly, the part played in it by the undertakers. Craig’s submission was addressed to Middlesex, and would appear to have been composed after some process of consultation with the general body of undertakers since it purported to be a representative statement. The discourse was characteristically Scottish in that it focused narrowly on the plantation in Ulster, but it made it clear that the enterprise which the undertakers had engaged upon was consistent with the ‘general and true proposition’ defined by ‘those who do rightly understand the state of Ireland’. This proposition held that ‘the best way for the settling of that realm both from future danger and for improving of His Majesty’s profits’ was ‘to plant that kingdom with British and to increase their number’.17

Having thus made it clear that the undertakers had been solicited to serve a purpose that had been defined by the crown, Craig proceeded to show how the settlement of ‘British’ had promoted wealth and employment in the province, which was reflected in the customs and casualties payable to the crown, with customs alone increasing from £500 to £14,000 over a process of ten years. The real benefit of the plantation was, therefore, that it served to make the people (both settler and native) rich and committed to peaceful living, where previously the ‘poor people [had been] always desirous of trouble and [in]novation’. To this extent, according to Craig, the plantation had fulfilled its purpose, and he contended that when the undertakers had come forward to support the plantation they had assumed the government would take ‘no strict course’ with those who adventured their wealth in the plantation, and that the contractual conditions in their patents had been intended ‘only ad terrorem and not with purpose to default their estates’. Craig believed that it had been reasonable of the undertakers to suppose that the king did not intend ‘to use greater severity than have been used in former plantations’ and he expressed himself satisfied that the wealthier undertakers had complied with all conditions. What deficiencies existed were, therefore, attributable to ‘the poorer sort of British’ who had consumed all their ‘means’ in making the journey to Ireland and had nothing left ‘to transport their families and build houses’. The solution of this very human problem was, claimed Craig, not to deprive any proprietors of their estates, but, rather, to concede that they might ‘for a few years . . . use the service of the natives and to make

17 Sir James Craig was initially summoned, 26 Apr. 1622, together with Sir John Fish, Bt. (Oxford, Exeter College MS 95, fo.18); the notes from the journal of Nathaniel Rich record a petition from Craig alone on 11 May 1622 (NLI, MS 8,014 iii); Craig however seems to have enjoyed support from Fish in presenting to the Commission on 18 May 1622 his ‘Names and Proportions of the Planters in the Six Escheated Counties of Ulster’ (NLI, MS 8,014 vii); both Craig and Fish held their lands in County Cavan.
some benefit of grazing’ so that they could accumulate sufficient wealth ‘to labour and stock their lands of themselves without further help’. And it would help the plantation even more, claimed Craig, if the undertakers were permitted ‘to make a difference between the conformable and refractory natives’ because granting lands to the more compliant of the Irish ‘would be a great means to draw some of them to come to church’.16

The fact that the undertakers saw the need to instruct Craig on how to defend their role in the plantation does not mean that they alone were found wanting as planters. The Church, as we saw, was subjected to particular criticism for its role in the Ulster plantation, and the servitors emerged relatively unscathed only because they had already been denigrated in the commissioners’ investigation of the army, the central administration, the provincial councils, and the Church. Some of the more prominent servitors were also isolated for particular castigation in letters to Middlesex which expressed amazement at the rapid social and economic advancement that had been achieved by many servitors since their arrival in Ireland at the outset of the century. The king himself was so impressed by such stories of rags to riches that he concluded that his ‘beloved subjects and servitors in Ireland’ deserved no further reward since they had already been ‘advanced and ennobled . . . as well or better than any other captains in Europe’, and because many of them had become corrupt in the process. The king would have been further convinced in this opinion by the reformers on the commission who contrasted their own zeal with the dilatoriness of those they described as the ‘Irish Commissioners’ who, they said, contributed ‘little light or help’. Sir Dudley Digges, a prominent English parliamentarian and seasoned reformer, was ready to exempt Lord Deputy Grandison from this general condemnation, but Sir Dudley Norton, the Irish secretary of state and client of Middlesex, and therefore enemy of those who had accepted blandishments from Buckingham, was willing to make no such exception since he drew a sharp distinction between ‘those of us who will truly acquit ourselves and others . . . that will juggle’.19

One of the prime jugglers was Sir William Parsons who, according to Norton, had ‘so stained’ his reputation by taking advantage of general pardons, ‘in one of which murder [was] contained and all else but coining and treason against the king’s majesty’, that ‘men [were] very sorry and afraid to have him put over them in their estates’. Even worse, according to the same correspondent, had been Sir Charles Coote, who was thought by several of the commissioners to have embezzled the composition rent in Connacht,

16 ‘Sir James Craig his General Propositions Concerning the Undertakers of Ulster’ (NLI, MS 8,014 vii).
19 ‘Report of the 1622 Commissioners’ (BL, Add. MS 4,746); copy of royal letter (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7,517); Sir Dudley Digges to Cranfield, 18 Apr. 1622 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,442); Sir Dudley Norton to Cranfield, 3 June 1622 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,447).
because nothing else could explain his rise from the humble position of provost marshal in the province to become ‘so high as a baronet and a Privy Councillor; a stirring man fuller of wit than judgement, very pragmatical but his own ends so much in his eye as he is become an eye sore to the country who have grievously complained against him for extortion’.  

Such *ad hominem* onslaughts were with a view to preventing the named individuals from receiving further royal favour either in land or office, and some of the reformers were responding to the widespread concern among Catholic landowners in Ireland that Sir William Parsons was about to become master of the Court of Wards. However, the reformers also hoped by such attacks to discredit the case that the servitors had been making for a continuing policy of plantation. Charles Viscount Wilmot, lord president of Connacht and also a client of Middlesex, acknowledged that the discovery of royal title to land was ‘a service of singular consequence’, but he cautioned against the resolve of Sir William Parsons, the surveyor general, to revive claims that had lain dormant for ‘many hundred years’. Speaking with the authority of one who knew Connacht intimately, and who was aware that the mooted plantation of Connacht was provoking widespread fear in the province, Wilmot contended that the policy was deficient because it drew no distinction between loyal and disloyal subjects, and he warned that even those who appeared to be most ‘subdued . . . [were] not ignorant how a few wood-kern would make the best plantation sleep abroad unguarded’.  

This too was the opinion proffered by Sir Dudley Norton when he asked if it was appropriate to persist with plantations as part of an ongoing ameliorative process. In Norton’s case it was the unease resulting from ‘the noise and murmur of new intended plantations in Munster’, which were to extend to the lands of the O’Kennedys, O’Mahers, O’Mulryans, and Mac Brian Arragh, that inspired him to write on the subject. Norton, like the others, prefaced his remarks with the assurance that he was ‘in love’ with plantations, ‘well knowing that a mixture of English with Irish was a good means for a sentinel to be set over the Irish, thereby the better to discover or prevent their secret meetings and conspiracies when they have any’. However he, like Wilmot in respect of Connacht, questioned the propriety of declaring ‘as intruders and usurpers’ those who had occupied their lands for 300 years, because it would leave lords who still had influence over the population in their localities ‘filled with fears and sadness because they say they know not what to call their own when 2, 3 nay 400 years possession will not serve their turn’. Moreover, Norton considered that the policy which required that a programme of plantation should be pursued on a continuing basis was indefensible because the recent plantations had accomplished little, ‘and private

20 Norton to Cranfield, 27 Dec. 1621 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7,549); same to same, 14 June 1622 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,459).
21 Wilmot to Cranfield, 13 Dec. 1621 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7,520).
turns . . . more than the true intention [had been] observed’. Therefore, he concluded that there should be no ‘fresh assays’ while there were ‘so many plantations yet unsettled and imperfect’. In this he was supported, exceptionally, by Sir Francis Blundell, who in his appraisal of all the plantations that had been effected in Ireland, advanced it as his first principle ‘that the plantations already begun may be fully perfected before any more be taken in hand’. What was meant by this was that the undertakers in Ulster and elsewhere who had not met their plantation conditions should have their grants revoked, and that the plantation lands in the province should be subjected to scientific measurement with a view to reclaiming for the crown those lands which exceeded the official size for a proportion. Then, it was recommended that those lands which came into crown possession by either of these means should provide for a further plantation by people of proven competence which would be superimposed upon the earlier settlement. 22

These views—excepting those of Blundell who had a particular interest in discommoding undertakers in the Ulster plantation—were held principally by the reformers who were attempting to come to grips with the interest of Buckingham and his clients in Ireland. The opinions of the reformers were, to a degree, shaped by their knowledge of the grievances of the different elements of the Irish population over the issue of plantation, and out of a concern that the zeal of the servitors for further plantations would drive the more compliant Irish Catholics into rebellion which, in the event of foreign war, meant driving them into the arms of the enemies of the crown. The reformers had some previous knowledge of the grievances of Irish Catholics because a delegation of Old English landowners had been permitted to itemize their grievances to the king in 1621, and their charges had played some part in persuading King James to constitute the commission in the first place. The commissioners would also have been familiarized with Old English concerns by their colleague Richard Hadsor, who was himself of Old English birth and who, despite thirty-five years spent in legal practice in England, still had ‘a private estate’ as well as ‘kindred and friends’ in Ireland. Moreover, as we now know from the independent researches of Victor Treadwell and Joseph McLaughlin, Hadsor was the author of the treatise Advertisement of Ireland, where he was able, both from his personal knowledge and from his work with the Commission, to demonstrate how the principal depredations and injustices of the servitors in Ireland impacted upon the Old English population. 23

22 Norton to Cranfield, 10 Dec. 1621 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7,508); Blundell, ‘There have Been Six Plantations’ (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,540); James Perrott to Cranfield, undated (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,445); Commissioners to Cranfield, 29 July 1622 (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 8,469).

However the commissioners were able to reach their own conclusions about the Old English population from their own detailed investigative work, and these views were negative as well as positive. On the negative side, the commissioners complained of the efforts of Old English landowners and townspeople to uphold recusancy in Ireland,²⁴ while, on the positive side, they had sympathy with the grievances and aspirations articulated by the Old English delegates who came before the commission. Several individuals from the Catholic communities in Ireland were given the opportunity to present petitions, but it appears from the journal notes on the proceedings of the commission kept by Sir Nathaniel Rich that two principal hearings on Old English concerns were heard; on 27 May the commissioners entertained a delegation from ‘the Lords of the Pale’, and in July 1622 John Taaffe presented ‘the grievances of Connacht by petition’.²⁵ Each of these delegations raised a wide range of issues ranging from their exclusion from public office and practice before the bar to the corruption and tyranny of soldiers and minor officials. However, the question of impending plantations was central to their concerns, and the Old English delegations took advantage of the opportunity to articulate a position on plantations to which they would cling rigidly for the next twenty years.

The Old English, like all others who appeared before the commission, stated their approval of the plantation in Ulster and professed to be aggrieved only because they themselves, ‘the native servitors who gave good testimony of their sincerity and dutiful endeavours with profuse loss of blood in the time of the general combustion’, did not benefit from the escheats ‘as . . . might justly be expected’. Their general exclusion from the plantation scheme in Ulster was, they averred, all the more surprising when account was taken of the benefits that had derived from ‘the ancient plantation established upon the conquest’ of the twelfth century, and of the ‘merits’ of the ‘heirs and offspring of those worthy plantators’ whose loss of blood on the crown’s behalf during the intervening centuries provided ‘invincible proof of their faithful obedience’. Moreover, they expressed themselves utterly amazed by the endeavours of minor officials to pry into their titles, and by the rumours that ‘the ancient English race should be supplanted and others substituted’. Therefore, in order to quell the unease to which such rumours gave rise, they proposed that all who had enjoyed unchallenged title to their estates for a reasonable time should receive a guarantee from the crown that their titles would remain unchallenged.²⁶

²⁴ ‘Propositions for Redress of Recusants’ (NLI, MS 8,014 i).
²⁶ ‘Petition of Lords, Knights and other the Gents and Freeholders of Connacht’; ‘Petition of Nobility and Gents. to the Commission’, 25 May 1622 (NLI, MS 8,014 i); ‘Additional Grievances of Nobility and Gentry’, 29 May 1622 (Oxford, Exeter College MS 95, fos. 79–80).
This analysis gives us a clear insight into the various positions in relation to plantations that crystallized in Ireland during the course of the commission’s work in 1622. Most servitors called for the confiscation of the estates of those planters in Ulster who had not fulfilled their contractual obligations, and, more controversially, they demanded that the energies of the state should be concentrated on the seizure of all lands in Ireland to which crown title could be established so that further plantations, which would benefit themselves, would be advanced at the expense of the Catholic landowners. The reformers among the commissioners also expected that a firm line would be taken with defaulting undertakers in Ulster, but they insisted that all further opportunities for promoting plantations should be frozen until those already under way had been brought to perfection. The undertakers would not have disagreed substantially with this second position, but they expressed themselves confident that the state of perfection that was expected in Ulster would be achieved in due course if the government kept faith in the sincerity of their endeavours. And the policy of the Old English in relation to plantation was that the plantations already in being should remain in place but that no further schemes should be entertained. The only factor that united all four groups was their acceptance that it was the king, and his representative in Ireland, who would determine which of these strategies would be followed, and this explains why the issue of plantation in Ireland remained contentious until 1641 and beyond.

5.2. THE PLANTATION ISSUE 1622–1632

The prevailing historical consensus is that plantations, which had been the principal preoccupation of government in Ireland before 1622, featured less prominently as a political issue during the years immediately following that date because the government in England could not run the risk of alienating its more compliant subjects in Ireland through the pursuit of an aggressive policy of plantation when war with Spain was in prospect or in progress. While it is true, as Aidan Clarke has remarked, that the formulation of policy for Ireland came to depend increasingly ‘upon international rather than local considerations’, and that the administration in Ireland was, consequently, reduced to the level of an interest group in having to plead its case by ‘dealing directly with the king’, the leading servitors in Ireland did not forget their priorities, nor did they desist from their ambition to attain them. Neither was the role of lobbyist new to them, since royal sanction had always been required for innovative policies, nor was this the first time that the threat of foreign war had impinged upon decision-making for Ireland.

What was novel was that the investigations of the 1622 commission exerted pressure upon existing tensions which provoked fissures within the servitor group in Ireland. The divisions which then emerged were sustained because each of the servitor factions in Ireland considered it necessary to win favour with one of the political groupings in England who were becoming increasingly polarized over issues of foreign policy. In the immediate aftermath of the 1622 commission, it was those servitors who favoured a continuing policy of plantation, and whose integrity had been called into question, who were put on the defensive as the earl of Middlesex and his associates sought to repair the financial position of the crown in Ireland. The defence was led by Sir William Parsons, who still had responsibility for investigating crown title to Irish land, and who, until 1628, could rely upon the support of the duke of Buckingham. The besieged servitors also enlisted the help of Richard Boyle, earl of Cork, who, after a dramatic career as acquisitor and developer of Munster plantation land, now saw the need to enter the political arena. He did so to defend servitors in general, but more particularly to protect his own vast estate which was coveted by those who were full of ‘wonderment’ at his ‘rising’ and who ‘would ... dive into the mystery of how it came to pass’. Cork had long been connected with Sir William Parsons and with Sir William’s brother Sir Lawrence Parsons who had been primarily involved in Munster until he established himself at Birr in the recent plantation in King’s County, and Cork had also won the admiration of Sir Francis Annesley who, as we saw, had been the closest associate of Sir William Parsons in 1622.28 While these now wanted to mobilize Cork’s wealth and influence to stave off the reforming zeal of the English lord treasurer, Cork had no choice but to become politically engaged because, in 1621, he had offended Middlesex by outbidding him for the purchase of the Munster plantation lands of Sir Richard Grenville on which Cork had held a lease. Cork’s ostensible reason for doing so, as he pleaded to Sir Dudley Norton, who was a client of Middlesex, was that he considered the Grenville estates—located principally at Gill Abbey in the valley of the Bandon river—to be ‘the frontier and lock’ of his own holdings in Munster. However, it was probably his wish to keep the reforming treasurer at bay that persuaded Cork to pay a price for the Grenville property that made it ‘the dearest bargain that ever was made in Ireland’.29

28 Henry Peers to Boyle, 18 Nov. 1619, in A. B. Grosart (ed.), Lismore Papers, 2nd ser., 5 vols. (London, 1886), ii. 166–7; there is evidence of Parsons’s reliance upon the political support of Boyle as early as 1613 in William Parsons to Boyle, 25 July 1613 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 4, no. 77); Lawrence Parsons to Boyle, 8 Feb. 1614 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 4, no. 133); Francis Annesley to Sir Humphrey May (undated copy) (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 4, no. 75 (b)); more generally on Cork see Nicholas Canny, The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork, 1566–1643 (Cambridge, 1982).
29 ‘Observations in the Estate of Sir Barnard Grenfield’s Late Irish Lands Sold to the Right Honourable the Lord Cranfield’ (KAO, Cranfield MSS, ON 7,527); Cork to Sir Dudley Norton, 28
As the members of this political faction who favoured further plantation in Ireland identified Middlesex as their opponent at court, they cultivated his rival, the duke of Buckingham—with whom they had long been associated—and they welcomed Viscount Falkland as lord deputy to Ireland in the knowledge that he was a Buckingham appointee. More specifically, Cork, who had striven to prevent Middlesex from establishing an interest in Munster, welcomed the appointment in 1624 of Sir Edward Villiers, a Buckingham nephew, as president of Munster, and sought immediately to arrange a marriage between his own principal heir Richard, Viscount Dungarvan, and Anne Villiers, a Buckingham niece. The desired match did not materialize but Cork’s effort to ingratiate himself with Buckingham proved worthwhile because, in 1624, Middlesex was impeached by the English parliament and dismissed from office thus leaving Buckingham as the principal source of power and patronage at court.

Sir William Parsons moved immediately to convert this turn of events to his advantage and wrote to Buckingham ‘in praise of plantations’, while alerting him to the fact that Sir William St Leger possessed sufficient evidence to prove crown title to the lordship of Ossory, occupied by Walter Butler, eleventh earl of Ormond, which, he suggested, would provide Buckingham himself with an opportunity to become a proprietor in any future plantation of the lordship. At the same time, word was again put into circulation that the crown was about to proceed with a plantation in the province of Connacht. Lord Wilmot, the president of Connacht and a supporter of the disgraced Middlesex, must have realized that his opinions would receive little sympathy when he wrote to Buckingham questioning the wisdom of ‘a forced plantation’ in Connacht. Such, he contended, would drive the people of the province to ‘hearken to some other nation’, and he considered this an unnecessary risk since the crown might receive a ‘profit equivalent to a plantation’ by accepting fines from the existing proprietors in return for secure titles to their estates. All that Wilmot sought at that juncture was ‘a serious debate’ but his objections were roundly refuted by Parsons who, in his correspondence with Buckingham, contended that the peace of Ireland had been ‘principally established by plantations’. These, he claimed, had not only brought loyal ‘English’ people into the previously rebellious provinces but had ‘utterly cut off the power of the great Irish’ and left them with ‘no command or jurisdiction’ that would make them useful to any possible foreign invaders. Moreover, claimed Parsons, the loyalty of those Irish lords who

Nov. 1621 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 12, no. 89); Cork to Sir George Horsey, 13 Apr. 1624, in Grosart (ed.), Lismore Papers, 2nd ser., iii. 107–12.


31 Prestwick, Cranfield, 423–68.
were granted estates under plantation conditions would, thereafter, be assured to the crown, and he feared no malconsequence from plantations other than ‘a rhapsody of unruly indigent persons, especially youths, which kind of rising hath not been very dangerous or durant’, and which could easily be controlled by garrisons.32

Thus Parsons countered the proposition that further plantations should be discontinued while war threatened, and he quickly won Falkland to this point of view. Therefore, in writing to Buckingham, the lord deputy not only recommended that the Connacht plantation should be proceeded with, but he broached the possibility of a plantation in the O’Byrne lordship of Ranelagh in County Wicklow, in which he was soon to develop a personal interest. In stressing the urgent need to cut off the ‘generation of rebels’ in Wicklow, whom he represented as a particular threat to the security of the state on the grounds that their estates were close to Dublin, Falkland endorsed Parsons’s proposition that there was no danger associated with the pursuit of further plantations. On the contrary, he claimed, if they were to fail to claim title to land which manifestly belonged to the king, they would be encouraging ‘that people to be as bad as they list’, and Falkland recommended that the government should take advantage of all opportunities for plantation out of his belief that Irish lords were ‘like nettles that sting being gently handled, but sting not being crushed’.33

As the government in Ireland set its mind on a policy of plantation, courtiers in England who enjoyed favour with Buckingham began to make overtures for inclusion in the plantations that, they believed, were about to be launched. It was probably at this time that the earl of Huntingdon, who had inherited substantial plantation estates in Ulster, made an overture to be granted land in fee farm in the proposed plantation of Connacht, while Falkland assured the Scottish laird Robert Maxwell, earl of Nithesdale, and husband of a Buckingham cousin, that once the plantations of Ossory and Ranelagh were under way, the time would be opportune to proceed with their ‘own proposition’. What precisely he had in mind was not divulged in the letter, but he made it clear that he did not visualize the policy of plantation being confined to land occupied by Catholic proprietors when he reported enthusiastically of the discovery made by ‘one Andrew Dikes, a Scottishman’ of ‘concealed lands’ occupied by ‘Mr. Bagnoll’ and hoped that the ‘whole county of Carlow’ could be claimed for the crown. Here he was referring to the descendants of Sir Nicholas Bagenal who had occupied land in Carlow since the sixteenth century, and Falkland was hopeful that Nithesdale would use his influence with the king to ensure that he would

32 Parsons to Buckingham, 14 June 1624 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Carte MS. 30, fo. 163); memorial to Buckingham, probably by Charles, Lord Wilmot, president of Connacht, 1624 (Carte MS 30, fo. 186); Parsons to Buckingham, 20 Sept. 1625 (Carte MS 30, fos. 178–9).
33 Falkland to Buckingham, 1624 (Carte MS 30, fos. 211–12).
uphold the royal title that had been proven and that he would deflect the opposition that would inevitably come from Bagenal and ‘his partakers’ who, he warned, included Sir Francis Annesley.34

This was the first hint of the breach between Falkland and Annesley which was to become a major rift that would vex the administration for the next decade, but this also was the first indication that the policy of plantation did not respect the land titles of anybody—whether British or Irish, Protestant or Catholic—who did not enjoy favour with the parties in power in London and Dublin. It was also clear that neither change of monarch, nor the threat of foreign war, nor political realignments at court would deflect the servitor interest in Ireland from their design, and, in September 1625, the moment news of the death of King James reached him, Sir William Parsons wrote to Buckingham requesting that he take measures to ensure that their plans for further plantations would continue without interruption into the new reign.

While acknowledging that the plantations that had already been established had not ‘brought in so many English as should be’, he still praised them because they had ‘utterly cut off the power of the great Irish’.35 This implied that Parsons remained steadfast in the view that plantations should be directed only against the Gaelic population, but we can be reasonably certain that he was of one mind with his confidants Falkland and Buckingham, that plantations should be used to advance personal profit as well as having a civilizing purpose, and that all land to which crown title could be established should be subjected immediately to plantation. Moreover we get some hints in the family papers of the earl of Nithesdale of how favourites at court responded to the prospects of fresh opportunities to become landholders in Ireland.

Robert Maxwell, ninth Lord Maxwell and first earl of Nithesdale, was a Scottish laird who took up residence with his king, James VI and I, in 1621, and he was to remain there during the reign of King Charles I without the means to sustain a life at court. His family papers are therefore much concerned with the consequent financial difficulties in which he found himself, and most correspondence concerns the endeavours of his loyal kinsman Sir John Maxwell of Pollok, in the vicinity of Glasgow, to collect the rents of the absentee lord, and to stave off Nithesdale’s many creditors, both moneylenders in Edinburgh and Scottish lairds who had been persuaded by Sir John to become ‘cautioners’ for the original debts. Nithesdale had been able to procure loans in the first instance because of his high social standing and because his lands in Scotland and in Orkney served as his ultimate security.

34 Unsigned note, undated (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 79); Falkland to Nithesdale, 25 May 1624, in Report on the Laing Manuscripts Preserved in the University of Edinburgh (HMC, London, 1914), i. 165–6; Victor Treadwell is obviously incorrect in supposing that Nithesdale ‘had no personal interest in the acquisition of Irish land’, Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 145.

However an added collateral was the favour which he enjoyed with the king, with the duke of Buckingham, whose cousin he had taken as his wife, and latterly with the great Scottish peer James, third marquess of Hamilton (married to a niece of Buckingham), who, in 1628, soon after his return from military adventures on the Continent, became a courtier to King Charles I. Nithesdale, his kinsman Sir John Maxwell, and even Nithesdale’s Scottish creditors, were all convinced that these connections could be turned to profit and so the money kept flowing and the debts kept mounting. What the source of profit might be was never spelt out, and Nithesdale’s retainers and creditors were fed with rumours that favour, which, at a stroke, would resolve all his financial difficulties, was about to come his way.36

One of these was the ‘bruit . . . that my lord is gone from court to France or Spain and that the King’s Majesty [had] written to the town of Edinburgh and the rest of his creditors to continue him during the time that he is in His Majesty’s service’. This, as it transpired, was unfounded, but the more frequent rumours related to prospects in Ireland where, after their experience with the Ulster plantation, Scots had come to believe there was gold at the end of every rainbow. The first such rumour, in 1622, which probably had some basis in fact, was to the effect that certain lands in Ireland which Nithesdale had considered were about to become his own had gone instead to ‘Buckingham’s youngest brother’ who was ‘made Viscount of them’. Then, two years later, it was reported that Nithesdale was confident that he was about to receive some consolation prize because ‘the Duke [had] written friendly promising to help him out of all’, and his hopes were higher still after 1633 when he had ingratiated himself with the king, having accompanied him to Scotland to attend at his Scottish coronation. Hope sprang eternal until 1639 with Nithesdale always confident that he would be able to make some bargain’ from what he ‘had been about in Ireland’, which would free him from his ‘greatest burdens’. Nithesdale never detailed what he was engaged upon, and the goal probably varied with circumstances in Ireland, but we do get a clear idea in one letter of what schemes he and Falkland had

in train during the years 1624–6. The anonymous author predicted that Nithesdale was about ‘to perfect . . . the greatest suit that ever was obtained of His Majesty’s father, or of himself, to wit that the first planters in Ireland shall be forced to transact with him’. This can only have meant that the undertakers in Ulster who had failed to fulfil their plantation conditions were being threatened with expulsion unless they agreed with whatever terms Nithesdale had been empowered to negotiate with them. 37

That this was indeed what Falkland had in mind was revealed by the full-scale onslaught that he, in association with Sir Thomas Phillips, an Ulster servitor at Coleraine, launched against the London merchant companies for their general failure to meet their tenanting obligation in the Ulster plantation. Phillips, who, together with Richard Hadsor, had conducted the 1622 survey of plantation lands in Counties Donegal and Londonderry, had long been critical of his neighbouring planters, the London companies, and he had command of the evidence which sustained the scarifying attack which he launched against them because, as he put it, they had deliberately set their lands to Irish tenants on short terms and at high rents to increase ‘their profit though it be never so dangerous to the commonwealth’. His close scrutiny of the estate rental of the London companies convinced Phillips, and presumably those to whom he reported, that plantation in Ulster could be highly profitable for the adventurous, and that the London companies should be dispossessed to make way for deserving favourites like himself, and, presumably, Nithesdale. 38

This was only the most audacious investigation permitted by Falkland to that group of his subordinates who professed that Ireland could only be made secure and prosperous through plantations. It is, therefore, likely that all undertakers in Ulster who were in breach of their contractual terms were equally exposed to attack, and they would have been on their guard against the prying eyes of land-hungry officials, such as Falkland and Parsons, or financially embarrassed courtiers, such as Nithesdale, whom they suspected of being anxious to convert into tangible estates the patents they had probably received from the crown for unspecified concealed land in Ireland. At the same time, Falkland was facilitating a frontal attack against Gaelic and


38 Mr Attorney’s certificate and a file of documents on the Londonderry plantation (Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7,046); ‘Sir Thomas Phillips’ Objections or Exception’ (Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7,047); ‘Answer of Mayor and City of London to the Charges, 1626 (Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7,048); ‘Londoners’ Receipts from Londonderry and Coleraine’ (Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7,057).
Gaelicized landowners in Connacht and County Wicklow, while crown claims to further property in the midlands were kept in mind.39

The task of staving off the mooted plantations which threatened Catholic interests in Ireland fell to the Old English, because many of their number were conversant with the procedures of the English common law. Furthermore, some of the lawyers among them had been facilitated, by such Old English landowners as the earl of Clanricard, whose principal Irish estates were situated in County Galway, to train as lawyers at the English Inns of Court so that they would be available to defend Irish Catholic landowners from just such challenges. The Old English had a further interest in staving off a plantation in Connacht because merchants from Galway and Sligo, as well as some speculators from the Pale, had acquired extensive holdings in the province by lending money to native landowners who proved incapable of repaying their debts. Therefore the issue of a plantation in Connacht, which is frequently represented by historians as yet another assault upon Gaelic proprietorship, was essentially a test of wills between the administration and an Old English community which had expanded upon an already substantial interest in the province through mortgage transactions.40

Lord Deputy Falkland recognized that the Old English would make more formidable opponents than the original owners, and he sought to weaken their position when he requested Buckingham to have the king persuade Richard Burke, earl of Clanricard, who frequented the court of Henrietta Maria, ‘to submit for his interest in the County of Galway’. Falkland was to be disappointed because Clanricard, whose integrity had been compromised when he had failed to defend the Leitrim estates of his ward and kinsman Brian O’Rourke from the intrusions of Buckingham and other British adventurers, was to stand firm until his death in 1634 when the title to his own lands was being challenged. Therefore, in 1625, the Connacht landowners, with the support of their provincial president Charles, Lord Viscount Wilmot, mobilized every resource at their command to prevent a plantation taking place. Wilmot again, as in 1622, sought to divert plantation away from the province by warning of the danger of provoking an ‘active people [who] . . . in numbers of idle swordsmen [were] the worst and most dangerous in all Ireland’, while landowner delegations reminded Charles of their record of past loyalties over 300 years. All of this was with the purpose of calling upon the king’s ‘honour and mercy’ to grant secure title to a deserving people in return for the payment of a fine which would give him ‘his profit equivalent to a


40 Mary O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land: Early Modern Sligo, 1568–1688 (Belfast, 1991); Breandán Ó Bric, ‘Galway Townsmen as Owners of Land in Connacht, 1585–1641’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1974); Advertisements for Ireland, 10; the term Gaelicized lord is one coined in Kenneth Nicholls, Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland in the Later Middle Ages (Dublin, 1972).
plantation’. Here again Wilmot offered his services as go-between, and requested guidance on ‘how far he should proceed in their offer of money’ before they sent ‘agents of the whole province to meet in Dublin’ where they would choose a delegation from the wider Old English community to present themselves at court in London. The fine the Connacht landowners had in mind was £10,000, but Wilmot advised Buckingham that they could be persuaded to pay ‘as much as the plantation lands (for that portion) might be bought for’. This willingness to pay money for royal favour was attributed by Wilmot to their ultimate concern that, under a plantation settlement, their tenures would be converted to knight service which would make it obligatory for their heirs to take the oath of supremacy before gaining possession of their estates. Therefore, as Wilmot saw it, the landowners of Connacht would, because of their commitment to Catholicism, be agreeable to pay the king the full value of the disputed lands to be ‘free from their oath when they are to sue out their liberties’. This seemed sage advice to a king who was chronically short of money and mildly disposed towards Catholicism, but Wilmot’s misfortune was that, as a former adherent to the disgraced Middlesex, he had no influence over Buckingham who forbade him ‘any further to treat with the natives about any composition’.41

The intransigence of Buckingham indicates that the royal favourite was still a firm supporter of those in Ireland who were lobbying for a plantation. However Wilmot had judged correctly that his proposition, which promised immediate revenue to the crown without the costs and risks associated with plantation, would prove irresistible for King Charles who, even from the outset of his reign, was desperately in need of the resources necessary to pursue a foreign policy. Therefore, in 1625, just as it appeared that Falkland had full authority to proceed with the series of plantations that would, at a stroke, have ended the influence of the principal Catholic proprietors in Ireland, the king changed his mind and, in exchange for the promise of money, offered to receive a delegation representing the Old English interest.

Once the king’s mind was made up, Buckingham quickly fell into line, and even the anti-Spanish party at court became reconciled to pursuing a conciliatory policy in Ireland, despite its contravening their religious convictions. This meant that Falkland, who had been stridently in favour of plantations, had no choice but to assume responsibility for conducting the prolonged negotiations which would lead to Charles ultimately conceding the Graces to his Catholic subjects in Ireland. The negotiation of the Graces has been so closely

41 Treadwell, *Buckingham and Ireland*, 140–1; Falkland to Buckingham, undated (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Carte MS 30, fos. 211–12); ‘Petition of the Lords, Knights, and Freeholders in the Province of Connacht and Clare, to the King’, Apr. 1625 (Carte MS 30, fos. 178–9); ‘Memorial to Buckingham re. Intended Plantations’, undated, probably by Wilmot (Carte MS 30, fo. 186); Wilmot to Buckingham, Apr. 1625 (Carte MS 30, fo. 200); Wilmot to Buckingham, 4 Oct. 1625 (Carte MS 30, fo. 205); Wilmot to Stockdale, 25 Oct. 1625 (Carte MS 30, fos. 207–8).
studied by Aidan Clarke, and more recently rehearsed by Victor Treadwell, that it does not need to be revisited other than to state that it was clear, from the outset, that Catholic proprietors in Ireland stood not only to gain secure title to those of their estates which had previously been exposed to plantation, but also substantial concessions in the practice of Catholicism. What was involved in this latter respect was a renunciation by the crown of its ambition to force the leaders of the Catholic community in Ireland to attend at Protestant service through the imposition of fines, and the payment by Catholic landowners to the crown of a sum equivalent to the revenues which they would otherwise have been forced to pay to the Protestant Church in Ireland in recusancy fines.  

This tacit toleration of Catholicism was the aspect of this new departure which left it exposed to criticism, and the Protestant leaders in Ireland, who saw all potential gain for themselves through further plantations being frittered away, immediately played upon the spirit and vocabulary of anti-Catholicism that had been so publicly displayed in England as recently as 1623–4 when a Spanish match for Prince Charles was being negotiated. The Protestants in Ireland pointed to the likelihood that the extension to Ireland (as it had been to Scotland) of the benefits of an English statute of 1624, which had granted secure title to all proprietors who had been in undisputed occupancy of their estates for sixty years, would result in Catholic landowners being able to endure as a permanent presence in Ireland, thus ensuring that patronage for Catholic clergy would continue indefinitely. Therefore, from the outset, Archbishop James Ussher of Armagh—despite his being Irish born and with many close relatives among the Old English community of the Pale—complained that ‘the many privileges’ being contemplated for Catholics amounted to ‘a toleration for that religion in consideration of the payment of a great sum’. This reality was even more apparent to the tempestuous English-born George Downham, bishop of Derry, who, in a sermon ‘before the Lord Deputy and the whole state’, proclaimed ‘the religion of Papists . . . superstitious and idolatrous’ and ‘their faith and doctrine erroneous and heretical’. This meant, he averred, that the granting of ‘toleration’ to them was ‘a grievous sin’ since it ‘set religion to sale, and with it the souls of the people’ who would be left open to the seductions of the corrupt papist clergy. This bold assertion struck such a chord with the congregation that the ‘church almost shook with Amen’, and Falkland’s authority was so obviously undermined that, when he demanded a copy of the sermon, Downham could retort that he would ‘say the same before the king’, safely in the knowledge that his sentiments were consonant with those which enjoyed official currency in England.

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42 Clarke, The Old English, 28–59, 238–54.
44 ‘Narration of Ussher A.D. 1626’, in ‘Letters to Laud’ (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Sanford MS 18, fo. 18); Cogswell, The Blessed Revolution, 29–30; on Ussher see Alan Ford, ‘James Ussher and the
Protestant tempers were even more frayed, and Protestant confidence in Falkland was even more eroded, because the years when negotiations were under way to have the lands of Old English Catholics declared exempt from the challenge of further plantation were the very ones when measures were being intensified to recover the lands of the Londonderry plantation for the crown. Thus it was at this very time that the impecunious Nithesdale was boasting that his financial difficulties were about to be resolved at the expense of planters in Ulster, while a royal committee, under the chairmanship of George Carew, now earl of Totnes, was in the process of calling the London companies to account for their shortcoming as planters in Ulster.45

The popular Protestant outcry against granting concessions to Catholics did result in some dilution of the package being negotiated as well as the inclusion of some representatives of the Ulster planters in the delegations being received in London. However once the Catholic landowners in Ireland began to collect the annual subsidy of £40,000, which was to be paid over three successive years, they were saved from the immediate threat of further plantations, while the recusancy laws were silently disregarded and Catholics were even permitted to serve in the army during the remaining years of Falkland’s governorship. The incorporation of concessions to Ulster planters within the full package of Graces which were agreed with the king in 1628 offered some consolation to Protestants, but the principal ground recovered by the Protestant interest during those years came their way by accident rather than by design. The recovery happened quite simply because, in 1628, more likely through ignorance rather than design, the government failed to follow proper constitutional procedures when seeking to convene the Irish parliament that was required to place the promises made by the king concerning ownership of land on a statutory basis. The Graces were, therefore, left to await the convening of another parliament before they would have legal standing, and the likelihood of procedures for such a parliament being put in place became remote once Falkland’s principal political support was removed with the assassination of the duke of Buckingham in August 1628. After that Falkland thought no more about parliament since his concern was to recover his credibility with the Irish Protestant community by enforcing the laws against Catholic religious practice. Not even this could save him from the wrath of those who believed he had betrayed them, and the king bent to the wishes of the Protestant interest in Ireland by recalling Falkland from government in 1629 and replacing him with Lord Chancellor


45 ‘Meeting before Totnes and Others of the Lords’ Committee at the Savoy’, 21 Mar. 1626/7 (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS 7,049).
Adam Loftus and the earl of Cork, who were to serve jointly as lords justices 1629–32.46

The king’s decision not to fill the Irish governorship on a permanent basis created a political hiatus, at a time when a power vacuum existed at court following the assassination of Buckingham. Under these circumstances the leaders of the several Irish Protestant factions hoped that they might recover the position of governor and resume both their programme of plantation, and the enforcement of the laws against Catholics, in defiance of the Graces. For their part, the Catholics continued to pay the promised subsidies to the king, while reminding him of his obligation to appoint a governor—who they hoped would be an Englishman—with a royal mandate to convene the parliament that would enact the legislation in relation to landownership promised in the Graces. These Catholic overtures became more desperate with each passing year, not only because they realized that their political leverage would be weakened once the money promised to the king was fully paid, but also because the government of Loftus and Boyle was demonstrating through their actions that they were not in any way bound by the Graces that had been conceded by the king. And, as John Reeve has shown, the Old English position became even more vulnerable because the lords justices, particularly Cork, proceeded with their anti-Catholic onslaught with the fulsome support of Sir Dudley Carleton, now Viscount Dorchester and secretary of state in England. The Cork–Loftus agenda was unfolded with the use of the military powers at their command to close all known Catholic religious houses, first in Dublin and then throughout the country, in a policy which culminated in the symbolic destruction of St Patrick’s Purgatory, Ireland’s most famous place of pilgrimage. This strike against the ‘scandal’ of religious toleration was reminiscent of that favoured at the time of the Mandates controversy at the outset of the century, and while the first steps taken by the government provoked a riot in Dublin, the earl of Cork was not intimidated, and gave assurance that these ‘brave outsides and flourishes’ were ‘designed to beget and nourish fears’ but in no way threatened ‘the public peace’ of the realm on which his ‘own fortunes and whole estate’ depended.47

This onslaught against Catholic practice was followed by the revival by the government of all plantation schemes which had previously been under consideration, but which had been suspended while the Graces were being negotiated. In ventilating these claims the officials proceeded with stealth, lest they put landowners on their guard against legal challenge. They were also

46 Clarke, The Old English, 60–5; Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 233–42.
secretive about their proceedings because they were jealous both of each other, and of unwanted prospectors from England and Scotland, notably the Scottish courtier James Hay, earl of Carlisle, who was aspiring to fill the vacancy left by Buckingham in the king’s favour, and who, like Buckingham, seemed to believe that he should enjoy every opportunity for personal enrichment that might arise. In the case of Ireland this could mean the acquisition of trading and manufacturing monopolies, or a grant to farm customs and other taxes, but the most cherished commodity of all was evidence of crown title to Irish land which, if one had the proper political connections, could be either converted into a grant of land at low rent to oneself or one’s nominees, or could be used to force the existing proprietors, whose titles were defective, to reach a settlement with the person who had access to documentary proof of title.

Where it was Catholic proprietors, whether Old English or Gaelic Irish, whose titles were being challenged, caution was also necessary lest notice, or rumour, of impending plantation should panic them into selling their lands at a bargain price to people who would be better able to defend it before the courts, or lest warning of what was in prospect should drive the Irish lords into rebellion. Even then some officials and soldiers still, as in the sixteenth and the outset of the seventeenth century, relished the prospect of Irish revolt which would provide opportunity for outright confiscation rather than partial plantation, and they sought eagerly for evidence of rebelliousness which might force the crown to take action against those they aspired to dispossess. The most daring of such charges of the mid-seventeenth century was addressed by an anonymous author in 1619 to King James’s secretary Sir Robert Naunton, and concerned the vast Ormond estates, lying principally in Counties Kilkenny and Tipperary.

This wealthy and strategically located lordship had long been coveted by English officials but it had remained beyond their reach because of the astute management of Thomas Butler, the Protestant tenth earl of Ormond, who had enjoyed the confidence both of Queen Elizabeth and of King James until he died in 1614. The passing of the tenth earl meant that the Ormond lands, and the palatinate jurisdiction which he had retained over County Tipperary against strident criticism of successive governors, now came into the possession of Walter Butler, a nephew to the tenth earl, whose Catholic attachment had earned him the sobriquet Walter of the beads and the rosaries. The Catholicism of the eleventh earl, and his lack of friends at court, meant that adventurers could mask their avarice as concern for the common good, and their ambition to promote a plantation on the Butler lands was aided by the willingness of Elizabeth Butler, the only surviving child of the tenth earl, who had married one Richard Preston, Lord Dinwall (an impecunious Scottish courtier who enjoyed the favour of King James), to contest the will of her father. The ambition of Elizabeth and her husband, to whom King James
was to grant the revived title of earl of Desmond, was to force a division of
the Butler inheritance, with Elizabeth and her husband taking the choice
portion from the eleventh earl of Ormond. They enjoyed the fulsome support
of King James and of officials in both England and Ireland in the pursuit of
this ambition, but the officials also sought after an opportunity to make some
of the property available for plantation, and it was to further this that one of
them, in 1619, dispatched to Secretary Naunton the anonymous document
with which we opened this discussion: ‘A Brief of Sundry Accidents Lately
Fallen out in Ireland . . . Intimating that the Earl of Ormond and Others did
Endeavour to Raise a Rebellion in Ireland’.

This document identified Walter, earl of Ormond, and his countess;
Ormond’s brother Richard Butler, Lord Viscount Mountgarrett; and
Ormond’s son and heir Thomas, Lord Viscount Butler of Thurles, as people
who had become discontented because of the challenges that were being
made to their land titles. They were, therefore, charged with conspiring both
with the Catholic clergy of the Butler lordship, who, in conjunction with the
Pope, were supposedly fomenting treason, and with Lord Delvin and
the landowners of ‘the County of Longford, Westmeath, and all other the
discontented Irish countries which are now to be planted’. Substance was
given to the charge by insinuation, with every meeting between the identi-
fied parties alleged to have been oath bound, and with the ultimate proof of
intent being that Mountgarrett’s son and heir had taken to wearing ‘Irish
trousers . . . which is still observed to be a forewarning of rebellion when they
change their habit’. It was also said that Ormond and Mountgarrett had
‘joined in alliance with all the principal Irish’ thus giving substance to the
prophecy ‘which the Irish antiquaries do report, that whenever the ould
English inhabitants of Ireland which they call Finnghale [Fionn Ghaill, fair
foreigners] do join with the meer Irish that then the late English which they
call the Dowghile [Dubh Ghaill, dark foreigners] and the English government
shall be suppressed and that the Irish shall then sway the sceptre of Ireland’.48

It is likely that occasional rumour of impending plantation did drive some
of the more impetuous elements in the country to make threatening actions,
ranging up and down the country with bands, armed with swords and ‘skeans’
(sceana, knives or daggers), as was alleged in this charge aimed at discrediting
Ormond and his adherents. However the more effective response of those,
whether native or newcomer, Catholic or Protestant, who were threatened
with plantation was to make direct appeal to the king, and to make full use
of the law. This was the course that Ormond pursued, in this instance, and

48 ‘A Brief of Sundry Accidents’ (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Carte MS, I, fos. 6–7); the distinction
between the Old and New English as Fionn Ghaill and Dubh Ghaill was conventional in Gaelic verse
of this time; precedents for deliberately provoking revolt are discussed in Raymond Gillespie,
Conspiracy: Ulster Plots and Plotters in 1615, Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies, pamphlet (Belfast,
1987).
he did succeed in staving off the threatened plantation, but not the loss of his palatinate jurisdiction or the division of the Butler inheritance. Even this little gain was at an enormous cost: first of crippling fines and legal expenses, then of eight years, 1619–27, spent incarcerated in the Fleet and in Newbury as a punishment for defying the royal will, and finally of seeing his grandson James Butler being kidnapped, with royal consent, so that he might be raised in England to provide a Protestant heir for what remained of the Ormond inheritance. This last action was justified by the king and his officials because Ormond’s son and James’s father Thomas, Viscount Thurles, had been drowned in crossing the Irish sea, and the young James had become immediate heir to the earldom. However, as it transpired, these tribulations and the prolonged legal battle proved worth fighting because the death of King James and the succession of King Charles in 1625, followed soon by the negotiation of the Graces, made it possible for Earl Walter to procure his release from prison and to recover his authority among his own people during that short interval when officials in Dublin were obliged to refrain from pursuing a policy of continuing plantation. Then, almost providentially, in 1628, Walter was released from the clutches of his foes first by the assassination of Buckingham, who had always supported Desmond and Lady Elizabeth against him, then by the death of Lady Elizabeth from natural causes, and finally, within fourteen days, by the death by drowning of Desmond, who was crossing to Ireland to lay claim to his wife’s inheritance. Ormond was quick to take advantage of these God-given opportunities and, as his coup de grâce, he had, in 1629, arranged, with the royal consent and at enormous cost, a marriage between his grandson James and Lady Elizabeth Preston, the sole child of the deceased Desmond and his Butler heiress. This marriage promised to restore the integrity of the Ormond inheritance, at the price of Earl Walter having to reconcile himself to a Protestant succession to the reunited property.49

This turn of events, as might be expected, outraged the officials in Dublin who now had neither a segmented Butler lordship, nor a plantation, and it was under these circumstances that they began again to petition for sanction to proceed with a plantation of the Ormond lordship. The earl, learning what was afoot, in 1630 again travelled to England to make overtures to King Charles, and supported his case for exemption of his lordship from plantation by the conventional reminder that he and his ancestors had held their lands and titles in Ireland since the reign of Henry II, and had always sought

to suppress ‘the enemies of the crown’. To this he appended a specious argument, which was widely commented upon (and which blithely ignored the Munster plantation), to the effect that if the crown laid claim to his lordship, he would have the distinction of being ‘selected amongst all the ancient English plantators to be the first replanted and ranked with the Irish’.  

Such an argument was always certain to make an impression on the king, and officials in Dublin were therefore quick to point out that stories of an impending plantation of the lordship of Ormond had originated at court—thus pointing the finger at the safely dead Buckingham—and that Dublin officials had acted with commendable restraint since they had known for ‘three deputyships’ that the lordship of Ormond was held by weak title. However, now that the matter had become public, the earl of Cork, writing in his capacity of lord justice, insisted that plantation should be proceeded with expeditiously. To facilitate this he recommended that Ormond should be given assurance that he would receive special favour from the king, when the lands of his lordship came to be parcelled out under plantation conditions, and that he should be invited to save legal expenses for the crown by surrendering his patents and other title documents for inspection by government lawyers.

Cork was concerned to avoid delay in planting the lordship for a variety of reasons. His first reason—that the plantation would convert a place that had been a ‘receptacle’ for outlaws into a place of ‘great strength and security for the well affected subjects of both the provinces of Munster and Connacht’—was such as one would expect from an English Protestant who had acquired extensive territories in both provinces. Cork’s second reason for wanting a quick plantation—that a quiet submission by Ormond would establish a precedent that could be followed when it came to dealing with Catholic landowners in the Connacht plantation—was equally unsurprising. However the other reasons cited by Cork for persuading the earl of Ormond to submit to the government’s purpose on the promise of easy terms suggest that he was genuinely afraid that the benefits of plantation in the lordship of Ormond, and elsewhere, would move outside the control of ‘well deserving English servitors’ like himself. This unease stemmed first from the various rumours circulating at court that ‘a Scotsman’ or ‘three Scottish lords’ were seeking a grant of the entire lordship of Ormond. Cork did not identify who he had in mind but we can suspect that one of them was the indefatigable Nithesdale and it seems likely that another was James Hay, earl of Carlisle, who, as Cork well knew, was positioning himself at that very time to revive his claims to the O’Byrnes’ country in north County Wicklow which was known to be held

50 Draft letter, Ormond to Dorchester, principal secretary to King Charles, 5 Jan. 1630 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Carte MS 30, fo. 259); the details of the case, and of Ormond’s response, were reported and commented upon extensively; see copy Cork to Lord Treasurer, probably Oct. 1630 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 36).
by defective title. The third Scotsman may have been the earl of Morton who about this time was supplied with ‘information . . . touching the plantation of Ireland’ which included the specific advice that ‘the upper and lower Ormonds’ presented inviting opportunities for ‘sufficient British undertakers’, or it may have been the duke of Lennox who, at this point, had an interest in both Irish acres and Irish warships including that of the young earl of Kildare which Lady Lennox sold to Cork.51

While fearing such intrusions from outside the kingdom, Cork was equally perturbed by the fact that Catholic proprietors throughout Ireland who had weak title to their estates were being persuaded by rumours of an impending plantation in Ormond to sell their lands ‘for very small considerations . . . to persons of great place in this state’ who would then use their influence to obstruct any formal plantation. He might have been equally fearful of the more astute members of the Old English community such as Sir Nicholas White who, ‘smelling a plantation’ in Ormond, had ‘bought up sixteen or seventeen ploughlands in fractions . . . almost for nothing’ with a view to getting a good title to a proportion of them when the plantation would take place. Considerations such as these convinced Cork—and perhaps also Loftus whose position both as chancellor and judge of Chancery would have given him unparalleled knowledge of weak land titles—that he did not wield sufficient influence as a lord justice to determine the course of any plantations that might be proceeded with. Therefore, Cork lobbied to have himself appointed to the senior position of lord deputy promising that he would quickly entitle the king to the lordship of Ormond together with Counties Roscommon, Mayo, and Sligo, ‘the only neglected part of this kingdom in which no English in effect are yet planted’. Then, failing to secure his own appointment, he wished to have Falkland, or some other worthy Englishman, appointed to the higher office provided it was not ‘any unknowing covetous person . . . sent to repair or raise a decayed estate out of the ruins of this poor kingdom’.52

These moves to bring new life to the dormant plantation programme aroused fears and resentment among the Catholic community whose leaders

51 Sir William Beecher to Cork, 1 July 1630 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 154); Cork to Lord Treasurer, 9 Aug. 1630 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 167); Cork to Beecher, 29 Oct. 1630 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 203); copy Cork to Lord Treasurer, prob. Oct. 1630 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 96); Cork to Bedford, 15 Sept. 1630 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 187); Cork to Sir William Beecher, 11 Jan. 1630/1 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 226); Cork to Beecher, 30 Mar. 1631 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fols. 282–6); Cork to Goring, 18 Mar. 1631/2 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 1, fo. 498); ‘Information for the Right Honourable the Earl of Morton Touching the Plantation of Ireland’, undated (Edinburgh, SRO, RH 15/41/37 no. 2); I am grateful to Jane Ohlmeyer for suggesting the possible Lennox involvement.

were being brought to confront the reality that their subsidy to the king had possibly been spent in vain, since their money to the crown was long since spent, the moment of danger from Spain was gone, and adventurers in England and Scotland, as well as servitors in Ireland, were clamouring for grants of Irish plantation land. While hopeful that the king could yet be persuaded to honour his promise, it was clear to Catholics that this would never happen so long as the government was controlled by their New English opponents, and so they too called for the appointment of a senior English figure to the post of lord deputy. Several names were mentioned but in early 1632 it become known that the choice had fallen to Thomas, Viscount Wentworth, who was destined to dominate Irish political life from then until 1641.

5.3. WENTWORTH’S POLICY OF PLANTATION 1632–1641

The leaders of all political groupings in Ireland had grounds to believe that Wentworth’s appointment would favour their interests and so the question of further plantation was permitted to lie dormant until Wentworth took up office in 1633. Even then Wentworth carefully concealed his intentions from both sides until after he had successfully negotiated a subsidy from the parliament he convened in Dublin in 1634. On the one hand, the Catholics were reasonably confident that Wentworth would bring forward legislation which would give legal title to those of them who held lands by defective title, because they believed that he, as a staunch supporter of the king, could be trusted to honour the royal assurances given to them under the Graces. On the other, the servitors and the Protestant clergy who had opposed the Graces from the outset were assured by the stern measures that Wentworth had taken against recusants in Yorkshire, where he had held the position of president of the north, that he would continue to be a firm upholder of the Protestant interest in Ireland. Each group, as events were to show, was mistaken as to the intent of Wentworth, and the only forecast of 1632 that was borne out by events was that Wentworth would govern the country ‘with full and absolute power’; a prediction that, in 1632, all factions in the country relished, but that all would live to regret.53

The career of Wentworth in Ireland, his concern to advance the interests of the king with those of himself, his adroitness at seeking to ‘govern the Native by the Planter and the Planter by the Native’, and his systematic use of several instruments of ‘Thorough’ to destroy his opponents, have all been carefully examined in numerous publications, and most authoritatively in those of Hugh Kearney.54 These studies, have not, however, devoted proper attention to the pivotal role of plantation in the grand strategy of Wentworth,

53 Cork to Treasurer, 5 Mar. 1631/2 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 2, fos. 410–12).
nor do they show how Wentworth’s policies on plantation dovetailed with his intentions to transform Irish society in its religious and political allegiances. It is necessary, therefore, to rehearse the governorship of Wentworth with a view to demonstrating how the connection that already existed between plantation and politics became even more intertwined during his period of rule.

The factors, besides Wentworth’s personality, which made his government different from that of any of his predecessors were that he was under particular pressure, because of the king’s effort to govern England without parliament, to raise sufficient revenue to cover the cost of governing Ireland, and to render a profit that would be available to the king. To this end Wentworth had devised a strategy, based on the findings of the 1622 commission which he had studied closely, that was calculated to meet the king’s objectives.55 Another factor which rendered Wentworth’s rule in Ireland enigmatic both to contemporaries, and to historians, was that he proceeded with such stealth that senior officials in government (and even the king) were not fully aware of the direction in which he was proceeding at any given time, while he himself systematically cultivated a false sense of security among those destined to become victims of his reform programme. That Wentworth believed himself to be pursuing reform, and in as programmatic a fashion as any sixteenth-century governor, emerges clearly from his correspondence with such English confidants as Archbishop Laud and Secretary Coke to whom he regularly gave advance warning of what blow he would next strike for the cause. How long he intended to devote to his task in Ireland is not clear, but, like the programmatic governors of the sixteenth century, he believed that he would enjoy a suitable political reward in England if he brought his self-defined assignment in Ireland to a successful conclusion. Writing to Laud in 1633 on the possibility of inducing English clergymen to serve in the Irish Church he advised that mature ministers ‘of parts’ would be ‘loath to come to bury themselves here in Ireland in their old age’, whereas vigorous men, aged between 35 and 45, would willingly ‘bestow part of their travail and watches upon us . . . if in the hope to be then called back’. In this respect, wrote Wentworth, ‘I judge the clergy by the laity, for this is in my own walk my own desire’.56

It was logical that, in writing to the English primate, Wentworth should emphasize the high priority he was giving to the ‘vast . . . work’ of the ‘reformation of this church’ which, he thought, was attainable ‘in good time’ with


55 Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland, 305–6.

the assistance of God, the king, and Archbishop Laud. This, however, was
more than cant, and religious considerations really did enjoy a central posi-
tion in his overall scheme of government. The glaring failure of previous
officials and settlers to advance the cause of the Protestant reformation in
Ireland was in Wentworth’s opinion, as it had been in that of the 1622
commissioners, prime testimony to the insufficiency of these people, and he
always emphasized the importance of religious reform in his scheme because
he recognized that his own endeavours would eventually be measured by this
same standard.57

The attainment of the religious reform of Ireland would, in Wentworth’s
opinion, be achieved by negative as well as by positive courses, and planta-
tion was to be a key instrument in both. The essential prerequisite to any
reformation in religion was, as Laud had defined it for England, to have a
church which was sufficiently endowed with land both to attract clergymen
from England, who would direct the pastoral work of the existing clergy in
Ireland, and to guarantee the independence of all clergy from secular inter-
ference to the point where they might be brought to observe the theological
and liturgical order in the Church that was favoured by the king and
Archbishop Laud. As he took stock of the position of the Church of Ireland,
Wentworth recognized that this was far from being the case, and one of his
first tasks, following the precedent set by Laud not only in England, but in
Scotland also, was to recover for the Church those of its estates which had
come into the possession of laymen whether Protestant or Catholic. To
remedy this situation, Wentworth, acting through the prerogative Court of
Castle Chamber, had those landowners, the most prominent of whom was
the earl of Cork, called to account and divested of their church lands and
made to bear heavy fines. The recall of extensive church estates in all parts
of the country out of the hands of lay impro pri etors prepared the way for a
process of incipient colonization because most of the recovered properties
went to support clergy who were deliberately recruited by Wentworth in
England. The principal of these was Bishop John Bramhall, who, despite
having a ‘competent means’ and living ‘contentedly and plentifully’ in
England, ‘was moved . . . to [go] into Ireland for the good and settlement’
of the Church there. In Ireland, Bramhall was assigned the see of Derry by
Wentworth, and was then placed in charge of the governor’s ecclesiastical
plans, and he regularly identified the task of recovering the property of the
Church with the plantation effort. He approved of the unique freedom to
lease church lands for sixty years that had been conceded to the bishops
in the six escheated counties because this was designed ‘for the advancement
of plantation’ in Ulster. Similarly, in 1635, when praising the church built in
Derry by the London companies, Bramhall recommended that it be called

57 Wentworth to Laud, 9 Sept. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 8, fo. 17).
after St Columba ‘who was the first planter of faith in those parts’. And the association between plantation and the promotion of true religion made by Bramhall at the general level was made by others when they spoke of their particular endeavours at colonization. For example Sir William St Leger, the lord president of Munster, boasted to Bramhall of ‘a little poor plantation at . . . Doneraile’ where he had established his residence, and he requested the bishop to find him ‘an able minister out of England’ to serve as pastor since this was necessary to retain the ‘great number of communicants’ he had ‘drawn’ to settle there.58

The other deficiency in the existing Protestant order that Wentworth detected was the existence in Ireland of a substantial Scottish population who favoured Calvinist doctrine and a Presbyterian mode of church government. Wentworth sought to rectify what he considered a source of scandal and disunity in the Church, first by a reformulation of church doctrine to bring it into conformity with the Arminian code favoured by Archbishop Laud for the subjects in all three kingdoms of the British monarchy.59 Then, when this persuasive strategy failed to achieve its objective, and when the king’s Calvinist subjects in Scotland began to resist the extension of this unifying process to that kingdom by constituting themselves into a Covenant, Wentworth sought to have Scottish settlers in Ulster swear an oath—known to Irish Protestant folk memory as the Black Oath—that they would not engage with their countrymen in Scotland against the king. This Scottish presence in Ulster may have been at the root of Wentworth’s general dissatisfaction with society in the province, and he was even more systematic than his predecessors in pressing the king’s right to impose fines on undertakers for their failure to comply with the contractual terms associated with plantation in Ulster. He pursued this notoriously in relation to the London companies, but he intended this investigation into their title as a test case for an investigating of the compliance of all undertakers in Ulster with their plantation conditions.60

Protestant leaders in Ireland were never impressed by Wentworth’s arguments that his challenges to them were with the purpose of consolidating the gains made by ‘true religion’ in Ireland, and his case became even less convincing when his onslaughts against individual Protestants coincided with

58 Bramhall to Laud, 18 Feb. 1635 (Huntingdon Library, Hastings MS HA 14,048); Bramhall, ‘Part of a General Apology’, 6 Mar. 1640/1 (Huntington, Hastings MS HA 14,065); Bramhall to Wentworth, 16 May 1635 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 14,049); W. St Leger to Bramhall, 7 Feb. 1636/7 (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 15,275).
an apparent toleration of Catholicism. The charges made against Wentworth may have been sincerely meant, but they counted against him politically when he, together with Archbishop Laud, came to be identified by the king’s English opponents, as the evil advisers who had persuaded the king to betray the achievements of the Protestant Reformation with a view to leading his subjects back to Rome. However, while this argument may have seemed plausible in the 1640s, a close study of Wentworth’s papers proves that he was persistently hostile to Catholicism, and that he was convinced of the necessity to place the Protestant Church in Ireland on a sound doctrinal and financial footing before it would be appropriate to win, or force, the compliance of Catholics with the established Church. Until the Protestant Church was in a position to receive and evangelize Catholics in large numbers, Wentworth saw little point in disturbing them in the practice of their faith. However his moratorium on religious persecution was also imposed with a view to minimizing the grounds for grievance that Catholic leaders might cite against him at a time when he was moving systematically to undermine the position of Catholic landowners in the country. These latter, he believed, constituted the principal bulwark for those Catholic priests who had returned from continental seminaries to retain, or recover, the allegiance of the Irish population to the Church of Rome, and he recognized that their destruction was vital to the success of his religious programme.

On those occasions when Wentworth revealed his true feelings towards Catholicism he did so in a virulent fashion. The customary claim of the Old English for favourable treatment based on their long record of loyalty to the crown was regarded by Wentworth with scorn. ‘They set forth’, he said, ‘how they and their ancestors have been faithful subjects, and yet in a manner the whole country hath been within memory in actual rebellion.’ And, as he looked to the future, he expected no better. Writing in 1636, Wentworth warned that until the Old English were ‘brought to a conformity in religion, the crown of England may not repose any confidence in them’. The political endeavours of the Old English were, he inferred, acting against official efforts to bring ‘the natives . . . into the paths of civility’, with the result that the Gaelic element of the population might ‘be accounted animals, mean betwixt rationals and brutes, than men’. The way in which the Old English were impeding the civilizing process was by providing protection and patronage for friars and Jesuits. It was Wentworth’s ultimate intention to have such clergy expelled from the country, and while, in 1636, he did not consider it opportune to remove them, he gave an assurance that when the time was right he would ‘take all speed and courage in the execution’.61

The reason why Wentworth wished, in 1636, to delay his proposed onslaught against the Catholic clergy was because he was then pushing ahead

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61 Wentworth to Coke, 6 July 1636 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 9, fo. 53).
with a plantation in the province of Connacht and County Clare. This, as we saw, had been deferred while the Graces were under consideration but Wentworth made it clear, once the parliament, which he had convened in Ireland in 1634, had voted the requested subsidy to the crown, that he intended both to disregard the promises made by the king and to proceed with a plantation. When doing so he was warned that his ‘severity may disaffect that people and dispose them to call the Irish regiments forth of Flanders to their assistance’.62

This reminder of the dangers associated with his work may have further convinced Wentworth that he should refrain from taking action against Catholic priests until he had first brought their patrons under firm government control. This, as he saw it, could best be done through plantation, and the kind of plantation which he visualized for Connacht was similar to Chichester’s plantation of the 1610s in north County Wexford. Under such a scheme, the occupants who did not have good title to their estates would forfeit everything to the crown but would receive back the equivalent of three-quarters of their property with a secure title. This, however, would be on the tenure of knight service which would provide a regular income to the crown, and would make it possible for the government to require the heirs of the initial grantees to take the oath of supremacy when they came to succeed to the property. If applied consistently this, he believed, would, within a generation, force all native proprietors in Connacht to conform in religion. Even more important for Wentworth was the fact that one-quarter of the land in Connacht would become available to English-born Protestant proprietors who, he expected, would become the basis for government support in the province. When this final element was in place Wentworth was satisfied that he would have a scheme which would advance ‘the service of the Crown, the increase of religion and the future peace and safety of the kingdom’.63

What Wentworth meant by the service of the crown was obviously the enhancement to the revenue and patronage of the crown that would follow from the plantation, and he advised specifically that instead of conceding the Graces, the king should apply ‘the benefit of those plantations to the Crown’ and not leave ‘them open as a prey to every pretender’. The ‘increase in religion’ would follow because, as he described County Galway, one of the five counties to be included within the scheme, ‘the people there’ were ‘in a manner wholly popish and Irish, not a Protestant and Englishman of note in the whole county [and] extremely addicted in their affections to Spain’. Plantation would thus be beneficial to true religion because it would both weaken those who were ‘unsound and rotten at the heart’ and provide the government with the opportunity to ‘line them thoroughly with English and Protestants’. The

62 Wentworth to King Charles, 10 Sept. 1636 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 3, fo. 262).
63 Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 219–22; Wentworth to Coke, 7 Apr. 1635 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 9, fo. 6).
enhancement of the security of the realm that would derive from plantation was implicit in Wentworth’s condemnation of the Catholicism of the Irish in Connacht. However, besides being ‘the likeliest and most open [area] to an invasion’, Connacht was also a region where the subjects were greatly dependent on their lords. Such dependency would obviously be terminated by the plantation scheme which Wentworth envisaged, because under it the freshly established English Protestant proprietors would be the socially dominant group in the province. Their influence would, in turn, bring an end to ‘the power which the popish clergy have with the people there’.64

These arguments, advanced by Wentworth to justify a plantation in Connacht, suggest that his policies were being shaped by the Spenserian theorists of the turn of the century who had argued how Ireland could best be brought to a civil order. Like the theorists, Wentworth believed that with the policy of plantation ‘lay a principal means of the security and flourishing of this kingdom in religion, peace, civility and trades’. Civil improvement would accrue because the Irish, as well as being ‘popish’ (or perhaps because of it), were addicted to ‘idleness and want of manufacture’. The settlement of English in their midst would, he believed, provide an immediate remedy for this social deficiency, but Wentworth also apparently accepted the notion that the Irish would be reformed by the example of the civil living of the settlers once plantation had taken place. And, in a passage reminiscent of the most blatant special pleadings of the theorists, Wentworth explained how the loss of one-quarter of their lands would be to the long-term material benefit of the Connacht landowners because ‘these three parts remaining will after this settlement be better and more valuable to them than the former four parts . . . as well in regard of the benefit they shall have by the plantation as of the security and settlement they shall gain in their estates’.65

Almost as if to show that such arguments about the civil benefits that would derive from plantation were not mere rhetoric, Wentworth went into considerable detail in describing his own efforts to establish a plantation in the O’Byrnes’ country in County Wicklow at the same time that the larger ‘western plantation’ was being negotiated. His intention was to make his own endeavours in Wicklow ‘an example for those of the other plantation now on foot’, and ‘a perfect work . . . for posterity’. Earlier efforts by the English at building in Wicklow, such as the construction of Cary’s Fort, were to be

64 Wentworth to Windebank, 27 Nov. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fo. 22); Wentworth and Council to Coke, 9 July 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fo. 249); Wentworth to King Charles, 10 Sept. 1636 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 3, fo. 262); ‘Considerations if King Charles Declared War on Austria’, n.d. (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 3, fo. 289); Wentworth and Council to Coke, n.d. (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fo. 249).

65 Wentworth and Council to Coke, n.d. (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fo. 249); report of Wentworth and the Connacht commissioners, 30 Nov. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fos. 30–1).
superseeded by his own fort and lodge at Cosha, and those English who had already settled in Wicklow were to be compelled to invest in similar buildings. And, as we shall see in the next chapter, steps were taken by Wentworth, which would be followed by his son in subsequent decades, to take advantage of the wealth of timber on his Wicklow property to promote iron smelting there.66

While thus providing a practical insight into what he himself believed could be achieved through plantation, Wentworth also alluded to what had already been accomplished in Ireland. In passing through the planted lands in Munster, between Clonmel and Limerick, Wentworth described it as ‘a country upon my faith . . . as well husbanded, built, and peopled as you are in England’. The ‘industrious and well-conditioned’ appearance was, he contended, due directly to plantation and he warned that ‘unless by this means we be able to invite the English, flatter not yourselves with the hope of any lasting good from this kingdom’.

Wentworth also had some favourable comments to offer on Ulster, despite his reservations over the presence there of Scots. Writing in 1639, he remarked, with considerable exaggeration, that there were ‘one hundred thousand at least of the Scottish nation’ settled in Ireland, but he still believed that they could be made useful if ‘a good hand’ was held over them to prevent them from joining the Covenanter. Because of their potential, Scots were considered by Wentworth to be better subjects than Irish Catholics. However, the plantation in Ulster was worthy of praise only because many of the grantees had been English, and he was concerned that none of the English grantees should be deprived of their estates simply because they had not fulfilled their plantation conditions. For this reason, he moved to halt a possible replantation in the one county in Ulster that had been planted by the London merchant companies. To do so, he asserted, would have been altogether out of keeping with the ‘crime’ they had committed and would take no account of the more important consideration that they had ‘settled themselves there bona fides upon valuable considerations, and by their charge and industry exceedingly improved those lands above what they were at their entry’. Any move to dispossess the Londoners, he said, would discourage ‘all other planters through the whole realm’ and would ‘so dishearten the English from bestowing themselves on this side as will be to the prejudice of the Crown many thousands in the future plantations’.67


67 Wentworth to Conway, 21 Aug. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10A, fo. 44); Wentworth to Laud, 16 Aug. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 7, fos. 40–1); Wentworth to Vane, 14 May 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10B, fos. 76–7); Wentworth to Cottington, 8 Dec. 1638 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10B, fos. 22–4); Wentworth to Laud, 3 Nov. 1638 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers vol. 7, fo. 134).
On this occasion Wentworth significantly referred to his plantation plans in the plural, and the contrasts which he developed between those areas which had been planted and those which remained in Catholic possession were designed to strengthen his case for a comprehensive plantation of all property remaining in Catholic possession. Even as the juries were proving crown title to lands in Connacht and Clare, Wentworth was secretly setting the wheels in motion for a plantation of the lordship of Ormond in Counties Tipperary and Kilkenny. And as the Connacht jurors clinched the case for the crown by proving that the province could be claimed as the ‘ancient inheritance of the Crown’ Wentworth concluded that the Old English lawyers ‘within the Pale’ who had contested the crown title would ‘begin now to find his Majesty hath the same title to a great part of Meath which he hath to Connacht, and that many other places amongst them also are upon older, fair and just claims subject to plantation’. The private investigations which Wentworth set afoot showed that, where crown title to Connacht could be proven by tracing ownership backwards to the original conquest of the province by the de Burgos, crown title to much of Munster could similarly be proven, as it had been by Sir Peter Carew in the sixteenth century, by tracing lineages backwards to the Norman conquest of Robert FitzStephen. Thus, in his opinion, most of the lands of Munster which had not been included within the Elizabethan plantation in that province and which still remained in Catholic possession were now liable to confiscation. Similarly for the province of Ulster, Wentworth was able to justify the seizure of Upper and Lower Iveagh in County Monaghan by making reference to the Irish parliamentary Act of 11 Elizabeth which had declared the entire lordship of Tyrone confiscate to the crown. And, more generally, Wentworth’s agents compiled a ‘book’ of minor holdings in Catholic possession in various parts of the country which could now be seized either because previous owners had once committed treason or because the lands had been ecclesiastical property.

It is only when these various references are pieced together that we come to appreciate that what Wentworth referred to as ‘the great work of Plantations’ was not the plantation of Connacht alone but the resettlement by the crown of almost all land in Ireland that remained in Catholic possession. He did not divulge his full scheme publicly because plantations were ‘not to be gone about but in time of peace’, and a general scheme was likely to arouse unrest. Even what he was attempting in Connacht was, he acknowledged, the cause of ‘discontentments and grumblings’, and Wentworth realized that what he hoped to implement in Ireland was a revolutionary scheme.

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68 Report of Wentworth and the Connacht commissioners, 30 Nov. 1637 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fos. 30–1); Wentworth to [Coke?], 9 Nov. 1635 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 9, fo. 102); Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vols. 24–5/275, 280, 281, 284, 295; on Sir Peter Carew in the 16th century see Canny, The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland, (Hassocks, 1976), 68, 78, 82.
such as would not have been contemplated for a civil society such as England. Writing to Sir Henry Vane, and alerting him to disturbances which might result from the plantation in Connacht, he challenged him to imagine the effect that a similar ‘operation’, which would deprive every landowner of ‘a full fourth of all his lands . . . would have with your people in England’.  

Besides his fear of the tumult that would result from an announcement of a general plantation, there were also practical reasons why Wentworth proceeded cautiously. It was, he said, ‘impossible to do all at once’, and he stated further that ‘we hold it not fit to embrace more having so much already in our hands’.  

Another reason which dictated caution was the intense lobbying of the Catholic party at court to counter the plantation in Connacht. The most persistent of the lobbyists was Richard, earl of Clanricard (or St Albans, as Wentworth addressed him, using his English title), and Wentworth used all the resources at his command, until Clanricard’s sudden death in 1634, to prevent Clanricard having his estates in Galway declared exempt from the plantation. Wentworth’s real objection, as he made clear to such confidants as Sir Henry Vane and Archbishop Laud, was that the exemption of Clanricard’s estates would create a precedent that would be followed in subsequent plantations, thereby defeating his principal purpose of undermining the authority of Catholic proprietors everywhere. He was not able to state this objection to the king because this would have revealed that what he had in mind for Ireland was a general confiscation of Catholic estates. Instead he sought to hold the king to his schemes by promising—quite implausibly—that the plantation of Connacht alone would ‘shortly . . . pay the debts of the Crown of England’ while also making the government of Ireland free of charge to the English exchequer. When, in due course, the king made the desired concession to Ulick Burke, who succeeded his father as earl, and declared the Clanricard estates exempt from the proposed plantation, Wentworth remonstrated with Treasurer Vane that a gift by the king of £100,000 in ready money to Clanricard would have been preferable to the exemption because of the way in which it had prejudiced ‘the future plantations’.  

As it transpired none of the plantations, not even that in Connacht, was proceeded with because, at the moment when Wentworth was about to launch his scheme in Connacht, his energies were suddenly diverted to assist the king with his political difficulties in Scotland and England. What is important, however, is the evidence that, before this distraction occurred, Wentworth had decided upon a programme of plantation for Ireland that was potentially as extensive if

69 Wentworth to ?, n.d. (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 9, fo. 206); Wentworth to Vane, 30 May 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10B, fo. 77).
70 Ibid.
71 Wentworth to Laud, 9 Mar. 1636 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 6, fo. 331); Wentworth to Vane, 9 July 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10B, fo. 121); Wentworth to Laud, 9 Mar. 1636 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 6, fo. 328); Wentworth to Vane, 9 July 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 10B, fo. 120).
not as comprehensive as that later implemented by the agents of Oliver Cromwell. The differences between the two is that the Cromwellians aimed to deprive all Catholic landowners, other than those who were to be corralled west of the river Shannon, of all their estates whereas Wentworth believed that Catholics could safely be permitted to retain three-quarters of their property provided they were closely superintended by the English proprietors he proposed to settle on the quarter of their estates that would become crown property. Wentworth was more lenient because he believed that Catholic landowners who were placed within this reformed social framework would be compelled, over the course of time, to abandon their religion in favour of Protestantism. The purpose behind his scheme is clear from his willingness to exempt the Connacht estates of both Lord Ranelagh and Sir Charles Coote, who were of English planter stock, from the proposed plantation, and also the estates of the Gaelic, but Protestant, earl of Thomond in County Clare. Not even Thomond was to be independent of the supervision of English Protestant proprietors however. On the death of the fourth earl in 1639, Wentworth immediately recommended that his heir should not continue to be lieutenant of County Clare because this had made ‘them in the nature of count Palatines [and] gave unto them a greater dependency than in reason of state ought to be afforded to any of the natives of this kingdom’. It seems to have been his wish that the existing English settlers in Ireland, and certainly the Scots, should also be made subject to the government of these new proprietors. The Scots required such supervision because of their Calvinist leanings, but Wentworth left no doubt that he lacked confidence in all existing Protestant planters and officials in Ireland and believed, in true Spenserian fashion, that they had become corrupt and degenerate because of the lack of proper order and discipline in both Church and state before his own arrival in the country.

All of this indicates that Wentworth believed that his series of plantations would mark a new beginning in the social and religious reform of Ireland. He anticipated that religious reform would proceed because the plantations and the political reordering of the country would reduce the ability of Catholic landowners to provide patronage and protection to priests and nuns. Then he expected that the weakening of the authority and independence of Catholic proprietors would make it impossible for them to oppose the withdrawal of toleration from the Catholic clergy; and we know from Wentworth himself that he did intend to expel priests from the country at the appropriate time. This would obviously be only after the plantations had been put into effect,

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72 Wentworth to ?, 22 Apr. 1639 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 11A, fo. 227). Dr Mary O’Dowd, in discussing the issue of plantation in Connacht, believes that Wentworth wished to grant no exemptions, either to Protestant or Catholic proprietors. It is true that he made such statements, especially when countering Clanricard’s claims, but he more often suggested in his correspondence that he did intend to exempt lands already in Protestant ownership from confiscation. O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land, 54.

73 Canny, The Upstart Earl, 9–19, 155–9.
and after the Church of Ireland had been given renewed strength with the
recovery of whatever property had been lost to it through lay impropriety
ship, and with the appointment of more clergymen and the establishment
of firm discipline. The persecution of the Catholic clergy was therefore to
coincide with an active missionary effort on the part of Protestant ministers,
and there seemed good reason to expect that this would succeed because the
ministers would have direct access to the common people who previously
had been shielded from outside influence by their Catholic lords.

The one element of Wentworth’s scheme that was not revealed was the
identity of the new proprietors who would be so crucial to the scheme’s
success. Servitors in Ireland believed that the governor was adopting their
plantation programme, and that they would, therefore, be the principal bene-
cficiaries. He did nothing to disillusion them on this score, but, as has been
noted, the governor, and also the king, believed that these had already got
more than their fair share of Irish land. Perhaps with this knowledge several
of Wentworth’s confidants at court, and their associates, were pressing for
grants of Irish land, and Wentworth, on a few occasions, made reference to
well-connected people who, he thought, would not make suitable planters.
One of these latter was the duke of Lennox whose secretary, one Mr Webb,
was active in Ireland seeking a grant ‘for the whole plantation of Connacht’.
Lennox, together with the earls of Arundel and Nithesdale, was suggested to
Wentworth by the king but the royal recommendation did not receive a
response from the governor. Wentworth seemed more enthusiastic about
a brother of Lord Chief Justice Finch who was proposed to him by Secretary
Cottington. This again suggests that he would have preferred to see English
rather than Scottish proprietors settled in Connacht, but he was careful not
to reveal any such preference when the current favourite of King Charles,
the marquess of Hamilton, petitioned Wentworth for a grant to his brother
of Connacht land in excess of the stipulated maximum of 1,500 acres. Instead,
Wentworth advised the Marquess that such a concession was not within his
own power to grant, and he hinted solicitously that better bargains might be
had in Ireland since it was his intention to use the plantation in Connacht
to increase the revenue of the crown rather than the wealth of the grantees.
It was Bramhall, rather than Wentworth, who moved, in the interests of the
Church, to dissuade Laud from pressing his claim for land in Connacht or
the lordship of Ormond, where Laud proposed to settle after ‘they’ had
become ‘weary’ of him in England. This reaction may have been given
without prior consultation with the governor since it is difficult to imagine
that Wentworth would have denied a grant to the archbishop in Connacht
where, it appears, he intended to take a large block of land for himself.74

74 Wentworth to Cottington, 4 Nov. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 3, fo. 32);
King Charles to Wentworth, 20 Oct. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 3, fo. 39);
From these snippets of information it appears that Wentworth would have preferred as proprietors, in any of his plantations, English over Scots, and Protestants over Catholics, and that he would have wanted all new landowners to be strong supporters of crown and Church. Where these proprietors were to find appropriate settlers for their estates was an issue to which Wentworth had not given much thought but which he seemingly believed would be problematic if we are to judge from his sneering observation to Archbishop Laud:

Indeed I have sometimes thought those that go to New England and the other plantations in America might better, by order of the state there, be directed hither where we do in very truth want men exceedingly. But then again when I considered how far most of those people are run out of their wits already I was very well content they should run far. 75

Even where the details were not worked out, it is clear that Wentworth was guided by a plan, and the plan seems to have been based on the theories that had been formulated in Ireland both before and immediately after the Elizabethan conquest of the country. While it is possible to point to parallels between this plan and the schemes formulated by the advocates of aggressive colonization it is less easy to establish direct influences. It would, for example, be tempting to suggest that his endeavours in Ireland had been inspired by Spenser’s *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), but Wentworth never referred to the Spenser text in his correspondence. However, we can be certain that Wentworth was familiar with Spenser’s *View* because the first published edition of the text appeared only in 1633 and was dedicated to Wentworth by Sir James Ware, who had adapted the original text to seventeenth-century circumstances. Moreover, Spenser’s *View*, with but ‘a few passages excepted’, was recommended by Ware as superior to all other works that treated of the reformation of Ireland. 76

If Spenser’s *View* did indeed influence Wentworth’s thinking, he still set about educating himself on how to proceed with the reform of the country from the moment of his appointment. Already in 1633, he remarked that he was ‘yet in gathering with all possible circumspection my observations whereupon, what and when to advise a reformation’. 77 Part of what he had gathered

75 Wentworth to Laud, 8 June 1638 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 7, fo. 104).
77 Wentworth to Carlisle, 7 Oct. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 8, fos. 30–1).
was a document described as ‘A Survey of the Government of Ireland, 1 January 1631[2]’, which was a historical sketch of England’s involvement with Ireland similar to that provided in Davies’s Discovery. Another item that has survived among Wentworth’s papers is one entitled ‘The Heads of all Such Matters as I Conceive do Conduce for Advancement of the Crown’s Revenues and the Certainty and Security of the Better Subjects of Ireland’. This anonymous text, like the previous one, devoted much space to a historical narrative but employed it to demonstrate the onset of degeneracy first of the Anglo-Norman settlers and more recently of the Elizabethan settlers in Munster. In both instances degeneracy was attributed to ‘the immoderate greatness’ of those who had acquired land in Ireland and who, consequently, had enjoyed excessive authority over ‘the earth tillers’. The most recent in this catalogue of neglect were the undertakers in Munster, many of whom had acquired holdings far in excess of the recommended 12,000 acres, with the result that ‘some of the heirs of such undertakers are so degenerate as they have renounced their religion and gone to popery’. And a third text surviving among Wentworth’s papers, ‘Butt’s Discourse on the State of Ireland’, was also consistent in its arguments with the earlier theorists, and pointed to three reasons why the kingdom of Ireland remained in a ‘most deformed, desolate and miserable estate’. These were, first, ‘the intolerable, malicious instigations of . . . the Roman clergymen’, second, ‘the common envy and hatred of most all this country nobility, gentry and farmers freeholders (of the Roman succession) against all strangers in general, but more especially against them that are not of their society’, and third, ‘the privileges in all or most of the cities or towns corporate in this kingdom’ whereby foreign merchants and tradesmen were excluded. The continuation of the ‘Discourse’, which recommended that Ireland be organized on Protestant lines after the example of the United Provinces, would certainly not have met with the approval of Wentworth, because of his strong monarchical preference. However, the general diagnosis would have confirmed him in his opinion that the security of all three kingdoms, and the fortunes of the British monarchy, would only be achieved when Ireland had been thoroughly reformed through the process of plantation and resettlement.78

While this remained Wentworth’s priority throughout his governorship, he was, as was noted, forced to suspend his colonization agenda from 1637 to the end of his period of rule in Ireland because he had little choice but to work in consort with the constituent elements of the Irish political nation with a view to garnering support for King Charles, who had come into conflict with those of his Protestant subjects in Scotland who had resisted his efforts

to extend English-style discipline and liturgy over the Scottish Church. Wentworth would, in any case, have hardly been able to proceed with his plantation programme under these changed circumstances, because the court favourites whose involvement was so necessary to the success of plantation, as he had defined it, became more preoccupied with winning reputation for themselves through providing support to their king in his hour of need than with carving out estates for themselves in Ireland.

This reorientation of focus can be illustrated effectively in the case of James, marquess of Hamilton. Hamilton was a prime Scottish nobleman but one who had spent his earlier manhood years on the Continent where he obtained some military experience in the Thirty Years War, and cultivated a taste for Italian art. Soon after his return, in 1627, from his foreign adventures he devoted more of his time to the court of King Charles than to his estates in Scotland and England. During that interval he took occasional interest in Ireland because he had kinsmen who were employed there in such various capacities as planters in Ulster and archbishop of Cashel, and because Irish as well as Scottish mercenary captains looked to him as a conduit through which to channel military recruits for service in France. These connections, as well as associations with Lord Deputy Falkland, seem to have alerted him to opportunity in Ireland, and what had been originally a general interest had become a fixed purpose by 1635, possibly because he was one of the Star Chamber judges who had declared the Londonderry plantation confiscate to the crown because of the failure of the London companies to comply with their plantation conditions. After that date, as was noted, Hamilton was not only petitioning Wentworth to make an estate available to his brother in the proposed plantation of Connacht, but he secretly commissioned a private agent to conduct an appraisal of the opportunities that presented themselves in all the counties of Ireland where plantation was in prospect. Independently of that, Hamilton requisitioned a costing of the revenues being gleaned from the Londonderry plantation, and very soon he, in conjunction with the earl of Antrim, was processing a bid—to counter that of the lord deputy himself—to take the entire Londonderry plantation ‘in farm’ from the crown. At the same time, Hamilton pursued a dispute with Lord Cromwell over which of their patents from the king gave valid title to the proprietorship of Strangford Lough in north-east Ulster with an associated 6,000 acres, some of which

79 The Hamilton papers are housed at the Scottish Record Office under the designation GD 406, where there is also available a copy of Rosalind K. Marshall, ‘A Calendar of the Hamilton Archive at Lennoxlove, vol. 1, 1563–1644’ (Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh University 1970). The documents that best illustrate Hamilton’s early Irish interest and his court associations are Archbishop of Cashel to HM Commissioners, 30 May 1622 (SRO, GD 406/1/254, no. 67); Hamilton to Duke [Buckingham], 16 Mar. 1627/8 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 8,187); Charles I to Hamilton, 17 Aug. 1627 (SRO GD 406/1, no. 79); Falkland to Hamilton, 3 June 1629 (SRO GD 406/1, no. 239); Piers Crosby to Hamilton, 21 Jan. 1630/1 (SRO GD 406/1, no. 191); Sir John Hepburn to Hamilton, 23 June 1633 (SRO GD 406/1, no. 254).
required to be improved by draining, but most of which was ‘as good land as the best in this kingdom’.80

There is nothing to suggest that Wentworth favoured any of these Irish plantation schemes in which Hamilton was involved, and there is clear evidence that he was stridently opposed to some of them. However the point is that this courtier who was deeply immersed in Irish affairs down to 1637 suddenly delegated responsibility to intermediaries after the first word reached him, in December 1637, of the popular outburst in Edinburgh against the English prayer book which, in the opinion of Hamilton’s Scottish Protestant informant, contained such ‘superstitions of Popery’ that it would ‘be as easy to establish the Mass in Scotland as the king’s service book’.81 After that date the papers of the marquess are principally concerned with narrating the course of political events in all three kingdoms, but especially in Scotland, as Hamilton assumed responsibility as the king’s principal adviser on Scottish affairs and as prime intermediary between King Charles and his Scottish subjects. His Scottish involvement may account for Hamilton’s particularly rapid withdrawal from prospecting in Ireland, but most courtiers of Charles I after 1637 similarly shifted their interest from court gossip and Irish speculative adventures to Scottish, and then English, political realities.82

This withdrawal of interest meant that Wentworth had no choice but to desist from his plantation programme, but nobody accepted that he had abandoned his scheme, and those in Ireland who had considered themselves most threatened by the governor believed they had received no more than a respite which they might turn to their advantage by winning favour with the king during his time of trial. The earl of Cork, who, of the Protestants in Ireland, had suffered the greatest humiliation and loss at Wentworth’s hands, appealed to both Archbishop Laud and Secretary Cooke to help establish ‘a true and right understanding’ between himself and Wentworth and to

80 Hamilton to Lord Deputy, 7 Oct. 1635 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 246); ‘Memo of the Counties in Ireland to be Planted, and Advice on Obtaining Land there by an Inhabitant in the Area for the Marquis of Hamilton’ (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 512); list of revenues available from lands in Londonderry, drawn up for the Marquess (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 501); Archibald Stewart to Hamilton, 1 Feb. 1637/8 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 359); draft [Hamilton] to Lord Deputy (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 8381); draft [Hamilton] to Lord Cromwell (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 8377); Wentworth to Hamilton, 3 July 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 377); Lord Cromwell to Hamilton, 3 Aug. 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 384); Edward Kendall to Hamilton, 28 July 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 3853); same to same, 28 July 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 383); copy [Hamilton] to [Lord Deputy], 30 Aug. 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 30,686); copy [Hamilton] to Lord Cromwell, 4 Sept. 1637 (SRO, GD, 406/1, no. 387); the details of Hamilton’s bid, and that of rivals, for County Londonderry have been traced in Jane Ohlmeyer, ‘Stafford, the “Londonderry Business” and the New British History’, in Merritt (ed.), Political World of Thomas Wentworth, 209–29.

81 Loudoun to Hamilton, 25 Dec. 1637 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 394); Traquaire to Hamilton, 26 Feb. 1638 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 982).

‘make him [his] friend’. At the same time, Cork expressed his unqualified support for the king in his dealing with his Scottish subjects whom he described as ‘a heady, violent and distressed . . . people’ whose ‘aim’ was ‘the freeing of themselves from civil government’. In recommending that the king use his ‘power’ against them, Cork was conscious that ‘the peace of poor Ireland [was] deeply interested therein’, but it seems certain that he was also taking advantage of the opportunity that had presented itself to recover his credibility with his monarch which had been eroded by Wentworth. This desire may explain why, in 1639, he became so involved with the preparation of regiments under the command of his son Richard, Viscount Dungarvan, and his son-in-law David, earl of Barrymore, to assist the king in his second attempt to bring the Scottish Covenanters to heel by force.83

The Old English community were equally supportive of the king’s efforts to assert his authority over the recalcitrant Scots. First evidence of the support they might make available came with the offer in March 1639 of, the admittedly Protestant, Lord Dillon of Costello Gallen to raise 2,000 men who he would assemble at two months’ notice in any part of Ireland from where they might be conveyed for service ‘as His Sacredness shall think best’. Dillon’s example cannot have been lost on his Catholic kinsmen of the Old English community and it must be these that the earl of Antrim had in mind when he assured the marquess of Hamilton that he would ‘from time to time acquaint [him] with the free offers of noblemen and gentlemen of quality in [Ireland] that desire to serve His Majesty’. More tangible Old English support for the king was registered first in their willingness to concede subsidies to the crown in the Irish parliament of 1640 to meet the cost of an army that Wentworth (by then earl of Strafford) proposed to raise in Ireland to provide military support to the king against the Scots, and then by supporting the effort to raise soldiers from among their tenants to serve in the king’s Irish army. There were many reasons why the Old English should have been such enthusiastic advocates of the king’s cause; they would have known that the Scottish Covenanters were hysterically anti-Catholic, and that any concessions made to the Scots by the king would have been to the detriment of his Catholic subjects in all three kingdoms, and they would also have welcomed any opportunity to have Catholics serve under the royal ensign because this would have underlined their persistent claim that Catholics were equals with any other of the king’s subjects. Over and above such considerations was their realization that support for the crown was likely to strengthen their negotiating position with the king, and they hoped that, once victory over

83 Cork to Laud, 10 Dec. 1638 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 2, fos. 309–10); Cork to Cooke, 10 Dec. 1638 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 2, fo. 310); Cork to Goring, 10 Dec. 1638 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 2, fo. 309); John Walley to Cork, 21 Apr. 1639 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 20, no. 11); same to same, 20 June 1639 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 20, no. 68); Barrymore to Wentworth, 26 May 1639, in Grosart (ed.), Lismore Papers, 2nd ser., iv. 37–9.
the Scots had been achieved, their record of service would provide powerful endorsement to their demand that the king should live up to his promise relating to land title. To this extent the issue of plantation was never far from their minds and, while supporting the call for subsidies and military support, the Old English members of parliament, in concert with some Protestant groups, succeeded, during the first session of the 1640 parliament, in sidetracking proposed legislation which, if passed, would have provided a parliamentary endorsement to the claim which the crown had established to the land of Connacht and Ormond.84

The Scots, the third major political group in Ireland, had less reason to be satisfied with the course of events, since they were the most recent arrivals and those with the least influence in the country. We noted, in Chapter 4, how the leaders of the Scottish settler community had striven, from the moment of their arrival in Ireland, to maintain unity among their ranks, even when they had different religious allegiances, and it was evident from the outset of the disturbances in Scotland that the religious issues which had provoked such turbulence in Scotland would create divisions also within the ranks of the Scottish community in Ireland. Those Scots in Ireland who had always been reliant on the favour of the crown could not wait for the problem to go away, and to this end favoured the hard line that was being taken by the king against their own countrymen and kinsmen. Lady Lucy Hamilton, sister to James, earl of Abercorn, remarked in February 1639 that ‘little else’ was being spoken of in Ireland ‘but only our Skots covinentours and ther prosidings’, and she supported the idea, which, she said, had wide currency in Ireland, that the king should use the ‘strong hand’ against them, although she feared that their disturbances would lead ‘to their own ruin in the end’.

A similar opinion was held by Marion McClelland, wife to Lord Robert Maxwell, who managed their joint property in Scotland, while her husband, when not canvassing favours at court, was looking after their estates and children in Ireland. She became conscious, at the outset, that Covenantant Scotland presented ‘much troubles . . . to them that their husbands is absent’ because the Covenant leaders sought after ‘the cause’ of her husband’s being away and attributed it ‘to ane sinisterous source’. In order to prevent their Scottish property being declared forfeit to the Covenantant cause, Marion felt obliged to attend most of their ‘committees’, but as Maxwell’s absence persisted it was thought advisable that he should return to attend at the next Scottish parliament and to explain his behaviour to the Covenanters, and especially to Lord Louden, to clear himself of the suspicion of being a royalist and a Catholic.85

84 Lord Dillon to Antrim, 8 Mar. 1638/9 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 1152); Antrim to Hamilton, 17 Mar. 1638/9 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 1153); Clarke, The Old English, 127–32.
85 Lady Lucy Hamilton to Sir John Maxwell of Pollok, 6 Feb. 1639, in Fraser (ed.), Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok, ii. 268; Marion McClelland to John Maxwell of Miltown, 29 Oct. 1640 (SRO, RH
Those Scots who we have come to identify as mere adventurers could also see that their prospects were blighted by developments in their home kingdom, and they too hoped for decisive royal action that would establish customary order. The earl of Nithesdale was, in 1637, finally ‘confident to make good benefit by what [he] had in hand’ in Ireland, or at least to ‘make some bargain’ at court for what was in prospect there, but by November 1639 even his optimism had faded and he recognized that his only escape from ‘imminent ruin’ lay in the assignment of some of his Scottish property to his kinsman and agent Sir John Maxwell of Pollok. Nithesdale’s problem, besides his indebtedness, was that as a courtier and a ‘Papist’ he could expect nothing but hostility from ‘the great rulers of that state for the present’, so in May 1638 he sent urgent instructions to the loyal Sir John to raise money from Nithesdale’s ‘friends and tenants’ so that Maxwell could furnish himself with ‘seamlie apparel and good nags’ and become Nithesdale’s proxy in attending upon the ‘Lord Marquese’ with whom he himself was ‘in good terms and . . . ready to give proufe of dutie to him, as occasion sall offer’. At that point, as the Marquess of Hamilton was on his way to negotiate with the Covenanters, Nithesdale considered ‘there was nothing but quietness to be thought on’, but he too, like Hamilton, soon came to see that ‘except by force’ the king’s authority over the Covenanters would never be restored.86

Another who fits the description of Scottish adventurer in Ireland was Randal Mac Donnell, earl of Antrim. He differed from Nithesdale in that he was of highland rather than lowland stock, and the principal estates he had inherited were in Ireland rather than in Scotland where most of his ancestral lands had fallen to the Campbells of Argyll. Therefore, Antrim’s ambition was to extend his holdings from Ireland into Scotland rather than, as in the case of Nithesdale, from Scotland into Ireland. In the years preceding the disturbances in Scotland, Antrim had been actively engaged with establishing a colony of Scottish settlers along the coastline of County Antrim with view to compensating himself for his Scottish losses and providing a home for himself and some of his Scottish retainers. However, like Nithesdale, he was a courtier (married to the widow of the duke of Buckingham), he cultivated the favour of the marquess of Hamilton, he was a Catholic, and he was persistently in debt. Again, like Nithesdale, he wanted a quick end to the disturbances in Scotland, but he was more decidedly, and more opportunistically, in favour of the crown taking a strong line against the Covenanters, knowing that this

86 Nithesdale to Sir John Maxwell of Pollok, 3 Aug. 1637 (Strathclyde RO, T-PM 113/274); same to same, 28 Oct. 1637 (Strathclyde RO, T-PM 115/631); same to same, 17 Nov. 1639, Fraser (ed.), Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok, ii. 269–70; [Hamilton] to Laud, 29 June 1638 [SRO, GD 406/1, no. 555]; Scally, ‘Counsel in Crisis’.
would present him with a pretext to attack the forces of his old adversary, the earl of Argyll, in the rear, and ‘recover me Kintire and my ancient right to the Iyles’. To this extent he could interpret the course of events in Scotland as ‘an Act of God to restore [him] to [his] former inheritance’, and the only negative consequence he could foresee was that, with the outbreak of war, Hamilton would not take up the opportunity available to him to ‘confidently go forward with the bargain’ of the lands of the London companies, and might thus lose the opportunity to become Antrim’s neighbour in Ulster.87

While these Scottish witnesses, all of them with experience in Ireland, were supportive of the action being taken by the king, and the marquess of Hamilton, to deal with the problems in Scotland, that does not mean that they also supported the steps taken by the governor in Ireland to prevent the disturbances in Scotland provoking a crisis also in Ireland. On the contrary, most of these individuals, and the Scottish population in Ireland generally, became increasingly alienated from the government of Wentworth. The governor, as was noted, had always been suspicious of the Scottish presence in Ulster, and developments in Scotland provided him with the opportunity to introduce what he considered to be proper order into the province, most especially since many Scottish clergy had been active in promoting Calvinist practice and organization in the areas where Scottish settlement was thick on the ground. Wentworth’s most flagrant measure to control this situation was his requirement that all Scots in Ulster over the age of 16 should abjure the ‘abominable covenant’ that had been subscribed to by their kin in Scotland, and this infamous Black Oath was enforced by the army, which Wentworth had stationed in north-east Ulster through the summer of 1639 as a further guarantee against Ulster being drawn into the ambit of Scottish politics. The governor’s second stratagem for controlling the province, religiously as well as politically, concerned the choice of clergy to serve in Ulster diocese. He had, ever since his arrival in Ireland, been choosing senior clergy on whose orthodoxy he could count as vacancies occurred in Ulster, and his most notable success had been the appointment of John Bramhall to serve as bishop of Derry. Some of these strategic choices had been Scotsmen, and more Scotsmen, whose ecclesiastical priorities coincided with those of Wentworth, became available for appointment to Ulster posts as they were being deprived of their livings in Scotland by the Covenanterers because of their loyalty to the king and Archbishop Laud. This pattern was pursued by Wentworth so persistently that, in 1641, the Committee of Estates of Scotland considered it necessary to request the return of named ‘incendiaries of the Scots nation in Ireland’ to be tried before the Scottish parliament either

87 Jane Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The Career of Randal Mac Donnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609–82 (Cambridge, 1993), esp. pp. 18–48; Antrim to [Hamilton], 11 June 1638 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 1156); same to [same], 13 Oct. 1638 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 653); same to [same], 14 Jan. 1638/9 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 652);
because of the works they had composed in favour of episcopacy or because of the moral support they had provided to Strafford or Archbishop Laud.88

The immediate consequence of Wentworth’s actions was to exacerbate tensions over religious issues among the Scottish settler community that had previously been masked, and the emerging divisions weakened the patriarchal authority that Scottish landowners had previously enjoyed. The early evidence of communal polarization over religious issues was the formation of Puritan conventicles, which included English as well as Scottish Protestants, one of which, in the house of Sir John Clotworthy, was visited by John Winthrop, Jr., on his visit to Ireland in 1635 seeking kindred spirits to settle in New England. This particular recruitment led to some discontented Ulster Protestants setting sail for New England only to find refuge in Scotland after they had been compelled by a storm, which they interpreted as divinely ordained, to abandon their westward voyage.89 Archbishop Laud saw nothing providential in their diversion to Scotland and believed that the resort there of the ‘ringleaders’ of nonconformity in Ulster had been both deliberate and unfortunate since Scotland had its surfeit of such people already. However Bramhall, and presumably Wentworth, was relieved to see them go anywhere out of Ulster, and he expected that the Church there ‘would quickly purge herself of such peccant humours’ if others did not travel over from Scotland to stir up fresh trouble in Ulster. In this Bramhall was correct, but his hopeful prediction took no account of the wishes of British proprietors in Ulster or of the painful efforts they had been making over the years to settle their lands with appropriate tenants. Neither were the interests of the planters of any consequence to Wentworth, and the negative impact of Wentworth’s actions on settlement in Ulster was reported on graphically by the earl of Antrim. Lowland Scots who had been settled by him on his Antrim estates and who were nonconformist were, he reported in 1639, abandoning their farms and flocking ‘over daily [to Scotland] fearing the High Commission Court’. This still left ‘many’ settlers on his lands, but these, he believed, ‘would never join willingly against their nation’, and he could see no prospect of finding recruits for a military expedition into Scotland except among his ‘tenants’—presumably Catholic highlanders—who promised to help him recover his ancestral lands taken from him by Argyll.90


90 Bramhall to Laud, n.d. (Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 14959); Laud to Bramhall, 27 June 1637, HMC Hastings MSS, iv. 75; Antrim to [Hamilton], 14 Jan. 1638/9 (SRO, GD 406/1, no. 652).
If Antrim, a Catholic and one who stood to gain personally from war against the Covenanters, had reservations over the policies of Wentworth, we can imagine the outrage of Protestants whose painful efforts to settle their estates with British Protestants were being undone by the governor’s onslaught against nonconformism. These Protestant proprietors, and their tenants, were being further impoverished, and therefore discouraged, by the billeting of soldiers on their property first, in the summer of 1639, when Wentworth wished to apply the Black Oath and again in the summer of 1640, when the new Irish army, which Wentworth (now earl of Strafford) wished to make available to the king to use against the Scots, was stationed initially in the vicinity of Carrickfergus, awaiting embarkation; later, when embarkation was deferred, the army was billeted throughout eastern and central Ulster. Most references to this force in the historical literature come from the boasts of the senior officers concerning the high morale of the troops and their readiness for battle, but we hear quite a different story both from those who had responsibility for supply and from those who eventually had to entertain the troops. Sir Christopher Wandesforde, who deputized for Strafford as head of government in Ireland, was well aware that the money available to him was insufficient to pay the standing army much less the augmented force, and he quickly became aware that the stratagem of putting the soldiers in field quarters was impossible because no tents were available. Therefore, ultimately, the officers were forced to billet their troops throughout Ulster, without any money to compensate their hosts. The result was as one would expect. Four of the officers followed instructions and, although penniless, marched with their companies to the town of Armagh where the townsmen were agreeable in principle to accept the soldiers for 2 shillings a week, but would not allow them to enter unless they had money in hand. The officers, who were at their ‘wits end’ to keep the soldiers in ‘good order’, were happy to accept a proposal from Chichester’s nephew Sir Faithful Fortescue, ‘one of the chief’ in the area, that he would act as ‘paymaster out of his own purse’ on condition that he would enjoy the next subsidy raised from the county. No such solution seems to have been proposed for Londonderry where the citizenry made it clear that they could not accommodate a further 500 soldiers, in addition to ‘two old companies’ already stationed there, and they called for a reduction in the number of troops being billeted as well as the use of martial law to keep them in order. This tension between soldier and community got worse as the date of the disembarkation of the soldiers for Scotland was repeatedly deferred, until the king, under pressure from the English parliament, agreed, in May 1641, to disband the force. Significantly, one of the reasons given for the disbandment was ‘to prevent the disorders which the soldiers ... might commit’.91

91 William St Leger to Ormond, 21 July 1640 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Carte MS 1, fo. 214); same to same, 17 Aug. 1640 (Carte MS 1, fos. 231–2); Sir Christopher Wandesforde to Sir George
The communal discontent among the Protestant community of Ulster might have been containable if the army in question had been to provide for their defence or if they had sympathized with the purpose which it was intended to serve. For most, however, it was no more than an army of oppression, and they had reason to identify Strafford as the ultimate source of the oppression, not only because of his obsession with the Scottish Covenanters and Protestant nonconformism, but because he too was considered responsible for the winding up, in 1639, of the Londonderry Company and the recall of all the company lands into the king’s hands to be administered by a commission headed by Bishop Bramhall. Those who had most reason to be aggrieved over this outcome were the London companies, who not only lost title to their estates, after a Star Chamber hearing of 1635, but were also fined £70,000 for their failure to comply fully with the plantation conditions. However the decision also affected all Ulster Protestant landowners, including the firebrand John Clotworthy, who valued the fifty-five years outstanding on his sixty-one years’ lease of the proportion of the Drapers Company at £6,000. The initial hope of tenants like Clotworthy, when the Star Chamber case had gone against the London companies in 1635, was that they would not be disturbed since they could not be held responsible for the breaches of the plantation conditions, and to strengthen their case they took credit for bringing ‘divers thousands of British families and artificers to reside upon those lands’, and for ‘suffering them to abide in the same for certain years without paying any rents’. To further assure their continued tenure, Lord Kirkcudbright and Sir John Clotworthy, ‘on behalf of farmers, freeholders and other lessees’ on the Londonderry plantation, had petitioned the king to allow them to take the county to farm. Neither this, nor any of three other bids—including, as was noted, one each from Wentworth and the marquess of Hamilton—was accepted by the king, and, worse still, in 1639 the Commissioners declared all company leases void, and assigned the lands ‘to other persons of mean condition’ without giving any compensation to the existing occupiers. The anger of the Ulster Protestants over this summary dispossession contributed to the resolution of the Irish parliament of 1640 which complained of ‘the extreme cruel usage of the commissioners’ which, it was alleged, had led to the impoverishment and near destruction ‘of the first and most useful plantation in the large province of Ulster’. The real target of the attack was not, as it transpired, the commissioners, who had been responsible for the removal of the sitting tenants, but rather Strafford who, ironically, had energetically opposed the cancellation of existing leases

Radeliffe, 28 June 1640 (Oxford, Bodleian Library Add. MS C286, fo. 30); same to Strafford, 28 July 1640 (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fo. 31); Henry Butler et al. to Ormond, 23 Apr. 1641 (Carte MS 1, fo. 373); John Vaughan and Council of Londonderry to Ormond, 6 Apr. 1641 (Carte MS 1, fo. 367); Royal Warrant to Ormond, 8 May 1641, received 14 May 1641 (Carte MS 1, fo. 381); Kevin Forkan, ‘Strafford’s Irish Army, 1640–41’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1999).
even though he coveted the plantation for himself. This, however, is not as it was seen by his contemporaries, and historians are agreed that this sequence of events, which so angered the Protestant settler population of Ulster, effectively sealed Strafford’s fate.92

5.4. CONCLUSION

The downfall, and the ultimate execution, of Strafford is a tragic story that has been narrated repeatedly and it is not my intention to provide readers with a confirmation of what they already know.93 The purpose of this chapter has been to demonstrate, rather, how the plantation issue remained central to Irish—and indeed British—politics throughout the entire period 1622–41, until differences over plantation policy brought about the downfall of its most potent advocate, who was destroyed not by the Catholics who would have become the victims of his plantation policy but by Protestants in Ireland who resented Strafford’s interference in what they perceived as their exclusive domain.

Protestant settlers in Ireland, and the leaders of the Old English community, as was evident from their testimony to the 1622 commissioners, approved of most of the plantations that had been proceeded with in Ireland and the only policy difference that then emerged was that the Old English, and those among the servitors who identified with the reform objectives of Cranfield, supported the idea of Ireland accommodating some plantations and wished to bring those that had already been introduced to a perfect condition before they experimented with any others. On the other hand most Protestant servitors and planters already in Ireland wished to proceed with a continuing programme of plantation to the point where Ireland would no longer be a country where plantations existed but one that had been so engrossed by plantations that it had become a plantation society.94 The supporters of this

92 John Bankes to Bramhall, 30 Mar. 1639 (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Hastings MS HA 13,925); ‘Propositions Made by Lord Kirkcudbright and Sir John Clotworthy’ (Oxford, New Bodleian Library, Bankes Papers, Bundle 6, no. 6, fos. 48–50); petition of Ralph Freeman, John Stone, and Tristram Beresford to Commons, undated, 1640 (New Bodleian, Bankes Papers, no. 12); ‘How Sir John Clothworthy Did and Doth Hold his Land in County Londonderry’, undated (New Bodleian, Bankes Papers, no. 15b); Ironmongers’ Company, ‘Evidence for the Case of Londonderry’ (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,375, fos. 165–8); ‘The Humble Remonstrance of the Knights . . . in the Commons House of Ireland. . . 1640’ (Bodleian, Rawlinson MS A237, fos. 4–5); Ohlmeyer, ‘Strafford, the “Londonderry Business”, and the New British History’; Jane Ohlmeyer has done more than anybody else to disentangle the story of the ‘Londonderry Business’, but she was not aware that her conclusions are confirmed by the information contained in the papers of Bankes, who was the king’s legal representative in the matter.


94 This distinction between a society with plantations and a plantation society is an adaptation of the distinction between a society with markets and a market society developed in Karl Polanyi, The
latter position were also reformers, according to their own lights, and they were guided by Spenser’s dictat that Ireland would never be securely under crown control, and would never become Protestant, until every indigenous lordship in the country had been transformed through a process of plantation. This process, as they saw it, would introduce Protestant proprietors into areas that had previously been dominated by Catholic influence, and these, in turn, would establish an enterprising Protestant settler community on their estates, and would uphold the position of the Protestant clergy who would be appointed by the government. It was clear that the different understandings over what was the best model of plantation that had been debated when plans were set in place for plantations in Munster and Ulster still prevailed. However, the failure of the undertakers in Ulster to meet their obligations undermined the credibility of the classical model while, at the same time, the servitors extolled the virtues of the Wexford plantation as proof of their supposition that servitors, with limited resources but with knowledge of Ireland and a commitment to its welfare, ultimately made the best planters.

As the servitors sought to convince the authorities in England of the need for continuing with plantations after their preferred design, they did win support from the more stridently Protestant members of the English political nation, but they also aroused the cupidity of senior courtiers who came to recognize the possibility of using the resources of Ireland for their own enrichment. The duke of Buckingham, the earl of Carlisle, and Thomas, Viscount Wentworth, were, as we saw, the most senior of those who became actively involved in the pursuit of Irish land and resources, but our attention has been drawn to a plethora of senior courtiers who became seriously interested in the acquisition of Irish estates. To these were added a multitude of impecunious fortune hunters, exemplified by Robert Maxwell, earl of Nithsdale, whose aspiration was not to establish a plantation in Ireland, for which Nithsdale was unqualified both on account of his straitened circumstances and because he was a Catholic, but to batten on those who had become planters by exposing them to fines or dispossession on the grounds that they had not fully complied with the conditions of plantation.

This development, as we saw, completely altered the meaning and purpose of plantation in Ireland, and introduced the concept of replantation to the point where no landowners in Ireland, whether Catholic or Protestant, Gaelic or Old English, Scottish or English, could feel secure in their estates. Wentworth, who by any standard was both a conscientious planter, and a conscientious promoter of plantations, was more alert than most to these developments and the possibilities they presented to himself, to his king, and to those who happened to be in favour with king and governor. Therefore while it has been possible to show how Wentworth’s ideas and policies meshed
with the succession of English policy-makers who had sought to reform and make their fortunes in Ireland since the 1580s, I have demonstrated also that many of those already in Ireland were so fixed to their own principles and ambitions that they could not see, until it was too late, how Wentworth’s agenda differed from their own. The first to receive a rude awakening were the Catholic landowners, who believed that they had in Wentworth a champion who would bring an end to the cycle of plantation that threatened their destruction, until they became disenchanted to the point where, against their better judgement, they combined with their avowed Protestant enemies to effect his downfall. Even as they presented evidence against Strafford they did not fully comprehend the cataclysm that he had in mind for them. On the other hand, servitors in Ireland fully understood the threat that Wentworth’s investigation of lay impropriety of church land posed for them, but as his attitude towards Catholic landowners unfolded they took assurance that the governor was being guided by the policy of continuing plantation which they had so long espoused. The servitors were correct in this conclusion, and it was only belatedly that they came to appreciate that the beneficiaries of the new phase of plantation were not going to be themselves, but rather a new wave of English planters that he hoped to attract to the country. Eventually even Wentworth himself was deceived by his own policies and rhetoric, because his identifying Ireland as a place of financial and social opportunity for the venturesome drew the attention not only of those English supporters of the king whom he wished to have as proprietors in Ireland, but yet another group of avaricious Scottish speculators—and eventually the king himself—who came to think of Ireland as a place that would provide rich pickings for the destitute rather than as a kingdom in need of reform that would enable it to achieve its full potential. The fact that observers of what was happening in Ireland could reach this conclusion so readily, and could set about undermining those who had succeeded in Ireland, is explained largely by the achievements of those British who had already made their fortunes when Wentworth was appointed to govern the country.
CHAPTER SIX

The British Presence in Wentworth’s Ireland

6.1. THE ESTABLISHMENT

British society in Ireland of the mid-seventeenth century, like English society there of the late sixteenth century, was dominated by those who held positions under the crown in the administration, the army, and the Church. The prolonged years of peace, which followed the cessation of hostilities in 1603, and which had been threatened only by the O’Doherty revolt of 1608 and by occasional threats of renewed war with Spain, gave an appearance of security to Ireland with the result that opportunities which arose there were more eagerly taken up in the seventeenth than in the previous century. This meant that the frequently articulated demand of the late sixteenth century, that positions in the gift of the crown should be reserved for people subscribing to the oath of supremacy, was insisted upon even more emphatically. The consequence of the strict enforcement of the law was that, at the official level, ‘British Ireland’ became very much ‘English Ireland’, with practically all senior positions held by English-born people (or their Irish-born children), with a few appointments going to Scottish favourites, and so few going to people of Irish lineage that the elevation of James Ussher, a committed Protestant of Old English ancestry, to the episcopacy was described approvingly by the commissioners of 1622 as an ‘advancement’ with which ‘the Papists themselves [were] well pleased’.¹

The day-to-day activities of the administration in Ireland during the early seventeenth century are difficult to chart because of the destruction of its records when the Dublin Four Courts was set on fire in 1622. However, it is clear from those sources which have survived that English legal procedures were the model for those in Ireland even if practice lagged behind that in England. At local and provincial level leet and baronial courts were established, as were the courts of the provincial presidencies of Munster and Connacht, while itinerant circuits of assize encompassed the entire country from the onset of peaceful conditions.² Most of the senior legal officers were

¹ Report of the 1622 commission (BL, Add. MS 4,756, fo. 64).
² On the creation of the context within which English common law could function in all parts of Ireland see Hans S. Pawlisch, Sir John Davies and the Conquest of Ireland: A Study in Legal Imperialism (Cambridge, 1985); the movements of circuits of assize, but not their proceedings, can be traced in
English born, and some of them accepted the rapid elevation to positions of influence which came with service in Ireland in the hope that it would lead ultimately to preferment in England. Even those, such as Sir John Davies and Sir Robert Jacob, who aspired to return to England neglected no opportunity to stake a claim to Irish land in any of the several plantations that were implemented, or contemplated, during their tour of duty. The lesser and medium-range legal officers were also, for the most part, English born or the children of English servitors but they saw their career prospects primarily in Irish terms. They were also notoriously corrupt, especially when it came to dealing with transactions concerning Irish land. However they considered that their actions were justified, both because senior officials in Ireland and England were frequently complicit in their sharp practices, and also because it was generally considered in Protestant circles that any measures which would lead to a reduction in the landholding, and hence the social influence, of Catholics were morally permissible.3

This, as well as what has been said in previous chapters, will make it clear that the state in Ireland of the first half of the seventeenth century stood aloof from the society it supposedly served to the extent that it intervened persistently to advance a policy of social innovation which was largely of its own creation. It enjoyed an independence that would have been impossible for any other state in Europe during peacetime for two reasons. First, as Joseph McLaughlin has calculated for the years 1604–19, treasure from England covered well over half the cost of governing Ireland, and accounted for 14.6 per cent of total English state expenditure during the years 1603–8. The second reason why government officials in Ireland could proceed with scant regard for local wishes was that the decisions of the administration did not, as was the case in England, require the co-operation of the principal landowners in the provinces to enforce them. Instead decisions were implemented by a plethora of officials, most of them Englishmen, ranging from sheriffs and criers to provosts martial with their assistants, who could rely ultimately on posses of soldiers to assist them. Soldiers were readily available to these minor officials because, from the early years of the seventeenth century, garrisons and petty wards had been stationed strategically throughout the country, much as Edmund Spenser would have wished.4

The extent to which this mode of government derived from sixteenth-century roots was also symbolized by the continued presence in the administration throughout the first half of the seventeenth century of the descendants of Archbishops Lotholus and Jones who had played such a prominent role in directing government policy for Ireland during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.5 The expansion of English legal administration into all provinces of the country resulted in an increased demand for English trained lawyers, both as judges and to plead before the courts, because, until 1628, Irish Catholic lawyers who had been trained at the English Inns of Court were technically precluded from pleading before the Irish bar because of their general unwillingness to take the oath of supremacy.6 This increase in the number of lawyers in government service was the most evident augmentation to the civil administration in the country at the outset of the seventeenth century, but a more oblique one was the re-employment of captains in the army, who had been demobilized after the conclusion of the Nine Years War, in charge of the petty wards which, as was noted, were erected throughout Ireland during the governorship of Sir Arthur Chichester. This redeployment gave the lie to the aphorism that ‘soldiers in peace are like chimneys in summer’, since, as Joseph McLaughlin, has made clear, most of the officers who were demobilized in 1604 became pensioners, and many were subsequently re-employed as governors of forts. This development was commented upon in 1612 by Sir Robert Jacob who, regretting the reduction of the army ‘to so small a proportion as it was not able to do any good if occasion should require it’, pointed out that the exercise had resulted in scant saving because the cost of maintaining wards and paying pensions to the disbanded officers amounted to an annual charge of £10,000, while £20,000 was still required to pay the horse and foot who remained in employment. Jacob complained that too few of the disbanded soldiers ‘had been planted . . . and rewarded with escheated lands’, but it seems that many of the common soldiers who had served in wartime under the pensioned officers being placed in charge of wards, were, in practice, settled by them as tenants on the lands attached to each ward once the commanders negotiated a lease of those lands as personal estates from the crown. Moreover, since many of these petty wards were built in the midst of Gaelic and Gaelicized areas which, with the passage of time, were exposed to plantation, many soldiers became tenants on the estates acquired by their former army captains once

5 For the Jones and Lotholus family members in government service see James L. J. Hughes (ed.), Patentee Officers in Ireland, 1173–1826 (Dublin, 1960), 72–3, 81–2.
6 Matters improved for Catholic lawyers in 1628 under the terms of the Graces, but it is probable that, at this time, Catholics were never entirely debarred from practice before the courts; see Ohlmeyer, ‘Records of the Irish Court of Chancery’.
these negotiated further grants of crown land as these plantations were proceeded with. Thus, during the 1610s and the 1620s, when England was in the throes of recession, Ireland became a land of opportunity, with those most likely to succeed being people who had had previous employment there in a civil or military capacity.7

Another feature of the administration of Ireland was the extent to which the military arm of the state became a normal part of the civil administration, despite being maintained from a separate budget. Officers, and the soldiers at their command, were employed not only to maintain order and execute the decisions of the courts but even to collect fines, and they came to be perceived as part of the ordinary administration to the point where extra soldiers had to be recruited, and paid for, whenever military engagement was in prospect. This was already apparent at the time of the O’Doherty revolt in 1608, but thirty years later when Thomas Wentworth contemplated intervention on the king’s behalf against his recalcitrant Scottish subjects he was forced to mobilize a completely new army of 8,000 men because the standing army would not have been up to the task. This was not at all surprising because the fighting potential of the army in Ireland declined with each passing year as the soldiers and their officers who remained in post became older and their arms became ever more rusty.8 Joseph McLaughlin demonstrates that the insufficiency of the army as a military force was apparent well before 1619, but it became even worse after that date when the government in Dublin sought to comply with English concerns over expenditure on Ireland, not by decreasing the number of people in the employ of the government, but rather by permitting the payment due to the army to accumulate as arrears. The financial reality of what had occurred, with the Irish state becoming effectively bankrupt, was noted by the appalled commissioners of 1622, who also took cognizance of the effect that the continuing defaults in pay had had on the soldiers. The ‘want of pay’, they proclaimed, ‘maketh soldiers disable[d] both in their bodies and courages, and drives them to make base shifts to the corruption of discipline; besides long settling in one place makes them think too much of home; and to remove them from one garrison to another is impossible, by reason of their miserable condition for want of pay’. It was also clear to the commissioners ‘that some soldiers [were] placed on their captains’ lands; and that in diverse garrisons some others [were] married and settled’, while the commissioners had received complaints from cities and towns ‘that many of some companies remaining in the said towns

8 Kevin Forkan, ‘Strafford’s Irish Army, 1640–1’ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1999); on the arms and munitions available to the army in Ireland see ‘A Brief Abstract of All the Brass and Iron Ordnance, 1 July 1622’ (NLI MS 8,013 viii).
were] housekeepers, tradesmen, and mechanical men . . . [and] do keep victualling houses'.

Although inadequate as a fighting force, the army did fulfil an important policing function, while the soldiers in the ranks provided an immediate supply of English tenants for plantation estates, especially for those acquired by military servitors. More importantly, the pay which went to those officers and pensioners who succeeded in acquiring plantation land enabled men of limited means to develop their properties, while, to use the phrase as well as the insight of Joseph McLaughlin, the construction of forts, which were then leased to officer landowners in newly planted areas, became ‘part of a state funded scheme of planting a new landed aristocracy’. Moreover the fact that support of officials was vital to the success of the military servitors in the scramble for plantation land bound the two groups together in a shared corruption, and their relationships were frequently further cemented by marriage alliances. This coalition of interests, which was rapidly formed during the years (1605–15) when Sir Arthur Chichester was at the helm, was consolidated (1616–22) when Sir Oliver St John served as governor, and was disturbed during the deputyship of Viscount Falkland (1622–9) only when personality differences occurred between the principals of the patronage networks that had emerged. These fault lines could, in turn, be frequently traced to factional differences at the English court.

What occurred during these years of peace in the seventeenth century was, in many respects, the fulfilment of the dreams and expectations of the servitors of the sixteenth century, and goes a long way to explaining why servitors frequently became the most effective planters. Their success in acquiring and developing land, and the dedication of these new proprietors to stripping their lands of their natural assets, while simultaneously increasing their income from rents, resulted ultimately in an increasing ability of the government of Ireland to meet its own costs through an increase in crown income from Ireland. This was registered first in a remarkable increase in customs revenue, especially from exported goods, and later again from the subsidies paid initially by Catholic landowners under the terms of the Graces of 1628, and then by all landowners through the subsidies sanctioned by Wentworth’s parliaments of 1634 and 1640–1. It was expected initially that Wentworth, who was appointed governor in 1633, would further increase crown revenue

9 ‘The army estimates of arrears’ (NLI, MS 8,013 i); ‘A Brief Declaration of the State of His Majesty’s Debts in Ireland at Michaelmas 1622’ (NLI, MS 8,013 v); report of the commissioners of 1622 (BL, Add. MS 4,756, fos. 33r, 34r); Propositions Concerning the Army’, 20 June 1622 (NLI MS 8,014 (i)).

10 McLaughlin, ‘The Irish Leviathan’, 280; Treadwell, Buckingham and Ireland; see above, pp. 243–75.

through curbing the malfeasance of the emerging Protestant elite, but while he did bring the glaring miscreants to book, his ultimate purpose, as was noted in the previous chapter, was to draw some of the spoils to himself, to the king, and to those such as Christopher Wandesforde who, having come with Wentworth to Ireland, became substantial landowners there within a few short years of their arrival. Thus, as Wentworth and his clients also established a stake in the country, we can conclude that landownership was almost universal among those holding civil or military office in Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century, and their common interest in the acquisition and the development of estates provided these two constituent elements of the ruling group in Ireland with a shared purpose which was possibly as important as the ethnic, religious, and political considerations that united them against the rival Catholic elite.

The third element of the establishment was those appointed to ecclesiastical office, and these came, over the passage of time, to be the uneasy partner within this triple alliance. The churchmen, at the outset of King James’s reign, were, as they had been in that of Queen Elizabeth, heavily reliant upon the support of the administration in Dublin. The endurance, until 1619, of Thomas Jones as archbishop of Dublin symbolized this continuity with the past. Churchmen were also satisfied with the special provision that was made for them in the various plantations that were implemented, especially in Ulster, and they consistently supported the tough line against recusants pursued by Chichester and Davies in Dublin. Clergy were also readily integrated into the establishment because many of them owed their appointments to particular Protestant landowners who, in the early years of the seventeenth century, exerted significant influence over the choice of clergy who would serve in the localities they had come to control. This process of selection resulted in the regional pattern of appointment that has been discerned by Alan Ford. He has shown that livings in Leinster went generally to graduates of Trinity College, Dublin; those in Munster went regularly to Englishmen who had previous links with Protestant landowners there; most benefices in Ulster were granted either to Scots or to English depending on the nationality of the Protestant proprietors in the areas to which appointment was being made; and in Connacht, where there were few Protestant landowners, only a few Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen were appointed to church livings while most positions were allowed to remain vacant.

This cosy arrangement did result in the early absorption of the clergy into the emerging Protestant establishment, but it also contained material for future discord. The essential problem was that during the early years of the seventeenth century many Protestant landowners succeeded in persuading

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12 See above, pp. 165–87.
13 Alan Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590–1641 (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 63–97.
senior clergy, who were their own relatives, or otherwise dependent upon them, to assign them long leases of church lands at low rents. The result was that the rental incomes from church land available to later incumbents frequently bore no relationship to the true worth of the property. This chronic problem of lay improprioryship occasioned future tension between Protestant landowners and their clergy, and it is not at all surprising that so many clergy abandoned their erstwhile patrons and sided with Lord Deputy Wentworth once he, assisted by Bishop Bramhall of Derry, became a champion of the cause of the clergy against Protestant landowners.14

Another matter which provoked tension between Protestant clergy and laity was that of recusancy fines. In a country where most subjects were Catholic but where the official religion of the jurisdiction was Protestant, the imposition of fines upon recusants for their failure to attend at Protestant service was the coercive instrument most immediately available to enforce conformity. It was also advantageous because if fines failed to bring people to church they would, at least, become a considerable source of revenue. The collection of these fines fell to minor officials, backed by the soldiers, but both possible benefits from the recusancy legislation were frustrated because sheriffs and other minor officials accepted bribes from Catholic landowners and merchants, leaving only the poor to choose between attending church or going to gaol because of their inability to pay the fine. This was criticized from an early stage, not only because of the glaring fraud but because of the ‘stain of toleration’ associated with the acceptance of the bribes.15 Further abuses concerning recusancy fines were unearthed by the commissioners of 1622, but it was then no longer expedient for the government in England, because of issues of foreign policy, to impose the more severe penalties upon the leaders of the Catholic community, who were also those most able to pay the fine for non-attendance.16 Differences between Protestant laity and clergy over the question of recusancy fines also arose because some officials aspired to use income from the fines to pay the arrears due to the army, rather than, as previously, to assist church-building and charitable work. These difficulties were overcome and some degree of unity within the ranks of Protestants was restored only when all were outraged because, under the terms of the Graces, the crown decided to suspend the collection of recusancy fines in return for the payments to the crown promised by Catholic landowners. Even without this partial resolution of their differences all three elements within the Protestant elite—the administrators, the army officers, and the churchmen—were bound together by their common interest in land, by their concern to

14 See above, pp. 275–98.
16 ‘Propositions for the Redress of Recusants’ (NLI, MS 8,014 i); report of the commissioners of 1622 (BL, MS 4,756, fos. 62r–v); see above pp. 243–58.
extend Protestant proprietorship through plantation, and by their matrimo-
nial interconnections, and it is these links which justify us in considering all
three together as the establishment.

6.2. BRITISH SETTLEMENT IN IRELAND: EVIDENCE FROM THE
ESTATE RECORDS

This conclusion means that if anything of the British presence in seventeenth-
century Ireland is to be understood we must look to the land which upholders
of the British interest owned, and the use to which it was put by them. The
best potential sources of information on British settlement in Ireland are
therefore the estate records which were compiled by a significant number of
landowners in the country—natives as well as newcomers—from the outset
of the seventeenth century. However the disturbed history of Ireland through
the centuries has meant that most of such records have perished with the
estate houses to which they belonged, and those that have survived are not
necessarily typical of the genre.

The most comprehensive estate record from the seventeenth century that
is extant concerns the property of Richard Boyle, first earl of Cork, which
surpasses in order and detail the records for the Ormond estates which cover
a longer chronological span. The Boyle estate cannot be considered typical,
because it had the reputation, even in the seventeenth century, of being the
most extensive, the most efficiently managed, and the most profitable plan-
tation in Ireland. Cork’s property was unusual also in the density of the
Protestant settlement that had been established on his more attractively
located and better-resourced manors, and in the fact that this settlement was
almost entirely English, rather than a mixture of English and Scottish, as
would have been the case on estates in Ulster and in parts of Leinster and
Connacht. Indeed in those few instances where Protestant tenants on Cork’s
estates, and in Munster generally, were of a nationality other than English,
yhey tended to be Irish, Dutch, or French, rather than Scots; thus Valentine
Gordon, spinster, of Bantry was the sole person among the 1,414 settlers in
Munster who made depositions in the wake of the Irish insurrection of 1641
who described herself as a ‘Scottish Protestant’.17

The earl of Cork took credit for what he portrayed as an exemplary promo-
tion of English settlement in Munster, even where the essential groundwork
had been established by the original plantation proprietors and their descend-
ants, from whom he had purchased most of his Munster lands. The fact
that Cork’s property of the 1630s was the product of piecemeal purchases is
significant in itself, because it suggests that the pattern of settlement (although
not its density) that prevailed throughout the estate was typical of British

17 Deposition of Valentine Gordon, spinster (Trinity College, Dublin, MS 823, fo. 169).
settlement elsewhere in the province and in the country. This seems all the more plausible because this settlement pattern was already in place on several segments of Cork’s estate at the moment when he purchased them. 18

The foundation of the earl’s Munster wealth was his purchase from Sir Walter Ralegh of the three-and-a-half seignories, in the vicinity of Youghal and Lismore, that Ralegh had received in the Munster plantation by grant from Queen Elizabeth. 19 This acquisition had been recommended to Cork, then plain Richard Boyle, by the government secretary Sir Geoffrey Fenton who, having identified Boyle as a suitable husband for his only daughter Alice, considered that the purchase of fertile plantation lands in war-torn Munster would prove an astute investment. It was the dowry of £2,000 which Alice Fenton brought with her marriage to Boyle that made it possible for him, on 7 December 1602, to strike a deal with Ralegh, who was then desperate for money as he languished in prison on a charge of treason. Later, Boyle became concerned that a conviction of Ralegh might raise doubts about the validity of the sale, and, to forestall any such difficulty, he negotiated a grant of the property to himself by a royal patent of 26 August 1604. Then, having secured crown endorsement of his title, Boyle began to manage the estate so efficiently that the rental income it produced enabled him systematically to acquire whatever further plantation land came on the market in Munster, either for lease or purchase. The result was that, by 1629, Boyle had become outright owner of a chain of Munster manors stretching from east County Waterford to the western extremities of Kerry, and from the southernmost tip of County Cork to the banks of the river Shannon.

These estates included the Munster plantation land originally granted to Sir Christopher Hatton in County Waterford; the manor of Carrigaline, south of Cork city, held previously by Sir Warham St Leger; the manor of Castle Dermot first granted to Richard Beacon before he transferred it to Henry Goldfinch of London; the two seignories, each of 12,000 acres, that had been granted to Phane Beecher and Hugh Worth in the barony of Kinalmeaky; the manor of Broghill, in north County Cork, granted initially to Hugh Cuffe; and also the seignory in County Kerry that had been granted to George Stone and John Champion. This sequence of purchases ensured that, by 1629, the earl of Cork had come to possess most of the land in Munster that had escheated to the government in 1585, and these acquisitions were extended by such purchases as Gill Abbey and Fermoy from the Grenville family; of Tracton Abbey and the manor of Dungarvan from Sir James Craig; and of whatever lands in the barony of Carbery to which Sir James Sempill could make claim under a patent (granted 10 May 1604 in the name of the adventurers Sir James

18 Chancery inquisitions, County Cork (Dublin, National Archives, R/C 4/2/2/443/33, fos. 144, 239–316); Chancery inquisitions, County Waterford (National Archives, R/C 4/12/2/443/43, fos. 36–46).

19 See Chapter 3 above, pp. 140–2.
Fullerton, James Carroll, and Eusebius Andrew, at the request of Sir James Sempill) which licensed the holder to seize all land or fishing grounds in Carbery in which the crown had ‘any right, interest or demand whatsoever’. Once Boyle had thus established himself as the prime landowner in Munster, and once he had rounded off his holdings by a series of strategic sales, purchases, and mortgages that involved natives as well as newcomers, he acquired yet further estates in Counties Tipperary and Kildare, and in Dublin city. At the same time he held on to most of his sixteenth-century acquisitions in the province of Connacht and in County Clare, and made incursions into the English property market most notably with the purchase of the manor of Stalbridge in Dorsetshire.20

It is not intended here to go into the details of how Cork acquired, and consolidated, title to his various estates. Our concern, rather, is to show how he, and the English proprietors who had been in possession of many of these several parcels of land before him, established a structure of occupancy that they considered conducive to making profit for themselves, and to attracting Protestant settlers to their lands. The structure in its most complete form can be discerned in a surviving rental for all of Cork’s Irish possessions that was compiled by his principal agent John Walley to facilitate the collection of his half-yearly rent due for payment on Lady Day 1637.21 Insights into the painstaking way by which this structure was attained can be gleaned from a voluminous estate archive once housed in Lismore Castle, and now shared between Chatsworth House in Derbyshire and the National Library of Ireland.

Boyle acquired the property in the aftermath of the Nine Years War when Munster was devastated only to a lesser degree than the province of Ulster. Most of his estate was technically bound by plantation conditions, although little remained of that plantation besides whatever infrastructure and leases had endured since the days of Ralegh and the other original plantation proprietors. Worse still for Boyle, who held no senior government post, was the absence of a source of income that would make it possible for him to develop his property, and during his early years in possession he established working arrangements with the existing occupiers of the land, both Irish and English, and it was only gradually that he forced these either to accept leasing terms that were more favourable to him, or to abandon their tenancies. His patience with existing practice is explained primarily by the impossibility of devising


21 The rental, which extends to 166 folio pages, is now catalogued as National Library of Ireland, Lismore Castle Papers, MS 6,239.
any alternative at a time when Munster had a poor reputation in England because of the overthrow of the earlier settlement. Boyle’s first success in introducing new foreigners to the province—some Dutch and French, as well as English—was through inviting them to become involved in the exploitation of the natural resources of his own lands and those of his Irish neighbours who were also interested in short-term gain.

Boyle’s initial associates in this asset stripping were William Kellett, seemingly a partner of Alderman Ellis of Bristol, and John Rowley of London. Each of these supplied Boyle with drapery, lead, and other commodities from England and, in return, they sought leases of land that would facilitate their involvement in the cutting and exportation of pipe and barrel staves from the natural forests of the province, and in fishing and curing pilchards on the south-west coast of Munster. These were particularly admiring of the scope of the Boyle estates, stretching almost along the entire south coast of Ireland; Rowley had his brother-in-law, ‘a mere stranger in the country’, settled at Crookhaven in west Cork, and promised to ‘draw over good store of merchants into Munster which will be a means to benefit and enrich the country’, while Kellett, when seeking a lease from Boyle of land in Castlehaven in 1606, said he ‘would [have] there a place for fishing and Youghal for shipping’. The horizons and commercial experience of these men were more extensive than those of Boyle, and their success did indeed attract other merchants whose business contacts stretched further afield. Kellett himself purchased a small barque to carry Irish grain and salted fish ‘for Spain’ so when Boyle offered him a lease of land his immediate query was ‘whether there be arable on it or no, and whether it lieth near any fishing’. The other merchants, who quickly followed, had an even wider range of interests. Thus, in 1617 and 1618, pipe staves shipped from Youghal on the account of Richard Boyle (who had by then become Lord Boyle) went to London, Rotterdam, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, Lisbon, Spain, and the Canaries. The association of Jean van der Bogarde, who was paid £1,074 17s. 10d. ‘for work done on pipe-staves’ between 1613 and 1617, indicates that Dutch traders were also heavily involved in the business, and other continentals identified with processing or purchasing pipe staves in Munster at this time were John Demers, Peeter Jacobson, and Derrick Hubright.

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22 William Kellett to Goodson, 28 Feb. 1604/5 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 1, no. 126); same to Boyle (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 1, no. 139); same to same, 3 June 1606, and 12 Nov. 1606 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, nos. 3, 19); John Rowley to Boyle (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 8); Kellett to Boyle, 2 June 1607 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 65); more particularly on Alderman Ellis buying pipe staves on his own account see Christopher Birkhed to Henry Hore at Dungarvan (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 41).

23 ‘Timber and Pipestaves Shipped from Youghal’, 30 Apr. 1617–24 Aug. 1617 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 8, no. 144); ‘Duty on Pipestaves and Pilchards’, 11 Apr. 1618 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 9, no. 4); account of Jean van der Bogarde, 1613–17 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 8, no. 131); Henry Wright to Boyle, 2 June 1608 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 118); same to same, 27 May 1609 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 3, no. 3).
Note: This map, derived principally from evidence cited in business correspondence, draws attention to long-distance trading connections forged by entrepreneurs within the settler community in Munster. These complemented both the short-distance trading connections sustained by settlers with small ports on the south coast of England and those on the estuary of the Severn, as well as the foreign trading connections sustained by Catholic merchants in the Munster ports.

Map 6.1. Munster settlers and the wider world
Munster was drawn into even more expansive trade as some adventurous settlers in the province, notably Captain William Newce, Lieutenant John Shipward, and Daniel Gookin, recognized the possibility of conveying live cattle, agricultural provisions, and settlers from Munster to tobacco planters in Virginia who, in turn, hoped that ‘if the Irish plantation prosper . . . great multitudes of people [would] be like to come hither’. As it transpired, English ships passing the Munster ports on their way to the various nascent English plantations in the Americas regularly stopped off for provisions and settlers, and Symon Gibbons, who had established himself at Youghal, began to convey tobacco from St Christopher in the West Indies to Youghal, and from thence to wherever a market might be found. Others who linked Munster with the wider Atlantic world were the pirates who frequented the multitude of coves on County Cork’s south-west coast, and who, in some cases, left their wives behind while they conducted their business further afield. One ‘Ellis the pirate’ was finally apprehended by Sir Thomas Button of the Royal Navy in 1618, but pirates remained an active presence in the area, as is indicated by the charge of trading in pirates’ goods brought, in 1623, against one Harrison and Robert Chimney because Chimney was found to have ‘coarse sugar’ worth £50 in his house and Harrison held 4½ pounds weight of bullion. An even more expansive connection with the wider world was through the East India Company, which felled timber for the construction of East Indiamen, and promoted irons melting at Dundaniel which was then outside Boyle’s control. Shipbuilding was also in the mind of Sir Thomas Smith, one of London’s leading merchants, when, much to Boyle’s annoyance, he, in association with Sir Lionel Cranfield, ordered Stephen Daunske, shipwright, to cut down sixty trees near Clonakilty. Henry Challon, an English naval adventurer and projector, had an even more expansive view when he recommended the erection of a chain of fortified towns on the south-west coast from which England’s military and naval requirements would be supplied, and where an entrepôt could be based to which all the commodities from England’s Atlantic colonies would be directed and from which the food and textiles of Ireland would be distributed to overseas markets.24

Richard Boyle does not seem to have shared such visions, but he did realize, from an early date, the pragmatic principle that the promotion of iron

smelting in Munster was closely associated with the pipe stave and shipping businesses because all were reliant on a continuing supply of cheap wood. It therefore comes as no surprise that he became involved with iron smelting, which was narrowly English focused, and it seems that his initial intention was to seek out and exploit iron deposits on his Munster estates which might be smelted with charcoal made from the waste portions of the trees being felled for planks and pipe staves. That Boyle aspired to promote iron mining on his estates is suggested by the fear of Ellen Stanley that he, as her land- lord, would send men to excavate for iron ore on her farm without her permission. She might have slept soundly because surveys did not reveal the expected deposits, and Boyle was already engaged with one Mr John Hampton, and later with Cuthbert Bouth and Thomas Ball of London, to ship iron ore from mines in the south of England to the furnaces which Boyle constructed close to the waterways and the woods of Munster where the ore might be smelted and then returned in its purified form for sale in England. This seemed such a certain prospect that William Kellett immediately asked to be assigned a quarter share in Boyle’s ironworks, and George Hillier reported from Bristol in 1621 that he had received 38 tons of the iron, some of which he had already sold to Robert Aldworth ‘the chiefest merchant in Bristol’, and he professed that Cork’s product was of such high quality that most ironmasters in England had come to hate him. If this was true in 1621 it was not always so, since Anthony Wye had reported from London in 1620 that it was difficult to sell iron profitably because the price had dropped, and Cork’s trusted agent John Walley concluded in 1639 that his master’s expectation that iron smelted in Munster would undersell that produced in England, because wood in Ireland cost only 2 shillings a cord, as opposed to 7 shillings in England, was based on an incorrect calculation. The other variables, said Walley, were that the furnaces in use in England were more efficient than those used in Munster and produced about 20 tons per week as opposed to about 10 in Ireland, while the bar iron produced in England was of a higher quality because ‘their workmen [were] better than ours and more orderly’.23

This emphasis which Cork, his associates, and his rivals in Munster placed upon the exploitation of the natural produce of the country, without any thought for the environmental consequences, would suggest that they viewed the province as a place in which short-term gain might be made rather than

23 Ellen Stanley to Boyle, 28 Jan. 1608 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 5, no. 122b); ‘Mr John Hampton’s Inducements to Draw Me to Deal in the Ironworks’, undated (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 86); account of partnership between Sir Richard Boyle of Lismore, knight, and Cuthbert Bouth and Thomas Ball of London, merchants (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 100); Kellett to Boyle, 2 June 1607 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 65); George Hillier to Cork, 13 Nov. 1621 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 12, no. 90); Anthony Wye to Boyle, 11 June 1620 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 11, no. 45); Walley to Cork, 7 Aug. 1639 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 20, no. 94).
as somewhere that might become their permanent home. Some, both of the settlers in Ireland, and of the English merchants who traded in the province, certainly regarded it so, and none more than those in Bristol who wished to extend the experiment ‘for iron to be made in Newfoundland’ to which they would ship sow iron to be refined on location making use of the plentiful supplies of wood.²⁶

Other aspects of the early seventeenth-century settlement in Munster which gave it the appearance of a boom town were the unruliness of many of the settlers, and the frontier dimension to life in the province. The most transitory, and the most unruly, of the English who took up residence in Munster were the pirates whose frequenting the coast of the south-west was held responsible for the prevalence of unlicensed tippling places in west County Cork. Fishermen who made use of these same areas were also unsettled and undisciplined, requiring only seasonal rooms in houses and cellars and the use of patches of land where they might salt their catch before they returned to their places of origin in the fishing ports of the English south-west. Again, because of their temporary residence in Ireland, they could not be tied to regulations concerning fishing boundaries or quotas, leading one aggrieved party, who complained of their ‘raking’ all the waters about Whiddy Island ‘over with their nets’, to conclude ‘that every Cornish fisher [was] a kind of Hoskin’.²⁷

Workers engaged upon the timber and iron-smelting enterprises were not regarded any more favourably by Boyle and his principal agents, or by outside observers of the Munster scene. Repeated complaints were made of the unwillingness of sawyers, ‘pipestavemakers’, and ‘squarers’ of timber to be satisfied with mere promises of payment and of their resort to ‘mutiny’ when what had been promised did not materialize. The colliers, woodcutters, carpenters, labourers, and basket-makers who were employed on the iron furnaces proved truculent to the point where Henry Wright had once to call on Boyle himself to negotiate with them, ‘payment being so slack’. And all who worked in gangs frequently became disorderly when they imbibed the aqua vitae that was readily available in the Munster towns, some of it distilled by English settlers. More serious was the attempt in 1607 by some of ‘Mr Hampton’s men . . . to raid a Frenchman laden with wines’, while in 1615 John Hawes had to call upon Boyle to bail out the workmen who had been indicted for causing a riot in Dungarvan for ‘without them we cannot work’.²⁸

²⁶ George Hillier to Boyle, 19 May 1629 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 11, no. 36).
²⁸ Henry Wright to Boyle, 6 Dec. 1607 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 82); Wright to Boyle, 17 Jan. 1607/8 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 93); same to same, 24 Dec. 1607 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 89); Henry Pyne to Boyle, 6 Oct. 1607 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 75); Wright to Boyle, 10 July 1608 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 125);
Complaints were also lodged over the lack of deference shown by workers and even settlers in the Munster towns for their social betters, including the earl of Cork himself, and such obstreperousness became more serious whenever it was given a religious veneer. The most notorious incident occurred in 1633 when one Mr Hassell, seemingly an incumbent vicar in Bandon, refused to give way to Mr Snarry when he was nominated to the permanent living by the earl with the agreement of the bishop. The first resistance happened when Hassell, with the support of ‘the worst sort of people’, interrupted the investiture service, but Hassell was still preaching in the church two months later and the ‘credulous multitude’ paid the tithe to him rather than to Snarry. Cork’s correspondent assured him that it was ‘not for his virtues or his goodness that some [strove] to continue’ Hassell in the position. However it was considered a serious incident because those with authority in the town did not enforce the will of the earl.\(^\text{29}\)

Many complained also of the frontier character of life in Munster and none more so than Morgan Poulden who had established himself in Castletown, west of Bandon. There, he contended, he was liable to have his cattle stolen by the people of neighbouring Muskerry, ‘a country altogether inhabited with the natives who are contrary to us in religion and desirous to ruin us’, while he had returned from Dublin on one occasion to find that, in his absence, his wife and family had been ‘molested’ by John Fowler, a servant to Cork ‘who by trading with pirates [had] grown proud’. He lamented the departure of Captain Newce, a noted frontiersman and founder of neighbouring Newcestown, whose departure for Virginia, where he was to establish Newport News, had left not a ‘dry eye’ among the ‘poor English of Munster’.\(^\text{30}\)

All of these aspects of life in Munster invite comparison with contemporary developments in the nascent English colonies in North America, whether on the uninviting shores of Newfoundland, or the fishing ports and iron-smelting communities in New England, or the tobacco colonies on the estuaries of the Chesapeake Bay.\(^\text{31}\) The earl of Cork would have raised no objection to these comparisons because he well understood that the situation in which he was seeking to establish himself had been designated by his government as a place to be colonized, but he would have seen what was occurring in the early years as a first step towards the erection of a community that would resemble the

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29 William Wiseman to Cork, 3 Apr. 1639 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 136); same to same, 17 June 1639 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 147).


countryside of Kent where he had grown up and for which he always retained a nostalgic affection. One means towards this ultimate objective of colonization was his endeavour to promote communities devoted to the processing of raw materials that could be obtained more cheaply in Munster than in England. He expected that this price advantage would attract artisans whose livings were beset by recession in England, and further afield. To this end, Boyle was alert to inducing weavers, fullers, tanners, glass-makers, cooperers, and cutlers as well as people with experience in the fishing, timber, and iron trades to settle in Munster, and his correspondence with his many business associates is littered with solicitations from him for likely settlers, and letters of recommendation to him in favour of people down on their luck.

Sometimes the concern of the correspondents was to offload misfits, as in the case of the man who sought employment that would ‘repair [the] defects in breeding’ of his only son who was ‘not fit for the university, nor fit for law, nor as yet for court service’. For his part Boyle was far more interested in hearing of people like the ‘Kentishman, born and bred about Canterbury’, who was ‘diligent’, of modest and civil government, and ‘religiously bred’ but who was ready to settle in Munster because he had suffered ‘God sent losses’ despite his being ‘a very skilful husbandman’ with experience in tillage and grazing. Another ‘old neighbour from about Canterbury’ who could make ‘vessels for shipping’ was Richard Elliott, cooper, and Cork would have been enthusiastic about the efforts of his brother Dr John Boyle to recruit a Venetian, employed by Sir Robert Mansfield, master of the London Glasshouse, with a view to having him establish a glassworks in Munster. Thus like William Pynchon and his son John, who founded and developed the manufacturing and trading town of Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1636, Cork was anxious to introduce people with particular skills to join him in Munster. However those who possessed the requisite qualities recognized their worth and were willing to make their homes in Ireland only if he granted them leases in the most desirable locations, as did one Champrowne who demanded some land in the vicinity of Clonakilty. When what had been promised did not materialize they were ready, like Samuel Fenton, to complain of being deceived into accepting land which ‘no ways would accommodate either with water, means of firing, shelter for cattle . . . nor any ways fit for corn’. The movement of English settlers to Munster during the early seventeenth century was thus no casual migration, as it has been perversely represented by one historian. The evidence shows, rather, that migration from England to Munster was the outcome of active recruitment and hard bargaining on both sides, and it is likely that the procedures followed by Boyle were similar to those pursued by other new proprietors in Munster, and elsewhere in Ireland, and also by some of those established by Boyle as the principal tenants on his property.

32 10 Nov. 1614 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 5, no. 78); John Chapman to Boyle, 26 May 1620 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 11, no. 39); Revd John Boyle to Boyle, 4 July 1618 (Chatsworth,
The crucial consideration for Boyle was that artisans who responded to his recruitment drive and pursued their crafts in the towns under his control would then be available to rent farms from him in the vicinity of those towns. There they would live under the tutelage of his head tenants who could be former military men, or the more successful entrepreneurs invited into Munster by Richard Boyle, and thus was established the pyramidal structure of landownership and political power that is so evident in the rent roll of the earl of Cork for Lady Day 1637. This document, which is extraordinarily rich in detail, accounts for the rents paid to the earl on 1,267 individual leases, all but forty-two concerning land on his core Munster properties, and accounting for a half-yearly rent of about £10,000, all but £490 of which derived from his Munster lands. 33

The most striking feature of the rental is the fairly even spread of tenants throughout Cork’s properties, other than in those locations where towns had long existed or had recently been established. Where there were few English lessees, as for example on the manor of Pilltown in County Waterford (which accounted for eight leases which produced a half-yearly return of £155 os. 6d.), most of the land was held by one or a few principal tenants. The prime holder in this instance was Sir Philip Perceval who leased from Cork the castle of Pilltown with its buildings, orchards, weirs, mill, and surrounding townlands, for a half-yearly rent of £133 10s. What the rental does not tell us is that, as well as being a principal tenant on Cork’s estate, Perceval was a landowner in his own right in north County Cork and elsewhere, and also a senior government official. Many of the other principal tenants on Cork’s estate such as Hugh Croker, Sir Richard Osbourne, Samuel Hill, William Greatrakes, Sir Thomas Browne, Erasmus Burrowes, Sir Percy Smyth, Captain John Strongman, Sir Randal Clayton, Sir Robert Tynt, Captain Thomas Adderly, Francis Barnard, Anthony Stowell, Peregrine Bannister, Sir William Hull, Lieutenant Clement Dale, and Dorothy Smyth (daughter to Sir Percy Smyth)


NLI, Lismore Castle Papers, MS 6.293; the approximations are necessary because some pages have been torn off from the end; the earl organized his rent according to the inheritances he intended to leave to his five surviving sons Richard, Viscount Dungarvan; Lewis, Viscount Kinalmeaky; Roger, Baron Broghill; Francis Boyle; and Robert Boyle. The half-yearly rent credited to the inheritance of Dungarvan was £4,054 7s. 6d., that credited to Kinalmeaky was £1,352 10s. 3d.; that credited to Broghill £994 8s. 11d.; that to Francis Boyle £979 11s. od., and the concluding section of the document would seem to allow £500 to Robert but there are some pages missing and no total for Robert had been arrived at where the document ends. The core lands are considered those in Munster excluding Clare and Tipperary; the rental makes no reference to Cork’s English properties.
were, like Perceval, either owners of extensive estates elsewhere in Munster, or they held several leases from Cork or other properties.

These individuals were the tenants-in-chief whom the theorists of colonization had considered essential to the success of any plantation, and they were placed in charge of the existing castles scattered in strategic locations throughout Cork’s estate. Most of them would have been considered particularly suitable as tenants-in-chief, either because they commanded wealth which could be employed to improve the property they held on lease, or because they had previous military experience. It can be assumed, although Cork’s rental does not show it, that these tenants, in turn, invited Protestant settlers to sublet land from them, even when they themselves farmed a substantial part of the land which they held by lease from him. This was certainly the case with Sir Philip Perceval whose own rental provides independent evidence that he did indeed pay an annual rent of £270 to the earl of Cork for ‘the castle, town, mill and lease of Piltown’ for a twenty-one-year term from midsummer 1631. However Perceval still turned a handsome profit by collecting an annual rent of £400 from William Kingsmill, whom Perceval had placed as his own tenant on the bulk of that same property with some additional lands in the barony of Decies, and by retaining ‘under stock’ a portion of the Piltown property which generated an annual return of £120.34

Cork’s arrangements with tenants-in-chief were in striking contrast to those reflected in ‘the rents of and in the Manor of Lismore’. This property was assigned into 101 distinct leases which generated a half-yearly rent of £567 12s. 2d., but the fact that these holdings were distributed among but sixty-eight lessees indicates that Cork came to place especial trust in a few selected individuals even in places that had been densely settled with Protestants. In these instances it was the skills, or the economic acumen, of the individuals in question that marked them out for special treatment. Thus, in Lismore, those who held the better and the greatest number of leases were Robert Carew and James Foster. The former held, besides several parcels of land in Lismore and its vicinity, the salmon and eel weirs in the vicinity of the town, some houses and mills in Lismore, and the ferry over the river. Foster paid a half-year’s rent of £85 ‘for the oeconomy of Lismore’ which suggests that he enjoyed a monopoly of trade in the town, and he also held several leases of land in the town and its surrounds, as well as the lease of a brewhouse, a bakehouse, and the ‘kiln of the manor’. Most other tenants in Lismore, English and some Irish, men and a few widows, leased houses with small plots of land presumably from which they pursued their crafts or trade. However, Hugh Croker, the tenant-in-chief on the manor of Cappoquin, also leased the ‘coneywarren’ of Ballyea on the manor of Lismore

34 ‘Rent Roll of Sir Philip Perceval before the War of 1641’ (BL, Add. MS 47,036, fo. 20).
with responsibility to supply, between 1 July and October, ‘thirty couple conies weekly for the provision’ of Cork’s principal house at Lismore.\textsuperscript{35}

The nearby ‘Manor of Lisfinny and Tallough’ which rendered a half-yearly rent of £693 2s. 4d. was segmented into 161 leases assigned to 129 individuals who were overwhelmingly English. This density of English settlement reflects the fact that the town of Tallow was being developed as a manufacturing centre, although little information was provided on the skills of the individual tenants besides the mention that Peter Baker and William Jones were butchers, that Michael Pinder rented ‘the tucking mill close’; that George Benbury and William Bluett each had ‘liberty of brewing to sell in gross’; that Maximilian Fanston rented the ‘cornmills of Tallow’; that John Warren held a lease of a tanyard and that Thomas Carter paid 13s. 4d. ‘for the lease of selling of his own leather tanned only by himself at Mocollop and payable in tyre [entire] at Michaelmas yearly’.\textsuperscript{36} Some better clues on the manufacturing activity that was being promoted along the banks of the rivers Blackwater and Bride were given in the leases on neighbouring manors where mention was made of ‘a house plot joining to Samuel Hill’s tanyard’, of 50 acres of land ‘formerly allowed to the furnace’, of property ‘letten to Peter Cooke, clothier’, of a lease to Nicholas Pyne of ‘the forge pool’, and to ‘Francis Hopkins for the glass house land’, and of a tucking mill, an old forge, and ‘tobacco closes’ attached to the castle of Killmakoe.\textsuperscript{37}

Most of these references relate to the lands purchased by Boyle from Sir Walter Ralegh and Sir Christopher Hatton where a cluster of towns, notably Youghal, Lismore, Tallow, and Cappoquin, already existed, or had been created by the English proprietors during the first phase of the Munster plantation. These towns had been further developed by Boyle, who deliberately promoted trade and manufacturing based on the exploitation of the raw materials that flourished, or could be produced, in the area. These activities ranged from the manufacturing of woollen textiles and leather, to the felling of natural timber to supply the furnaces required for iron smelting and glass making, and it would seem that attempts were also made to promote ‘alternative agriculture’ by producing such exotic crops as tobacco. Cork’s lease to ‘John Hayes of London, Esq’ in 1637 indicates that he believed further opportunities existed for the promotion of manufacturing employment. This lease was ‘for the half part of Dizart with the mines &c to be found there, and for the fish houses at Ardmore with liberty of fishing there’.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} For details on Lismore see NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 22–26.
\textsuperscript{36} For details on Lisfinny and Tallough see NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 26–34.
\textsuperscript{37} For details on Cappoquin and Bewley see NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 26–27; on the lands of Killmakoe, fos. 74–9; and on the manor of Mogely and Corryglass, fos. 79–82.
\textsuperscript{38} Rents of the Abbey of Mollanna (NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fo. 55); the phrase ‘alternative agriculture’ has been coined by Joan Thirsk, \textit{Alternative Agriculture: A History from the Black Death to the Present Day} (Oxford, 1997).
Cork’s purpose in developing such urban societies, which, by the 1630s, were inhabited principally by English settlers, was, on one level, to meet the civilizing and security purposes that justified all plantation, and on another to maximize his income from rent. This latter ambition was achieved first because the introduction of artisans from England generated a demand for houses and garden plots in the urban centres themselves, and secondly because these artisans then sought to supplement the incomes they could earn from trade and manufacturing by taking leases of farms in the surrounding countryside. And the earl was able further to enhance his rents by giving tenancies to his more trusted servants, to the many clergymen who were his chaplains or dependants, and even to the musicians who played in his house and in the churches he patronized.39

This settlement pattern which characterized the estate that Cork had purchased originally from Ralegh prevailed throughout his Munster lands. For example in the Bandon river valley, in west County Cork, the earl had contracts for 108 leases in the twin parishes of Bandonbridge and Ballymodan, and these arrangements were calculated to bring him a half-yearly income of £157 15s. 10d. One indication of the premium placed on property within the security of this walled town was that its extent was expressed in square feet rather than acres, with, for example, £5 rent being paid by Thomas Smyth and Katherin his wife for four assignments of property with ‘backsides’ which they held jointly with James Saxpie, Robert Belshere, and Henry Turner, the four portions together being ‘125 foot in length and 47 foot in breadth’. Another benefit that accrued to Cork from this sizeable urban development was that many artisans and traders in the town of Bandon also paid rent to the earl for farms in the surrounding manor of Coolefaddoe, in Kilbeg and Kilbrogan, and more generally in the barony of Kinalmeaky. In Coolefaddoe, Cork’s property was parcelled out into sixty-one leases which produced a half-yearly income of £318 14s. 2d., while Kilbeg and Kilbrogan paid a half-yearly rent of £52 2s. 2d. from ten leases, and the barony of Kinalmeaky a further £155 0s. 6d. from twelve leases. The names of such Bandon notables as the widow Turner, Henry Turner, and Francis Barnard (the latter an assignee for John Winthrop) occur among the lessees in two or more of these areas, and such references as the payment of £17 10s. by William Burrell ‘for three parcels whereon the Iron Works stands’, the payment of 20s. by William Hill ‘for the liberty of the slate quarry’, and the payment of £90 by James Ellwell ‘for Coolefaddoe Mills with ten acres, and east Gullogh Mills with three acres, and Ballymodan Mills with two acres’ provide some insight on the manufacturing activity that derived from the intensive English settlement in the region. The frequent mention of

enclosure in the leases of all these areas also points to the extent to which the countryside had been tamed by urban contact. The influence of Bandon, and the proto-industry associated with the town and with neighbouring villages such as Newcestown and Enniskean, also spilled over into Cork’s lands in Carbery, as did some of the townspeople of Bandon. The substantial half-yearly income of £574 3s. 2d. which Cork enjoyed from his property in Carbery was boosted by yet another significant urban development at Clonakilty.40

The earl was, understandably, given to boasting of his promotion of English settlement on his estates, and he frequently took personal credit for the erection and development of Bandon to the point where it was ‘at least 7,000 souls all English Protestants, and no one Irishman or Papist living there’. His first claim was but bombast since, as was noted in Chapter 3, this settlement had first been promoted by Phane Beecher, and it is he, with the aid of Captain William Newce and John Shipward, who founded Bandonbridge, which had probably become the most populous British plantation town in Ireland at the middle of the seventeenth century.41

Cork’s second boast, that Bandon was an exclusively English town, was also an exaggeration since the rental of 1637 identified about a dozen people with Irish names who held leases of houses and gardens in the Ballymodan end of the walled town, and one Morrogh O’Madden rented a house and garden, which was ‘not improved’, in Bandon proper. The rental of 1637 also revealed that the English settlement in Bandon and its surrounding countryside was long established rather than of recent creation. The most compelling evidence of this is the presence among the lessees of many widows, the more wealthy of these being the widow Turner and the widow Marstin, the widow Haswell, and ‘widow Ales Baylye’, some of whom held extensive leases in more than one location. Another telling indication of the maturity of the settlement was that some of the widows had remarried locally and brought an inheritance to their second marriages. Thus, the five leases granted to Anthony Bennett in Kilbrogan were ‘in the right of his wife, the widow Crofter’, and a lease made out to William Yope in Bandon was ‘in right of his wife the widow of Edward Turner’.42 Another indication of the confidence that the English settlers had in their community was that a few

40 Rents of the manor of Kinalmeaky (NLI, Lismore MS, 6,239, fos. 93–4); rents of Kilbeg and Kilbrogan (NLI, Lismore MS, 6,239, fos. 95–6); rents of the manor of Coolefaddoe (NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 96–103); rents of the town of Bandonbridge (NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 103–11); rents of the town and lands of Ballymodan (NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 111–15); rents of the lands of Carbie (NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 115–28).
42 NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 96–111.
of the more venturesome were already using it as a base from which to colonize other parts of Cork’s estate, notably those who drifted westwards from Bandon and its vicinity into the barony of Carbery. ‘Thomas Taylor of Bandon’ also identified opportunity in the eastern side of the earl of Cork’s property in County Waterford where he leased 44 acres of land and two mills in Killmakoe, as well as six distinct leases and the parson’s tithes in Tallow.\(^{43}\)

While the earl can be credited with having consolidated English settlement on the land originally developed by Phane Beecher and his heirs, he only purchased the property after he was satisfied that it was already well settled and profitable. This is clear from the surviving rent rolls for Bandon and Coolefaddoe for 1615 and 1618 which show that these properties were then assigned into approximately forty leases, and that most of the lessees were English people. In 1618 the account was maintained by John Turner, possibly the husband of the widow Turner of later years, and perhaps the father of Henry Turner, but the rental returns of £164 12s. 2d. for 1615 and £216 1s. 6d. for 1618 are not suitable for comparison with the rent for 1637 because the earlier leases jumbled annual with twice-yearly payments, and because rural rents are grossed in with those from the town. However, it does seem that rental income increased steadily over time, both because of expansion of the area under settlement and because rents on particular parcels were adjusted upwards to take account of the improvements that had been made, and of the greater sense of security that came to prevail as war and insurrection became but a dim memory. In 1615 and 1618 a clear distinction was drawn between substantial tenants who leased large units of land, ranging from 600 to 20 acres, and those (presumably artisans or traders in the town) who held house plots for which they paid but a few shillings in rent. Moreover, a study of the surnames on the bigger leases of the manor of Coolefaddoe indicates that many of the individuals or families present in 1618 were still there in 1637, although fewer surnames persisted among the holders of the less-consequential leases in the town. It seems safe to assume that Mrs Grise of 1618 was the same person as the widow Gryce of 1637 who then had John Hane acting as her assignee; Richard Hawes, Richard Snooke, John Kirke or Kircke, Stephen Paul, Herbert Nicholas, and James Illwell or Ellwell who were consequential tenants in 1618 were still present in 1637; and the names Turner, Saunders or Sanders, and Newce occur on both sets of rentals. Most settlers on both occasions were probably artisans living in an urban setting, although the only clue in the rental for 1618 as to the trading and manufacturing activity under way in the area comes from a lease valued at £8 made in favour of ‘the tanners’.\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\) NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 47–8, 55, 74–9.

\(^{44}\) ‘Account of Rents due about Bandon Bridge’, 25 Mar. 1615 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 6, no. 1); ‘John Turner’s Account for Rent of Coolfadda and Bandon Bridge’, 20 June 1618 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 9, no. 17); for 1637 NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 96–111.
Early rentals from other improved sectors of Cork’s estate indicate that English settlement was long established in those areas also. Information on the manor of Lisfinny and Tallow survives for the years 1609, 1613, and 1617, and all of these bear witness to a significant presence there of English artisans, and a good deal of persistence from year to year until 1617 but not from 1617 to 1637. The details relating to settlement in 1609 derive from two investigations solicited by Richard Boyle of the rents and conditions that had been agreed between the tenants on the manor of Lisfinny and Tallow and Thomas Fitzgerald, the proprietor from whom Boyle was striving to wrest possession. Taken together, the documents show that the vast majority of tenants on the manor were English, that they held leases from Fitzgerald at low rents, payable in kind as well as in money for terms ranging from twenty-seven to twenty-nine years, and that almost all claimed ‘houseboot’. Boyle, when he acquired this property, sought to break these leases and to establish terms more favourable to himself as proprietor, and such restructuring might explain why so few of the names present in the early years of the century still featured on the rent roll for 1637. However, the significance of these earlier documents is that they establish that there was already a sizeable English settlement on this property when it was acquired by Boyle, and that most lived in the townships of Tallow and Tallowbridge. Many of these English tenants may have been introduced there by Ralegh or his agent, since John Bateman, son of Thomas Bateman, produced a lease issued to him by Edmund Colthurst in 1594, and Alice Nott could show ‘an old copy of her dwelling house dated 1589 and another lease made since by Edmond Colthurst’. A ‘rowle of all the tenants dwelling upon Lysfinny and Tallough land’ in 1609, and the rentals of 1613 and 1617 indicate that many of these English settlers, and some of the Irish tenants, were skilled artisans: Peter Saunders who leased Tallow mill in 1609 was ‘a millard’, another Sanders was ‘the glover of Tallough’, another tenant in Tallow was ‘Richard the fiddler’, John Dane of Lisfinny was a weaver, one Smith was a ‘quaillcacher [quail catcher?]’, one Bukbary was a ‘glasier’, John Handby was ‘a naylor’, and William John FitzRoche was ‘a tucker’.45

This evidence relating to both Bandon and Lisfinny indicates that the special talent of Richard Boyle was in identifying properties for purchase that were already well developed, and his special expertise was in building upon the foundations laid by others. That he did this consciously emerges clearly from two of his business transactions on which we have precise information;

45 Court baron, 2 Mar. 1608/9 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 2, no. 159); ‘Rowle of All the Tenants Dwelling within Lisfynny and Tallough Land Belonging to Thomas Fitzgerald . . . 18 July 1609, Enrolled by John Murffy’ (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 3, nos. 11, 12); ‘A Note of Moneys Received within the Manor of Lisfinnie for Michaelmas, 1613’ (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 4, no. 101); ‘Receipts of Peers Power 1 May 1617 for Rents on Lisinen, Tallowe, and Tallowe Bridge’ (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 8, no. 24).
that relating to his purchase of Sir John Jephson’s lands in Mallow and County Limerick in 1623, and that which resulted in the purchase of the manor of Carrigaline from Warham St Leger and his son Anthony in 1629. Before he bid on the Mallow property, Cork commissioned a full rental which identified for him the acreage of each proportion, and the conditions of each lease. What he was especially interested in knowing, besides the general merits of the property, was the number of years outstanding on the leases, and the ‘improvements’, with a consequent increase of the rent, which might be proceeded with in the near future. It was only when he was assured that profit could be generated when the lease structure had been altered in the proprietor’s favour that Cork laid out £28,076 12s. 6d. (which represented seventeen years’ purchase) for the Jephson property, and placed his friend Sir Randal Clayton, who was already a resident in Mallow, as his agent on that particular estate. Cork also commissioned a valuation of Carrigaline when he contemplated that purchase, but then, when he became aware that there would be obstacles to restructuring the rental in his favour, he opened negotiations with Daniel Gookin, the tenant-in-chief who enjoyed a long lease at low rent of a large block of the estate, as well as with the two St Legers who were vendors of the property. Following upon these negotiations, Cork paid £900 for the unexpired portion of Gookin’s twenty-one-year lease, thus providing Gookin with some money to support his interest in North American colonization.46

Both of these examples reveal that Cork had no compunction about dislodging existing English settlers from his newly acquired properties when this was necessary to advance his own interest, and his single-mindness in ridding himself of an unwanted English tenant is best illustrated by his campaign to break the lease that Henry Pyne had enjoyed on Ralegh’s Munster estate; an episode that has been detailed by Michael Mac Carthy-Morrogh.47 However, while English tenants were frequently dislodged from the lands that came into Cork’s possession, their removal was almost invariably to make room for other English tenants who were of Cork’s choosing and who accepted leases on his terms. Therefore, the ultimate losers of British settlement in Ireland were those Irish occupiers who had been removed to make way for English settlement in the first instance, and those who continued to be eased out of their holdings to further facilitate the Anglicization of a

46 The Rental of Sir John Jephson’s Lands and Titles in Ireland Made in January 1622/3’ (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 13, no. 179); the manor of Carrigaline, 23 May 1629; articles of agreement between Cork and Daniel Gookin of Carrigaline, 24 June 1629 (Chatsworth, Book of Patents Relating to the Lands of Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork, fos. 343–9); on Gookin see Frederick W. Gookin, Daniel Gookin, 1612–87, Assistant and Major General of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Chicago, 1912), and Patricia Coughlan, ‘Counter Currents in Colonial Discourse: The Political Thought of Vincent and Daniel Gookin’, in Jane H. Ohlmeyer (ed.), Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland (Cambridge, 2000), 56–82.

given area. Some insights into this continuing process can also be gleaned from a close study of the 1637 rental.

No major dislocation of an Irish population was involved when Cork set about consolidating the English presence in newly established towns such as Bandon or Tallow because these had been primarily English from the outset. However, such English communities always contained some Irish inhabitants even if, as in the case of Bandon, these pursued menial occupations and resided in ‘Irish towns’ at the fringes of the urban settlement and in ‘cabins and old rotten houses [which were] very dangerous for firing the town’.48 Such removals of the Irish population of long-established towns were necessary if these were to be made into model Protestant communities, but this was always a gradual process. For Lismore, where Cork had established his principal seat, the 1637 rental still mentioned several of those who had been removed to make way for the settler presence. For example, Roger Carew, who was one of the town’s elite holding the lease of the salmon and eel weirs, and the ferry, also rented several parcels of ‘burgage land’ which Cork had ‘purchased of Morris Russell, Edmond Power, James MacShane Normealy, John, James and Richard O’Leght’. Similarly, the ‘burgage lands’ which James Foster leased jointly with Jane his wife had been purchased by Cork from James and William Normeale, Eustace Roche, and Dermond Quinlane; the house garden and orchard of Arduff that Foster leased had been purchased by Cork from Morris Russell; and even the ‘brewhouse wherein the widow Owland lives’, and which Foster leased in 1637, had been purchased by Cork from John Bye O’Diveny. What is not detailed in the rental are the circumstances leading to these ‘purchases’ or the terms on which they were agreed, and neither is anything divulged on the fate of such as the Roches, Russells, and O’Divenys who had been persuaded to make way for the Carews and the Fosters.49

Some indications of the process by which Irish proprietors came to lose their lands are given in those pages of the rental which concern the parts of Munster that had been under Irish occupancy up to the point that Cork had acquired them. The most precise information is available on the lands which Cork laid claim to in the barony of Carbery, where many inhabitants of Bandon had, under Cork’s tutelage, spilled over into the eastern parts of the barony. The castle and mill of Enniskean which was leased by Anthony Stowell, the 160 acres leased by James Lawrence and Anna his wife ‘for life’, ‘the half parcel of Clonogeher’ leased by Herbert Nicholas, the ‘west Shanoways’ leased by Robert Cotes, and the ‘east Shanoways’ leased by Richard Baylie, as well as several leases held by Sir William Hull, Edward Bradstone, Nicholas Barham, James Dyar, and widow Bates, were all declared

48 Augustine Atkins to Cork, 30 May 1636 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 131).
49 NLI, Lismore MS, 6,239, fos. 22–36.
to have been ‘parcel of Fyneen McOwen Carty’s land’. In similar fashion, ‘the whole parcel of Gallanes’ held by Captain Roger Pagett was described as ‘parcel of O’Crowley’s land’, while, further west, the leases held by Edward Boyle were described as ‘parcel of the land of Slught Teig O’Mahone’. How these transfers in ownership and in occupancy were effected is suggested in other entries for the same barony. Ranell Oge Hurley paid £4 per half-year for the right of occupancy of the castle and two parcels of Beallyncarrigy which he had mortgaged to Cork for £80. This indicates that Cork was charging a rent which equaled 10 per cent on the money he had given on loan to Hurley, and this same rate was charged consistently to a long list of Irishmen who had likewise mortgaged their property to the earl of Cork. This rate seems to have proven excessively burdensome to some, since it appears that ‘Dermott Mc Fynneen Carty the freeholder, and Teig Mc Fynneen his feofee’ had lost possession as well as occupancy of ‘three gneeves in Kilkerranvore’ which they had mortgaged to Cork for £20 but which, in 1637, was rented to John Hicks for a half-yearly rent of 20s.50

The process that comes to our attention here, and that is highlighted also in Statute Staple records, was widespread throughout Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century. It was one whereby those Irish landowners who fell heavily into debt, or who did not have good title to their estates, sought to resolve their problems by conceding title to all or a portion of their lands as security on the loans they negotiated with individuals who were agreeable to lend money to them. In some instances, as in Connacht, those most prepared to invest in such loans were the Irish townsmen, but while Catholic traders in Munster were also involved in lending, they could not match the cash-rich earl of Cork. The procedures were similar whether the loan was given by an Irish Catholic merchant or an English or Scottish speculator; the proprietor surrendered title to the lender but remained in occupancy and paid a rent equal to the annual interest due on the loan. Then, in the event of the lenders being unable to meet this interest payment or repay the capital, they were expelled from the property, and the new proprietors could then choose between leasing the lands to the former owners or taking on tenants of their choosing.

When this occurred on the properties acquired by the earl of Cork through mortgage transactions the new settlers were usually English, and these were frequently attracted from nearby towns. However in other instances, such as on the manor of Dungarvan in County Waterford, and in the vicinity of Dingle in County Kerry, native occupancy was less disturbed, presumably because the relatively poor quality of the land or the scarcity of natural resources made these areas less attractive to English settlers. The tenant-in-chief on the manor of Dungarvan was Gervase Erryngton who paid a

50 NLI, Lismore MS, 6,239, fos. 115–28.
half-yearly rent of £68 6s. 8d., and one Thomas Wreckfall rented the 30 acres of Glanamadry. The only other English lessees on the manor appear to have been Cuthbert Smyth who paid 12s. 6d. for a half-yearly rent on ‘the smythes park’, and Francis Knowles and the widow Wharton each of whom leased a house and garden; otherwise the tenants bore Gaelic or Old English names, and the only evidence that Cork was at all involved with mortgaging in the area was the ‘rent charge of £10 per annum’ paid by Andrew Wise for Balleynecorty and Ballycolin ‘until £100 be repaid’. The ‘Kerry lands’ of Cork’s estate seem to have remained even more distinctly Irish with the rents being collected by Cork’s Irish retainer Dermot O’Dingle, and the only obvious newcomers were Thomas Spring who leased a castle with its associated lands, Alexander Travers who paid £6 for a lease, and James Knowde who leased some rectories and held the parsonage of Dromcarrig. Most other names on the Kerry portion of the earl’s rental were unmistakably Irish such as Piers Pheriter [Piaras Feiritéir], who paid a half-yearly rent of £9 for three parts of Ballypherriter or Churchtown, Richard Nagle, John Fitzgerald, Esq., and Piers Ryce Fitzgerald who paid £3 6s. 8d. for a house and garden in Dingle called ‘the Starch House’.

It is hazardous, given the unusually comprehensive character of the rental for Cork’s estate, to advance general conclusions concerning British settlement in Ireland based on this one example. However some of the patterns discerned there are so closely replicated on other Irish properties for which records survive that it would seem that proprietors, or their managers, were working to a common model. The only other English-managed estate in Munster which I have studied was the property of Sir Philip Perceval who, as was noted, was a landowner in his own right as well as being a tenant-in-chief to the earl of Cork. However Perceval also held the onerous position in Dublin of clerk and registrar of the Court of Wards and Liveries, and never had the opportunity that Cork enjoyed, in the years before 1629, to give undivided attention to the management of his estate. Moreover much of Perceval’s land in Munster, especially that in the barony of Duhallow, had come to his hands through mortgage dealings, and his estate records are especially interesting for what they reveal of how a Dublin-based official could, over a short period of time, build up extensive estates of prime land in Munster and County Kildare (which in the years before 1641 he calculated generated him an annual income of £4,961 11s. 3d.) principally through investing the profits of his office by extending loans to a series of native proprietors who ceded him possession of land as a security on those loans.

51 Rents in or near the manor of Dungarvan, NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 2–6; rents, County Kerry, NLI, Lismore MS 6,239, fos. 140–3.
52 Details on Perceval’s mortgages were inserted regularly in his rent returns, but a composite statement on his mortgaging practices, and on the estates that accrued from them to his heirs, was compiled after his death in 1686, ‘Ancient Properties Mortgaged’ (BL, Add. MS 47,039, fos. 8–9).
of estates through such mortgage transactions the original owners of the lands remained in occupancy, effectively enjoying the status of tenants, and the rent which they paid him was essentially the equivalent of the interest on the loans he had conceded them. Much the same obtained for his estates in County Tipperary, but one of the more interesting aspects of his rental for all his estates, but especially those in County Tipperary, is the extent to which he made profit also from stock farming. Land in Tipperary, Cork, Waterford, and Kildare was, of course, especially suited to this purpose, and Perceval was perpetuating an economic activity which had been pursued in these areas from time immemorial, even if it had been condemned as barbaric by theorists for colonization. However pastoral farming was also especially suited to an absentee proprietor who was busy with official business in Dublin, because he could oversee his interest by having his herdsmen, who were essentially managers of his property, prepare regular inventories of his vast flocks of cattle and sheep, which, as it transpires, were mostly of English breed, with intermittent accounts of purchases, sales, and losses. However, while in this respect Perceval was assuming the character of a classic absentee and a grazier, he devoted special attention, through his agent John Hodder, to building up a community of English settlement on his manor of Burton in the barony of Orrery, in north Cork, which he held by letters patent with the privilege of courts leet and baron and the right to ‘impark’ 1,000 acres of land, where he established the principal seat of the Perceval family who were to become earls of Egmont in the eighteenth century. There, and in the lands which abutted the manor of Burton in the vicinity of neighbouring Liscarrol, Perceval leased most of his lands in large units to tenants-in-chief who were mostly English, and these may, in turn have sublet farms to English husbandmen or artisans.

While, in this respect, Sir Philip Perceval would appear to have emulated the earl of Cork’s estate management, the earl’s example, or the theories of colonization that inspired all British settlement in Ireland, would seem also to have influenced the, once Gaelic and Catholic, O’Briens, earls of Thomond, if we are to judge by their rentals concerning their principal properties in County Clare. These lords had, through the effective operation of the surrender and regrant scheme, become Protestant and considerably Anglicized during the later decades of the sixteenth century, and the early

53 ‘Rent Roll of Sir Philip Perceval before the War of 1641’ (BL, Add. MS, 47,036; for the manor of Burton and surrounding areas see esp., fos. 9–11; on his Tipperary lands see fos. 16–18; for his concern with stock farming see 13 Oct. 1638, ‘A Note of All the Cattle and Sheep in Butler’s Country Now Living’ (BL, Add. MS 46,920 A, fo. 161), ‘An Account of his Flocks at Liscarrol and Bregoge [1634/5]’ (BL, Add. MS 46,920 B, fos. 11–12), ‘An Account of All the Dry Cattle of Mr Perceval’s at Liscarroll, September 1639’ (BL, Add. MS 46,923, fo. 64); see also list of the jury at Clonmel, Lent 1638 ‘who freed all the sheepstealers’ (BL, Add. MS 46,923, fo. 32), see also deposition of ‘John Hodder . . . Esq., in the Behalf of the Right Worshipfull Sir Philip Percivall, Knight’ (TCD, MS 824, fo. 166) where Hodder estimated the value of goods and chattels on the north Cork property at £2,866 and the annual rental income at £2,387 14s.
decades of the seventeenth. Donogh O’Brien, fourth earl of Thomond, was not only attempting to extend his land-holdings beyond their customary boundaries in County Clare into the planted county of Limerick, but was working systematically to increase the rental income from his ancestral lands in Clare. His most effective means of doing so was to imitate the practices of his planter neighbours further south, by inviting foreign Protestants to settle in the satellite towns he had established along the line of the river Shannon in Kilrush, Ennis, and Sixmilebridge. As well as paying rent on the urban dwellings which the earl had constructed in these towns, these Protestants took leases of land from the earl while they generated a primary income through the pursuit of their crafts or businesses from within an urban setting. This estate improvement became possible because Thomond could draw upon English and Dutch traders and artisans who had established contact with the port of Limerick, at the head of the Shannon estuary, and who welcomed the opportunity to consolidate their position in a region that was rich in timber and fishing resources.

Strategies similar to those followed by Thomond for increasing rent on his property in County Clare were pursued by his neighbour Richard Burke, fourth earl of Clanricard. The Burke family, despite their being of Anglo-Norman descent, had succumbed considerably to Gaelic influence until they too, like the O’Briens of Thomond, were drawn to English allegiance by the surrender and regrant policies of the sixteenth century. Their return to English ways was marked by a succession of English marriages, and by the fourth earl taking up residence at his English house Sommerhill in Tonbridge Wells where he conflated his English title earl of St Albans (once held by the disgraced Francis Bacon) with his Irish peerage, and by his forging formidable legal connections through the Inns of Court. While Anglicized, and an absentee from Ireland, Clanricard (unlike Thomond) remained loyal to Catholicism, and maintained contact with his Galway roots and supervised the management of his County Galway estates through correspondence with his agent, the Galway merchant Sir Henry Lynch. His solicitude for the welfare of his kin and family retainers emerges clearly from his correspondence with Lynch, but so also does his pragmatic view that the security of his property, and the enhancement of his rental income, could only be procured by the settlement of English tenants on his estate. He, like the earl of Cork, retained a ‘book’ of all the leases on his estate which was a duplicate of that which he instructed Lynch to keep by him ‘always at Galway’. Through this he was able to retain a mental picture of his property and his interests, and he was thus in a position to alert Lynch to the necessity of

54 Developments on the Thomond estate have been described in Ciarán D. Ó Murchadha, ‘Land and Society in Seventeenth Century Clare’ (Ph.D. thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1982) which derives from a scrutiny of the rentals and other surviving papers relating to the Thomond estate which are stored at Petworth House.
recruiting skilled English people to take leases of the sixteen of his twenty-three mills which were lying idle; then when, in 1623/4, war with Spain seemed imminent, he instructed Lynch to find appropriate tenants, who he thought should be ‘sufficient men which . . . should be English men than any other’, to occupy ‘the frontier places’ of his estate which needed to be ‘strengthened and secured . . . to prevent any hurt that might arise by any domestical or inland incursions, or rebellions, wherein none ought to be <too> secure that lives in Ireland’. Here Clanricard obviously had former English army officers in mind, but his enduring concern was ‘that no land in Ireland [was] let at as low rates as [his]’ and he attributed his consequent low level of income to ‘the drunken humours, laziness, and want of skill which they will not learn’ of his Irish tenants. Clanricard did something to remedy these deficiencies by sponsoring the education in England of the sons of some of his retainers, usually at the Inns of Court. However his immediate solution to resolving his shortfall in income was to induce English artisans and innkeepers to settle in the town of Loughrea, in the centre of his estate, and at Portumna, on the banks of the river Shannon, where he had built a grand house with ornamental grounds, and where he proposed ‘to plant a town there of some importance’. The rents from such English townsmen would, he believed, give him a fresh source of income, while he expected them also to lease farms at improved rents on his estate.55

If these two examples demonstrate that Irish landowners who sought to improve and ‘Anglicize’ their estates saw no other means to do so than to imitate the practise of such successful proprietors as the earl of Cork (who, incidentally, provided Clanricard with a gift of some does to help him populate his deer park), successful landowners in the Ulster plantation followed similar procedures without any such guidance. Thus George Canning was able to make progress with establishing ‘British’ tenants on the Ironmongers’ proportion in County Londonderry only because he could draw upon the artisans and traders who had settled at Coleraine, while Sir Robert McClelland thought it equally important to establish a village, comprised of about thirty Scottish artisan households, as it was to introduce Scottish tenants and workers on the Haberdashers’ proportion in the same county. And, as was noted, the progress of the more successful Ulster planters is attributable principally to their development of nucleated settlements such as Stewartstown, Strabane, Dungannon, and Lurgan, where English or Scottish artisans or professionals took up residence. These benefited the plantation effort because proprietors were able to induce them to pay entry fines and rents for leases of plantation land, while these also paid rent on their urban properties and generated employment through the exploitation of natural

resources and the promotion of trade and manufacturing. Moreover, as they came to regard their position as permanent, these urban residents, in turn, laid out money to improve their towns. Thus, for example, a surviving documentary fragment relating to the largely ecclesiastical town of Armagh points to the construction of ten ‘fair stone’ houses ranging in estimated value from £500 to £60 built by resident clergy or merchants all of whom held substantial leases of land in the vicinity of the town, in most cases for a sixty-year term. Also from Ulster it becomes clear that plantation was not a necessary spur to the creation of towns to assist in estate development; the Scottish and Catholic second earl of Antrim was as efficient as any planter in settling nucleated communities of both English and Scottish artisans on his vast property.56

Equally well it can be seen from the Ulster experience that where such urban development was not promoted, little progress was made towards the further development of a settler community; a point which can best be demonstrated in relation to the properties in the Ulster plantation acquired by Sir John Davies. He received two allocations in the Ulster plantation, one in the barony of Omagh in County Tyrone, and the other at Lisgoole Castle in County Fermanagh, and he had a further indirect interest in the plantation because of the involvement of his father-in-law Lord Audley (who was to become earl of Castlehaven in the Irish peerage) as a major planter. The Davies properties (as was noted in Chapter 4) passed muster with the commissioners of 1622, and there was every reason why the commissioners should have been optimistic about their prospects because Davies was particularly well placed to defend and even expand his property while it could be expected that he would invest the profits of his office in estate development. However, while Davies, through his agents Matthew Davis in Tyrone and Nicholas Combe in Fermanagh, was able to satisfy the government in relation to both building and tenanting, the property did not develop from the base he had established, principally because Davies left Ireland for England in 1619 where he pursued a literary and legal career until his sudden death on 7 December 1626, the day before he was to have been installed as chief justice of the King’s Bench. His death meant that all his Irish estates fell to his daughter Lucy who, although but 11 years old, was already married to the 15-year-old Ferdinando, Lord Hastings, future earl of Huntingdon. The properties, which came to be referred to as the countess of Huntingdon estates, were, until 1672/3, managed by a succession of agents and rent collectors on behalf of an owner who had but a remote interest in them.57

56 See Chapter 4 above, pp. 205–42; ‘Houses within the City of Armagh, Built or to be Built’, unsigned and undated but the handwriting suggests pre-1641 (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 75); Jane Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The Career of Randal Mac Donnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609–83 (Cambridge, 1993), esp. pp. 33–48, 73–6, 109–11.

57 ‘List of Things Submitted to [the earl of Huntingdon] for his Consideration’, undated (Huntingdon Library, Hastings MSS, Box 76); general note on the Hastings family Irish estates, undated (Huntingdon Library, Hastings MSS, Box 76)—here it is mentioned that the Fermanagh lands
The first rental, dated 1629, testifies to a settlement pattern on the Davies property in Tyrone that would have satisfied any government inspector, with twenty-one individuals (all but ‘Reyney Delacroche’ having distinctly English names) engaged in contractual agreements, either for a freehold or a lease of twenty-one years; a further seven ‘Irish’ tenants holding leases for terms of seven, nine, and eleven years; and a group of eighteen individuals, again mostly bearing Irish names, who held from year to year. The Fermanagh property for that year was assigned into eighteen lots but this arrangement would have been considered less satisfactory by the government since all but eight of the tenants had Irish names.

This balance was maintained, but not increased, in favour of British settlers, in the rental for 1638, but it appears that by then the conditions by which the leases were held were being made more favourable for the English occupiers. Thus where Richard Guttrich had received in 1619 a twenty-one-year lease of ‘two great lots of servitors land’ for the half-yearly rent of £12 10s., this lease had been altered in 1626 to become a term of ninety-nine years if Guttrich and his son ‘should live so long’. It seems to have been at this juncture that the countess, or her adviser in England, contemplated letting her entire Irish property to farm, a course against which she was advised by her Tyrone agent on the grounds that ‘no farmer [would] take her lands in the County of Tyrone but for a far greater benefit than the having of an agent there [would] be charge to her honour’. The countess was swayed by this advice but she must have regretted her decision because her rents remained consistently low, and the accounts sent to her indicate that she was losing rather than gaining money from her Irish possessions. The gross annual rent for the two estates in 1633 amounted to £523 5s. but her outlays came to £525 8s. 10d., while the half-yearly rent of £322 for Lady Day 1637 left her with a shortfall of £42 for that half-year alone. The disbursements that accounted for these losses ranged from the purchase of livestock to the pursuit of legal cases concerning the property, and from the payment of agents, rent collectors, and the king’s rent to the maintenance of Lisgoole Castle and the associated demesne lands, as well as the improvement of the property through the construction of a tuck mill, a lime kiln, a buttery, and dairy, and the introduction of ditches and whitethorn quicksets. The losses being incurred were obviously offset by an increase in the value of the property, but the alteration in leasing arrangements that had been permitted meant that such gains went inevitably to the tenants rather than to the owner.

and the Isle of Devenish were sold in 1673 for £5,600 to Ferdinando Davis; genealogical treatise by Theophilus Hastings, son of the countess of Huntingdon and grandson of Sir John Davies, end of 1674 (Huntington Library, Box HA Genealogy, Hastings, L5 A5); in this last document it is mentioned that the teenage marriage of 1623 outraged the archbishop of Canterbury, and that Lucy continued to live with her father until his untimely death while Lord Hastings attended at Cambridge, it being ‘not held convenient they shoud cohabit together’; here it is also mentioned that the Tyrone lands were sold, in 1672, to Edward Edwards, County Londonderry; more generally on Davies see Pawlish, Sir John Davies.
Closer scrutiny of the records for this estate indicates that even the original arrangement was less than satisfactory from the proprietor’s perspective because several of the tenants can be identified as having had interests elsewhere. For example on the Fermanagh property Sir William Cole, who rented the island in Devenish in County Fermanagh in 1629, was a landowner in his own right elsewhere in the same county, Edward Davys and Nicholas Combe also held leases on the County Tyrone estate of the countess, and Thomas Slacke was a clergyman who had multitudinous interests in ecclesiastical and secular property throughout Fermanagh. These few references suggest that there was a factor besides the absence of a resident proprietor that made these two plantations less than satisfactory from the proprietor’s perspective. The lack of a town on either of the estates meant not only that the countess did not enjoy an urban rent, but also that she was at the mercy of the sitting British tenants who, in the absence of the competitors who would have come forward for leases if a flourishing community of artisans and professionals had existed in the locality, could threaten to abandon the property unless the proprietor met their demand for better contractual conditions.58

That this estate first acquired by Sir John Davies was not unique in Ulster in failing to conform to any model of settlement is made clear from the example of another Ulster estate, that of the earl of Essex in the barony of Farney in unplanted County Monaghan. The records for that estate are unique for this period because they include a series of estate maps made in 1634 by Thomas Raven, a highly skilled English cartographer who was employed by the government to survey confiscated property in Ulster but who then turned his hand to private work. The maps that Raven drew of the Essex estate are exceptional in that they provide a snapshot view of the landscape of this estate of 47,000 acres, which depicted roads, forts, churches, mills, cabins, and houses. An analysis of these maps made by P. J. Duffy indicates that Raven portrayed a stable but thinly populated environment whose traditional aspect has been altered only by the appearance of an occasional watermill and a thin scattering of two-storey slated houses with dormer windows. These amounted to only two dozen in all, and when account is taken of the clusters of slated houses in Carrickmacross and Peter’s Town, one can better appreciate how little change had been made in the environment by the estate development of the Essex agents. Roads were still little more than tracks, watermills were constructed where rivers made this possible, natural woodland remained largely undisturbed, and the normal

58 Rent rolls for the lands of the countess of Huntingdon, Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone, 1633–66 (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 76); order to Rowrie Ballagh Mc Kew to collect rent as specified, 6 Mar. 1637 (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 78); ‘Reasons why the Right Honourable Countess of Huntingdon Should Let her Lands to Farm in Ireland and why not’, undated (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 79).
habitations were single-storeyed thatched cabins with a door and, occasionally, ‘a window, grouped in clusters which dotted the countryside’. 59

We cannot assume that these primitive residences were invariably those of the native population. Judging from records of the Davies estate, quality of residence is a poor guide to the national origin of a tenant. The comprehensive survey of the Fermanagh portion of that estate conducted around 1664 shows that there were only eighteen ‘coupled houses’, all of which were in the possession of the principal British tenants. Of the other residences on the estate, two were each described as ‘a handsome Scotch house’, but the remaining places of habitation were noted variously as ‘Irish creats [creat, a shape]’, ‘Scotch buildings’, ‘Irish houses’, or ‘small Irish buildings’, and seem all to have been thatched cottages of a rudimentary nature. 60

These two Ulster examples of estate development and management again illustrate why the creation of urban communities of artisans was necessary both to successful British settlement and to efficient estate management in seventeenth-century Ireland. The establishment of new towns, or the introduction of significant communities of British settlers in existing ones, quite obviously required the support and interest of landed proprietors, but such support was not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee the success of a town, and there were probably altogether more failures, or half starts, like Peter’s Town and Carrickmacross, than there were successes. Towns that flourished were invariably located in places suited to the pursuit of trading and manufacturing, or for the conduct of state business. To this extent, towns, once they were established, could assume a life of their own, while the residents of these towns invariably furthered the improvement of the surrounding countryside. To understand this process we must look beyond estate records to develop some understanding of the broader British community that established itself in Ireland, and especially in urban Ireland, during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The sources that convey the best impression of the full range of British settlement in Ireland at this time, and of the central importance of towns as part of that settlement pattern, are the depositions collected from the surviving Protestant population in the aftermath of the insurrection of 1641. Those who collected these statements were primarily interested in having the government wreak vengeance on those who could be declared responsible for the onslaught against the Protestant population that had taken place, but the fact that all deponents identified themselves by name, occupation, or social position, and stated their precise location in Ireland, makes it possible to plot out the settlement pattern of deponents which, it is suggested here, was (with

60 ‘Survey of the Countess of Huntingdon’s Lands’, c.1664 (Huntington Library, Hastings MSS, Box 76).
the exception of the province of Ulster) indicative of the settlement pattern of the British population in Ireland as a whole. Moreover, the testimony provided in these depositions constitutes the best source of information on the economic activity of the settler community in different parts of Ireland because all of the 3,140 Protestant settlers who came forward to make depositions in the aftermath of the insurrection provided an inventory and valuation of their possessions in 1641 together with substantial information on what economic activities they had been engaged upon in the months and years before the disturbance.

6.3. The British Presence in Munster

The pattern of settlement in Munster that is suggested by the surviving estate records for the province is corroborated by the 1,414 depositions (including 33 from County Clare and 35 from Irish Protestants) which were taken from survivors in the province of Munster. When the residences of these deponents are mapped out they indicate a settlement distribution that is consistent with that suggested by the estate records. The depositions suggest that there was some English rural presence everywhere throughout the province; a denser rural settlement in the valleys of the Blackwater and Bandon rivers, and along the estuaries of the Shannon and the Lee, and an especially concentrated settlement where well-situated, good-quality land coincided with the presence of towns, notably Waterford, Lismore, Tallow, Youghal, Cork, Kinsale, Bandon, Mallow, Mitchelstown, and Limerick.61

What is true of the depositions from the entire province is borne out by those for County Cork which is not only the largest county in Ireland, but the county from which most depositions survive. A total of 904 deponents from County Cork made statements in 1642–3, and the fact that these were distributed throughout 134 parishes reveals that there must have been some Protestant (mostly English) settlement in every part of the county. However the fact that 66 of these 134 parishes accounted for but three, or fewer, deponents indicates that settlement was thin on the ground except in particular regions. These regions of dense settlement were determined as much by their location and the availability of desirable natural resources, as by the ownership of land. This is indicated by the thick return of depositions from a continuous line along the valleys of the Blackwater, the Lee, and the Bandon rivers, and again from along the coastline of west County Cork, where fishing attracted settlement.

Even more striking is the large number who had been resident in towns throughout the county when the blow struck in 1641. The largest cluster of deponents from County Cork—a total of 62—emerged from the twin parishes

of Ballymodan and Kilbrogan which together incorporated the walled town of Bandon, and there was a further cluster of eighteen deponents from the nearby parish of Kinneigh where Castletown is located. The twenty-six deponents who came forward from the parish of Kilgarriff almost all belonged to the town of Clonakilty, and the return of twenty-five deponents from the parish of Brigown is explained by Mitchelstown being located in that parish. Similarly, the thirty-one deponents from the parish of Clonfert belonged principally to the towns of Newmarket and Kanturk, and almost all of the forty-eight deponents from the parish of Mallow belonged to the town of that name.

It emerges from their testimony that the vast majority of these urban deponents were artisans who rented urban property where they pursued their crafts, but most of them also leased farms in the surrounding countryside. Therefore their presence was vital to sustaining the income that landlords enjoyed from their estates, while the rents they paid on town plots constituted a supplemental income to those far-seeing proprietors who encouraged urban development. The depositions collected in Munster also reveal that artisans, in turn, gleaned some income from the subletting of urban dwellings to their dependants, and the very presence of artisans, in itself, cultivated an enterprising culture which enhanced the employment prospects of skilled workers whether native or settler. The most compelling evidence of this comes

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**Map 6.2.** The distribution of British settlers in Munster c.1641

**Note:** This map reflects the distribution of those Protestants with Munster addresses who made depositions in the aftermath of the 1641 insurrection.
from the lists provided by the artisan deponents of those who were indebted
to them at the moment when the insurrection disturbed the routine of their
business lives. In the course of their depositions they distinguished between
English Protestant debtors who would be unable to repay them because they
had been destroyed by the rebellion, and Irish papist debtors who would not
meet their obligations because they had entered into insurrection. However
the more important distinction is between debts owed to these enterprising
artisans by Irish Catholic landowners and those due to them from fellow arti-
sans whether native or settler. Many of the landowners’ obligations were
probably incurred from services rendered or manufactured goods provided,
but it is likely that successful artisans were as active as prosperous merchants,
officeworkers, and landowners, in lending money at high interest to impecu-
nious Irish proprietors, probably with land as a security on the loan. However
when it comes to debts owed to these artisan entrepreneurs by other craft-
workers it seems that the debts were due to them by tradesmen with similar
or kindred skills, as, for example, clothworkers being owed money by weavers,
and tanners claiming debts from shoemakers or brogue-makers. In such
instances, it was probably not money that was owed to the deponents, but
rather materials which would have been advanced to subordinate artisans
under a putting-out system.62

The intricate web of debt and obligation that bound natives and new-
comers together in communities that had been refashioned by settlement is
well illustrated by the list of debtors provided in the deposition of Richard
Christmas, a cloth-maker who had lived in the parish of Kilmacabea in the
barony of Carbery in west County Cork. He claimed that, because of the
uprising, he had suffered a total loss of ‘nine score and six pounds’ due to
him in debts. Those indebted to him included eight named ‘impoverished
Protestants’, two of them dead, but some of these may have been charitable
bequests rather than commercial transactions since those listed among the
debtors included ‘James Cleland, clerk’. Of Christmas’s fifteen Irish debtors,
twelve, starting with Fyneen McCormac Carty of Bantry, were described as
‘gent’, and of the remaining three one was Donogh Mac Fyneen Carty of
Kilmacabea, ‘masspriest’, and two—Thomas Condon of ‘the Lepp’, and Teig
Leah of ‘the Ard’—were weavers.63

Such instances could be multiplied a hundredfold from County Cork alone,
and what is true of the deponents for that county certainly holds good also
for County Waterford. The multi-faceted activity of these deponents as
artisans, farmers, traders, moneylenders, and middlemen that is brought to

62 Nicholas Canny, ‘The 1641 Depositions as a Source for the Writing of Social and Economic
History: County Cork as a Case Study’, in Patrick O’Flanagan and Cornelius Buttimer (eds.), Cork:
History and Society (Dublin, 1993), 249–308.

63 Deposition of Richard Christmas of Cappaonabagh [Cappanabohy], parish Kilmacgibby
[Kilmacabea], cloth-maker (TCD, MS 823, fos. 74–5).
light by their testimony provides clear evidence that towns in Cork, and
throughout Munster, were prime locations of British settlement as well as
important centres of proto-industry. They appear so dynamic that it is likely
that some of these Cork urban settlements surpassed the planned plantation
towns of Ulster both in terms of the size of their Protestant settler commu-

nities, and of their commercial importance. It is also possible, or even
probable, that some regions in Munster, notably the valleys of the Bandon
river and the Blackwater, were more densely settled with foreign Protestants
than any area of comparable size in planted Ulster.

Settlers in Munster with similar or kindred skills seem to have co-operated
with each other from the outset, and to have organized themselves into
communal clusters devoted to particular manufacturing enterprises. While
the source hardly ever discloses when particular settlers first arrived in
Munster or where they originated from, it does seem that skilled artisans who
obtained an initial lease from a head landlord in a place conveniently located
for raw materials and market opportunities tended to invite suitable workers
of their previous acquaintance to join them in Munster, in the same way that
Richard Boyle recruited some of those who were to become influential figures
in Munster in later years. If we accept the logic of this reasoning then the
presence of four tanners, three butchers, a weaver, a felt-maker, a blacksmith,
a wheeler, a shoemaker, a Sawyer, and a maltster among the forty-two depo-

tenents from the parish of Kinneagh was not the consequence of an unplanned
drift of people from a variety of places in southern England to Castletown in
west County Cork. It is altogether more likely that artisans with skills that
were considered necessary to the local economy were invited to settle there
by individuals such as William Richardson of Castletown, clothier, or by
Richard Samell, chandler, of the same town, or by a major entrepreneur
such as Henry Turner in nearby Bandonbridge, whose activity will be consid-
ered shortly.64

What held true of artisans seems to have been equally valid for those
described as yeomen and husbandmen. These appear to have been specialist
agriculturists rather than an undifferentiated mass of farm labourers, and
their presence in particular locations would seem to be explained by their
having been recruited by a tenant-in-chief or even by a head landlord wishing
to promote farming best suited to the soils or market opportunities in given
areas. The presence of John Slade, shepherd, in the parish of Kilbrin in north
County Cork seems unremarkable until the deposition of Jonas Smith, the
only gentleman deponent from that parish, is examined. From his inventory
it appears that while Smith engaged in mixed agriculture on his home farm,
his commercial activity was sheep grazing, since he estimated his loss in sheep

64 Deposition of William Richardson (TCD, MS 823, fo. 80); deposition of Richard Samell (TCD,
MS 823, fo. 200); deposition of Henry Turner (TCD, MS 824, fo. 148–19).
at £495 out of a total estimated loss of £1,498. Therefore Slade was probably recruited by Smith to serve as his shepherd, and Slade, in turn, had a father and daughter resident in the same parish. 65

All of this suggests that in County Cork—and in Munster generally—there was a sequence of settler communities dominating particular localities rather than a broad-spectrum settler society covering the expanse of the entire county, even where these communities shared the same landlord. This impression is sustained by an investigation of the economic information contained within the depositions for the county. It emerges, for example, from the listings provided by artisan or farmer deponents of those who were indebted to them, that their network of commercial contact was confined to their own or neighbouring parishes. This local dimension to the world of settlers of modest means is also borne out by their frequent reference to kinsfolk who lived in close proximity to them. Communities of settlers with special skills such as the fishing communities at Castlehaven, Glanbarahan, and further west would, presumably, have been brought into contact with the wider world through such entrepreneurs as Sir William Hull of the island of Schull, or Otto Redish in Youghal, or Tristram Whitcombe of Kinsale. Hull has left us in his deposition with an especially detailed inventory of the equipment required for the furnishing of a fishing palace. Otto Redish with his associates Frances Gibbons and Elizabeth Lewis, both widows of Youghal, had been ‘partners in the trade of fishing’. They valued at £267 their loss of ‘implements necessary to trade of fishing’, and Whitcombe of Kinsale placed a value of £140 on his ‘fishing palace’ at Ballymalloe in east County Cork that has been ‘demolished’ during the disturbances. These individuals who had made substantial investment in the promotion of fishing must have provided considerable employment for fishermen, fish curers, and their families in settler communities along the coastline of county Cork, but what we learn of such humble folk comes from third parties, usually in identifying those of them who had been killed or were indebted to them. The general absence of depositions from those involved at the menial level of the fishing trade may be explained by their poverty, but, as was noted earlier in this chapter, such people were transitory workers with scant local investment and most probably slipped back to England or Wales in their boats at the first outbreak of disturbances in the county. 66

Artisans involved with manufacturing were more fixed to their place of residence than the fisherfolk, which explains why hundreds of them made depositions which enable us to advance conclusions with greater confidence

65 Deposition of John Slade, shepherd (TCD, MS 822, fo. 116); deposition of Jonas Smith, gentleman (TCD, MS 822, fo. 161); lists of deceased fishermen from Glanbarahan appear in the deposition of Peter Scuse, yeoman (TCD, MS 823, fo. 18).
66 Deposition of William Hull (TCD, MS 824, fos. 253–9); deposition of Otto Redish (TCD, MS 822, fo. 194); deposition of Tristram Whitcombe (TCD, MS 822, fos. 26–7).
about the niches they had carved out for themselves in seventeenth-century County Cork. Most artisans, regardless of craft, claimed losses for their initial investment in establishing themselves in their trade, but this was seldom a significant sum. Richard Christmas of Kilmacabea placed a value of £5 on the implements of his trade, a further £5 on ‘English wool and stockcards’, and a value of £40 on the lease, with eight years to run, on one tucking mill, 8 acres of land, and a dwelling house. Similarly with Henry Tatardall, a tanner who had settled in the parish of Myross; he valued his implements of trade at £2, and a lease of a portion of land with nineteen years unexpired on which he had built a tanyard at £10. Of much greater loss to Tatardall were his leather and tanned hides which he estimated as worth £42 10s.67

Both Christmas and Tatardall revealed in their depositions that they were also involved with farming but on a minor scale. Other artisans, such as John Holland, blacksmith, of Enniskean, showed that they had a greater involvement with agriculture. Holland’s wife claimed that he had enjoyed an annual income of £10 ‘from the benefit of his trade’, and an annual profit of £5 ‘above the landlord’s rent’ from the lease that he farmed. On this he raised cows, horses, one mare, corn and hay, and he also possessed houses in Enniskean valued at £10.68 Holland’s relative prosperity would suggest either that he was longer settled in the county than Christmas and Tatardall, with more opportunity than they to invest the profits of his trade in the acquisition of land, or, alternatively, that an artisanal hierarchy existed, and that those, like blacksmiths or millers, whose presence was essential to the functioning of a farming population could dictate terms to their landlords and negotiate leases of land before they agreed to settle in any given community. Whichever the case, it does appear that the way upwards on the social scale for all artisans was perceived to be through the acquisition of farming land, sometimes supplemented by urban property.

This is made clear by the depositions of several who assumed the designation ‘yeoman’ or ‘gentleman’ but who revealed in their inventories that they were skilled artisans. One example is Thomas Lowe from the townland of Derrycoole in the parish of Kilbrogan. This yeoman, for so he described himself, enjoyed an annual income of £10 from the twenty-four-year lease which he held in that townland, and a further income of £7 per annum from a lease for one life. But if he was a yeoman in 1642, he had once been a tanner, because he valued at £4 5s. a lease for 180 years of a ‘parcel of land and a tanyard’ at Newcestown, and he placed a value of £40 on his investment in the tanyard itself. Similarly with Robert Horne, gentleman, from the parish of Kinneigh. Yeoman might have been a more appropriate social category for him, because the farm, which he held on a forty-one-year lease,

67 Deposition of Richard Christmas (TCD, MS 823, fos. 74–5); deposition of Henry Tatardall (TCD, MS 823, fo. 144).
68 Deposition of John Holland, blacksmith (TCD, MS 822, fo. 30).
rendered him but a modest profit. However, he was also a maltster, and presumably had originally worked as such in Munster because he valued at £2 10s. the ‘necessaries for malting’, including ‘hareclot and two great cisterns, one screen and other things’, and he also had ‘newly built a fair malt house which with other houses and tenements was worth twenty pounds per annum’. Horne seems to have had every intention of making a further investment in building because he claimed a loss amounting to £10 10s. for ‘wood, lime and boards’. Another who had made the transition from maltster to gentleman was Humfry Hunt of Clonakilty. 69

However a few who described themselves as artisans did reinvest in business and achieved spectacular success while also making some profit from farming and rentals from urban property. One of the most conspicuous in this respect was Henry Turner of Bandonbridge whose surname appeared among the tenants on the Bandon property of the earl of Cork. Turner claimed to have lost £774 because of the rebellion but he still described himself as ‘free-burgess and clothier’, rather than gentleman. He is the Cork settler whose deposition is most frequently cited because of his claim that he was involved in the export of broadcloths to Mr John Quarles of Amsterdam, ‘a Dutch merchant but an English man’, and he placed a value of £400 per annum on this trade, which at its height (according to another source) facilitated the textile manufacturing established at Tallow, County Waterford, by William Page, clothier, who, allegedly, ‘maintained above 150 poor people’.

This activity, as well as Turner’s self-portrait, suggests that he saw himself primarily as a businessman and manufacturer. However he also claimed to have lost tenements and farms, to the value of £150, which he held on a forty-eight-year lease, and the ‘land of Gaggan’ which he valued at £10. The stock on this land, oxen, cows, heifers, a bull, a gelding, and some nags, were valued at £130, and he also claimed to have lost £20 when his houses and garden plots in Sugar Lane near the North Gate of Bandon were deliberately destroyed lest the enemy should shelter in them. Turner listed a further loss of £30 because his seven houses in Bandon had been burnt by the rebels. Thus it appears that even Henry Turner had diversified his interests and invested in land and urban property, although his principal interest was in manufacturing and trade. Experience would have taught him the wisdom of diversification because, in May 1639, he had suffered the loss of his ship which had sailed from Youghal ‘full laden with cloth from Page and others’. 70

Another unsurprising feature of the depositions is that the wealthier the deponent, the wider his or her geographical horizons. Henry Turner’s contacts extended to Amsterdam, but his list of debtors suggests that his ambit

69 Deposition of Thomas Lowe (TCD, MS 825, fo. 130); deposition of Robert Horne (TCD, MS 823, fo. 114); deposition of Humfry Hunt (TCD, MS 823, fo. 49).
70 Deposition of Henry Turner (TCD, MS 824, fos. 118–19); Walley to Cork, 27 Jan. 1639/40 (Chatsworth, Lasmore Papers, vol. 20, no. 143).
of influence within Munster, while not local, remained regional, which would suggest that his outreach to Tallow, on the Waterford estate of the earl of Cork, was exceptional. His list of debtors, which extends to about 100 people, was made up almost entirely of the names of Irishmen with addresses which extended from Cork city westwards to Bantry, and of a smaller number of English and Old English merchants from such towns as Cork, Baltimore, Bantry, Templetrine, and Ballydehob. The list, interestingly, included ‘Old Lady Muskery and her son Owen Chartie’, and also a great number of Irish people from the town of Bandon, which is further proof that it was not entirely an English settlement. The fact that many of those who owed debts to Turner were described as gentlemen would suggest either that he was involved in the local sale of his broadcloth or that he was involved in moneylending. If the latter, his business was on a small scale because his total outstanding debts amounted only to £322. A further snippet of evidence that suggests that Henry Turner was tied to the local world of commerce and manufacturing while participating also in international trade comes to us from the deposition of John Langton, a gentleman of Bandonbridge. In this, Langton revealed that he was jointly responsible with Henry Turner for the maintenance of a farm, held on a thirty-one-year lease from ‘the consistory of the diocese of Cork’, for and on the behalf of ‘Edmund, John, Margaret and Henry Rufin the children and orphans of Matthew Rufin, deceased’.71

Such moving proof of Henry Turner’s loyalty to his immediate neighbours should not conceal the important role which he, and other large-scale manufacturers, played in drawing the series of artisan-based settler communities in Munster into a single regional economy which intersected with the overseas markets to which entrepreneurs, such as Turner, had access. The drawing of these several sub-economies closer together to constitute a regional economy was further advanced by the great trading merchants of Kinsale and Youghal, and by the lesser merchants and chapmen of these port towns and of inland towns such as Mallow and Mitchelstown. Those whose depositions provide the most detailed information on this function were Thomas Turner of Youghal, merchant (possibly a kinsman of Henry Turner), Tristram Whitcombe of Kinsale, merchant, Jonas Clone of Youghal, merchant, and Stephen Clove of Youghal, chapman. Each of these drew a distinction between the ‘disabled English Protestants’ and the ‘Irish rebels’ who had been indebted to them. In the case of the former, the deponents merely listed their names, thus implying that those English people listed were close neighbours or residents of the same locality as themselves.72

71 Turner’s deposition (TCD, MS 824, fos. 118–19); deposition of John Langton (TCD, MS 823, fo. 51).
72 Evidence for this and the succeeding paragraphs comes from the depositions of Thomas Turner (TCD, MS 824, fo. 99); deposition of Tristram Whitcombe (TCD, MS 822, fos. 26–7); deposition of Jonas Clone (TCD, MS 824, fo. 251); second compilation by Jonas Clone (TCD, MS 822, fo. 310); deposition of Stephen Clove (TCD, MS 823, fo. 58).
This list in the case of Thomas Turner, whose total debts were estimated by him at £693, extended to 150 names. Tristram Whitcombe, who estimated his debts at £3,986 17s. 10d., divided his English Protestant debtors into three categories; those who were ‘debtors by speciality’, ‘debtors upon account’, and ‘debtors for certain goods’. He listed twenty-seven names under the first category, seventeen under the second, and he provided no names for the third, they being ‘divers other poor people’. After this enumeration, he listed five names of ‘impoverished papists and Irish’ from Kinsale who were also ‘debtors of account’, and then a long list of Irish rebel debtors with addresses which extended throughout Counties Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. Whitcombe was the proprietor of a fishing palace; he revealed in his deposition that he occupied extensive farming lands with leases valued at £680; and he was also involved in the timber trade with losses of ‘tuns of timber, cords of wood, and pipe staves’ valued at £152 10s. His greatest business, however, must have been moneylending, because only this, as well as outstanding mercantile debts, would explain the huge sum that he claimed was owing to him at the outset of the insurrection.

The other striking group of merchant deponents appear to have been directly involved in trading, and the credit extended by them to retailers was probably in the form of consumer goods from which they would have extracted their profit once these middlemen had sold them on to the consumers. Information in these merchant depositions enables us to trace a map suggesting the orbit of the commercial influence of each Cork town, and these depositions also identify many Irish people in the southern half of Ireland who were connected by trade with Munster ports. Jonas Clone, for instance, was owed money by ‘Edmund Bryen of Clohine, County Tipperary, mercer; Hugh McCahir of Iland Co. Kerry, gent; Edmund Hackett of Waterford, merchant; Dennis O’Dwyer of Birr, King’s County, mercer; John Cleer, city of Kilkenny, merchant; Nicholas Arthur of Cullen, County Limerick, merchant; Philip O’Breda of Mitchelstown, merchant; Richard Comerford and Richard Bourke of Callen, Co. Kilkenny, mercers; William Banfield and William Smith of Birr, merchants; Henry Hendley and Thomas Hendley of Downe, Co. Cork, gents; Hugh Rigley of Clogh begg, Co. Longford, mercer; Henry Neale of the city of Waterford, merchant; and Edward Comyn of Fethard, Co. Tipperary, chapman’. A second list compiled by Clone, which included all the above names, was more extensive and included further names of traders in Birr and in Ballinvale, County Longford, as well as several individuals in County Roscommon. The list compiled by Thomas Turner of rebel traders who were in debt to him was concentrated on Counties Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and Tipperary and included the names of three ‘English papists now notorious rebels’, John and Anthony Rushell of Aglis, County Waterford, and George Carter of Thurles, County Tipperary, who apparently had established themselves as traders in Ireland. Stephen Clove, the
chapman from Youghal, could not provide a comprehensive list of his Irish rebel debtors because his ‘bills and bonds’ were kept in England, but those whose names he recalled were all in Birr, King’s County. More helpfully Clove detailed the commodities in which he had been trading, these being ‘six hundred weight of tobacco, linen yarn, linen cloth, wool and one pack of feathers’.73

Other deponents, such as Jonas Clone, revealed how they maintained contact with the outside world, while still others explain how they developed an inland trade in Ireland. Clone mentioned that he and his partners had lost 4 hundredweight of tobacco and ninety-four barrels of salt as well as ‘a quarter part’ of the barque the William of Youghal, when that vessel was captured by pirates at Wexford. How the imported tobacco was marketed in

73 See previous note.
Ireland is explained by the deposition of Simon Lightfoot, who described himself as a blacksmith of Kinsale, but who was obviously a man of many parts because he claimed a loss of £12 for ‘a horse laden with tobacco and one pair of scales and weights’. How the settler traders in Youghal devised such a remarkable orbit of influence is explained by the deposition of Richard Newman, carrier, where he claimed the loss of ‘ten pack horses with furnishings’; these, together with the packhorses of other carriers who did not make depositions, would have been used to convey imported goods, such as tobacco and salt, as far afield as Birr, Longford, and Roscommon, in exchange for linen, wool, tallow, hides and such other commodities of the countryside as would have attracted a market abroad.74

This attention to the artisan and trading elements of Munster settler society should not blind us to the fact that most settlers in Munster, as in all provinces of Ireland, were farmers. Many of these were specialist producers, most of them met the conditions laid down by their landlords concerning improvement, and collectively they provided raw materials, such as wool and hides, that created employment opportunities for the artisans, while they also produced an agricultural surplus for the market. While displaying a preference for a particular agricultural specialism, which presumably was dictated by such variables as the nature of the soil, the preference of their landlords, the distance from markets, and their own previous experience in agriculture, most cultivators aimed at self-sufficiency by mixing tillage and stock farming, with the balance in favour of their specialism which would have been raised for the market. Ellias Cottrell, yeoman, who farmed near Buttevant, held three farms on lease from Thomas Betworth, Esq., but his loss in corn, ‘threshed and in stack’, valued at £20 was outbalanced by the value he placed on his livestock, with cows and dry cattle valued at £20, sheep valued at £40, and a horse valued at £3. Thomas Paddeson, a husbandman from Kilgarriff, maintained a more even balance between tillage and stock raising on his one farm since he valued his losses as corn in the haggard and the house at £46 10s., corn in the ground at £18, and livestock at £45 14s. However he was primarily a tillage farmer, since he also claimed a loss of £30 ‘expended upon near forty acres of land provided for next summer’s tillage’. This exemplifies a great number of farmer depositions from Munster which impress because of the amount which tenants had invested in the improvement of their properties. Peter Warner, a yeoman from Ballymartle, placed a value of £50 on the costs incurred in ‘building, ditching, and improving his farm’. He was primarily a stock raiser, but his mention of a loss of ‘three horses laden with apples’ suggests he was supplementing his basic income through involvement with alternative agriculture. Sara Butler, widow, from Kilbrogan, also had an eye to supplementing the basic income that could be derived from raising

74 Deposition of Simon Lightfoot (TCD, MS 823, fo. 24); deposition of Richard Newman (TCD, MS 822, fo. 153).
livestock, since she estimated at 115. her losses in 'poultry and milk tubs'; items that might have been ignored if the inventory had been compiled by a man.75

Farmers, like the artisans in Munster, lived in a hierarchical society, and their mediators with the outside world were the noblemen, gentry, or the parochial clergy who would have been their landlords. This aspect of their lives hardly needs to be detailed because the leadership role of landowners and clergy is well understood. Attention, therefore, has been devoted to the function of the major manufacturers and traders because they were the people most responsible for the creation of an enterprise culture that extended the commercial range of Munster society far beyond its traditional confines. They also believed that they had a role to play as political leaders of their community, as is suggested by Tristram Whitcombe’s publishing two pamphlets in the years following the insurrection of 1641 to spur the Protestants of County Cork, and throughout Munster and Ireland generally, to greater effort to recover the ground that had been lost.76 Also, whether they realized it or not, they played a role which was hardly less important than that of the principal landowners in raising the economic performance of the settler society in Munster to a level against which that of the settler societies in all other provinces may be measured.

6.4. THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN ULSTER

Measuring the performance of the settler society in Ulster against that in Munster presents methodological problems, because only 572 of the depositions collected in 1642 and 1643 concern people who had been resident in Ulster before 1641. This figure for nine counties amounts therefore to only slightly more than half the number of the deponents for County Cork alone. Comparison between the settler societies in Munster and Ulster is even more difficult because the return of depositions for the province of Ulster is not evenly distributed, with the 572 returns breaking down into 54 for County Armagh, 249 for County Cavan, 8 for Donegal, 18 for Down, 143 for Fermanagh, 15 for Londonderry, 62 for Monaghan, 22 for Tyrone, and only a single deponent from County Antrim.77 It will be clear from what has been

75 Deposition of Ellias Cottrell, yeoman (TCD, MS 825, fo. 41); deposition of Thomas Paddeson, husbandman (TCD, MS 822, fo. 38); deposition of Peter Warner, yeoman (TCD, MS 823, fo. 97); deposition of Sara Butler, widow (TCD, MS 825, fo. 75).

76 Tristram Whitcombe, The Truest Intelligence from the Province of Munster (London, 1642); Whitcombe, A Sad Relation of the Miseries of the Province of Munster (London, 1645).

77 Depositions from County Armagh (TCD, MS 836); depositions from County Donegal (TCD, MS 839); depositions from County Cavan (TCD, MSS 832, 833); depositions from County Down (TCD, MS 837); depositions from County Fermanagh (TCD, MS 835); depositions from County Monaghan (TCD, MS 834); depositions from County Londonderry (TCD, MS 839); depositions from County Tyrone (TCD, MS 839); the depositions from County Antrim (TCD, MS 838) were all compiled in the 1650s, and the sole deposition from the 1640s for County Antrim is that of Henry Maxwell filed under the depositions for County Armagh (TCD, MS 836, fo. 118).
said in Chapter 4 on British settlement in Ulster that this patchy return of depositions bears no relationship to the spread of a British settler presence throughout the province. However the skewed return becomes immediately comprehensible when account is taken of the fact that Ulster bore the initial brunt of the onslaught of 1641, and that, probably, a higher percentage of the settlers there lost their lives, or were compelled to flee the country, than was the case in the other provinces of Ireland. Furthermore, many of those who fled the province probably like Henry Boine, clerk, from County Tyrone, made their escape into Scotland and proceeded from there to their places of origin in England. Therefore it comes as no surprise that the highest return of deponents from the province of Ulster is from Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, because these were the three Ulster counties which had most restricted access by water to the north and north-east coasts—and thence to Scotland—and their inhabitants had customarily looked southward towards Dublin for contact with the wider commercial world. When the settlers in these counties were forced to abandon their residences in 1641, it was to Dublin that they looked as a place of refuge, and it was there that many of the survivors had an opportunity to present evidence against their assailants. As they made their way across country, many of the male refugees found themselves drawn into the government army that was mobilized to confront the Ulster insurgents, particularly at the siege of Drogheda, and the depositions for the three counties of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan therefore include a uniquely high proportion of sworn statements from women who represented their husbands either because they had engaged in military action or had died in the struggle.

However, despite these peculiarities, the depositions from Ulster, or at least those from Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, bear out what has been said of the importance of towns as the focal point of British settlement in Ireland. Thus in the case of Monaghan, 13 of the 62 deponents for the entire county were residents of Clones; in Cavan 35 of the 249 deponents gave Belturbert as their place of residence; and in Fermanagh 35 out of 143 deponents for the entire county identified themselves as belonging to Newtown Butler. Also in each of these counties smaller clusters of settlers can be associated with smaller towns such as Glasslough, and Carrickmacross, in County Monaghan, and Cavan Town, Killeshandra, and Virginia in County Cavan.

These towns, and the many other inland and port towns that had been developed throughout the province of Ulster by the settler population, undoubtedly contributed significantly to the rental income that landlords enjoyed. Moreover, town-based artisans in Ulster seemed every bit as eager as their counterparts in Munster to take leases of land to augment, or even

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78 Deposition of Henry Boine (TCD, MS 839, 1).
79 Depositions from County Cavan (TCD, MSS 832, 833); depositions from County Fermanagh (TCD, MS 835); depositions from County Monaghan (TCD, MS 834).
supersede, the income they could earn from the pursuit of their craft. In so far as one can generalize from evidence relating to these three counties alone (two of them planted and one unplanted) together with scrappy evidence from other counties, then it appears that British settlers in Ulster before 1641 had organized themselves into securely based, closely knit groups and that the members of these groups were keenly conscious of the kinship networks which they had forged within their communities during thirty years of residence. This dimension to their lives emerges with particular clarity from the testimony for County Armagh where deponents who had suffered the loss of many friends and kin were at pains to identify those who had been killed and to trace their relationship with them. Thus, for example, William Clarke, tanner, from the parish of Havileglish, submitted a statement of the losses suffered not only by himself but also by his 60-year-old mother Margery Clarke, by his father-in-law John Wright, and by his brother-in-law, also John Wright, all of them close neighbours. Richard Warren, yeoman, also from Havileglish, complained that he had been separated from his wife and five children, that his brother William Warren of the same parish had been drowned in the Bann, leaving a widow and six children to the mercy of the rebels, and that his father-in-law Thomas Cattle, aged 60 years, and his brother-in-law Thomas Cattle, junior, had also held leases to land in Havileglish.\footnote{Deposition of William Clarke (TCD, MS 836, fos. 2–3); deposition of Richard Warren (TCD, MS 836, fo. 9).}

Despite such evidence of strong communal bonds among the settler population in Ulster, the information that the artisans, manufacturers, and traders (or their wives and widows) provided of their economic activities suggests that they were a less wealthy and a less dynamic group than their counterparts in Munster. This is not to suggest that the range of crafts represented among the urban settlers in Ulster was narrower than the skills identified by the settlers in the towns of Munster. On the contrary, the deponents who gave Newtown Butler as their address included tailors, grocers, weavers, butchers, innkeepers, shoemakers, tanners, merchants, and blacksmiths, while George Wirrall, gent., mentioned that he 'had sometimes served Mr. Harris salt peter master in London, [but] had no skill in the faculty himself'.\footnote{Deposition of George Wirrall, gent. (TCD, MS 835, fo. 231).} The details these artisans provided on their agricultural pursuits show that most of them had been engaged in stock raising, while some had been involved with tillage, had erected watermills and lime kilns, and a few exceptional ones had invested in 'husbandry gear' and engaged in bee-keeping.\footnote{See, for example, the depositions of Robert Barton, blacksmith (TCD, MS 835, fo. 73); Robert French, merchant (TCD, MS 833, fo. 116); Robert Hancock, grocer (TCD, MS 835, fo. 115); John Hayes, tanner (TCD, MS 835, fo. 116); Mary Hocklefield, wife of Robert H., tanner (TCD, MS 835, fo. 244); Richard Knowles, butcher (TCD, MS 835, fo. 129); Thomas Knowles, yeoman (TCD, MS 835, fo. 131); Agnes Mathem, wife of Thomas M. (TCD, MS 835, fo. 133); Elizabeth Moore (TCD,}
settlers there were conversant with agricultural improvement, but, on the other hand, relatively few of them practised the intensive and highly innovative agriculture which was such a striking feature of farming practised by yeomen, husbandmen, and artisans who had made their home in the more densely settled areas of Munster. There is also much less evidence in the Ulster depositions of the individualism that characterized settler society in Munster at the lower socio-economic levels, and many tenancy arrangements in Ulster seem to have been on terms of a collective contract with the landlord. Thus, for example, Henry Barnes, yeoman, testified that he and his father, also Henry, had been ‘living and stocked together’ when they were robbed of cattle, corn, hay, butter, and cheese.83

Furthermore, while the testimony offered in the depositions suggests that most settlers who farmed land in Ulster engaged in some tillage, the indications are that cultivation was neither extensive nor progressive. There were, for instance, few claims lodged for the loss of iron ploughs or plough irons or even for carts with ironclad wheels, and where the loss of grain (either in the haggard or in the field) was mentioned it usually concerned small quantities, and more often oats and rye rather than wheat and barley. One John Hibbots, a yeoman from County Cavan, did mention that he cultivated all the cereal crops together with peas and beans, such as was commonplace among farmer deponents in Munster, but the value Hibbots placed on these was but £10 out of his total estimated loss of £248.84 The evidence suggests that Ulster holders, whether yeomen or artisans, who leased property in the vicinity of the towns in which they resided were primarily stock raisers whose losses in moveable goods were expressed principally in terms of losses in livestock. These, admittedly, frequently included animals of English breed, usually bulls and milch cows, but the suspicion remains that these choice animals had been sold or leased to them by landowners wishing to improve the character of agriculture on their estates, since there is no evidence of a general improvement in animal husbandry in Ulster similar to what was evident throughout Munster. Instead, Ulster farmers seem to have permitted their livestock to graze over an open countryside with nothing but castration to prevent them from breeding promiscuously. This impression is prompted by the infrequent reference to enclosure in the Ulster depositions, as opposed to Munster where even the most humble deponents claimed to have incurred losses through the destruction of quicksets and ditches that they had erected to divide their holdings into field divisions.

MS 835, fo. 80; John Parry, yeoman (TCD, MS 835, fo. 155); John Right, butcher and innkeeper (TCD, MS 835, fo. 158); Ursula Robinson, wife of John R. (TCD, MS 835, fo. 213); Elizabeth Taylor, wife of John T., weaver (TCD, MS 835, fo. 176); Richard Walker, grocer (TCD, MS 835, fo. 182); Anne Booth, wife of James B., tailor (TCD, MS 835, fo. 78); George Wirrall, gent. (TCD, MS 835, fo. 231).

83 Deposition of Henry Barnes, yeoman (TCD, MS 832, fo. 185).
84 Deposition of John Hibbots, yeoman (TCD, MS 833, fo. 8).
Impression leads to a conclusion following a perusal of all the depositions for Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, and of particular statements by individual deponents from other counties. Eleanor James of Newtown Butler testified that her murdered husband, Abraham James, had been a ‘grasier’ whose herd was worth £1,407, and who had held leases of several parcels of land called the Island Callows together with ‘a horse pasture about eighteen tates’. Dorothy Rampine, widow of Zachary Rampine, acknowledged that her husband had been similarly engaged in stock raising when she mentioned the murder at Palmerstown in Dublin of a servant Robert Akersley who had been sent by her husband ‘with a drove of cattle to be sold in Dublin’.85 If settlers in Fermanagh could earn a living by supplying live cattle for the Dublin market, those in Counties Cavan and Monaghan were sufficiently close to supply milk and dairy produce as well as meat on the hoof for the Dublin consumer. This explains the regular claims by deponents in those counties for the loss of milch cows—with one specialist producer claiming to have suffered the loss also of twenty milch goats—and more exceptional losses such as that sustained by one ‘carrier’ of six horses laden with butter, and that by another of butter to the value of £40 ‘ready to be sent to Dublin’.86 These people were, obviously, meeting the demands for milk, butter, and cheese in the expanding city of Dublin, but while this was commendable in market terms the settlers seem to have been doing no more than diverting to Dublin the produce that, previous to plantation in Ulster, would have been consumed locally within the Gaelic community. That they were building upon what was customary rather than promoting something new is again suggested by the absence from the depositions of references to the loss of dairies and their contents, or of outhouses where the dairy cattle might have been kept in the winter months, or of substantial claims for losses of hay or other fodder crops.

If artisans and farmers, among the settlers in Ulster, failed to promote an agricultural revolution such as was implemented by their counterparts in Munster, the artisans and merchants also showed themselves to be relatively conservative in their business endeavours, or at least produced little evidence in their depositions that they had overcome the obstacles to attaining more than modest comfort during a lifetime of endeavour. Again, if we concentrate on the artisan and business deponents from Newtown Butler, it appears that Robert Barton, blacksmith, aged 65 years, had enjoyed, in the shadow of his days, a lease in the town of a house and shop together with its ‘backs- side’ which he valued at £35, that he had held ‘a stock of iron horseshoes, nails and an anvil and other things in the shop’ which he valued at £7, that

85 Deposition of Eleanor James (TCD, MS 835, fo. 122), deposition of Dorothy Rampine on behalf of her brother Edward Mayer who ‘lived within two miles of Newtown’ (TCD, MS 835, fo. 247).
86 Deposition of Symon Wesman, gent. (TCD, MS 833, fo. 204); deposition of John Dewsbury, carrier (TCD, MS 833, fo. 144); deposition of Edmund Sherwin (TCD, MS 833, fo. 64).
he possessed coals worth £2, and that his only other worldly goods were wearing apparel worth £4 5s. in ready money, and due debts which he estimated at £15 10s. John Right, butcher, had augmented the income from his trade by becoming an innkeeper but the scale of his operation must have been small since the losses he recorded were for ‘four beeves ready killed’, some ‘beer for innkeeping’ and for his house and ‘holmstead’. Indeed, the only commodity in Right’s possession that seemed destined for a distant market was ‘thirty stone of tallow’, an obvious by-product of his butchering trade. John Hayes, tanner, aged 58 years, was more prosperous than Barton or Right, which is not surprising since opportunities for tanners must have been considerable in a community dedicated to stock raising. Hayes estimated his wealth at £132 which he accounted for as £40 for his household goods and the provision for his house, £14 for his stock of cattle, £6 for hay, 40s. for corn, and £70 for hides, leather, and bark. John Taylor, weaver, seems also to have diversified into farming which must have been his principal source of income since his widow, Elizabeth Taylor, valued his possessions as £20 for eighteen head of cows and cattle, £10 for ‘household stuff’ which included bedding, brass, pewter, linen, and ‘other implements’, £12 10s. for ‘yarn ready’ as well as ‘butter and cheese’, £15 for the ‘working tools for a plough’, and £4 for hay. 87

While it may have appeared to their neighbours within their localities that all such individuals had attained material success, it is obvious from the inventories which they, or their widows, compiled that they were primarily concerned to cater for the needs of the local community and that they registered their desire to attain upward social mobility by leasing land within the locality in which they had settled rather than in expanding the output from their trade. What is absent, as compared with the artisan depositions from Munster, is evidence of artisans who had elevated themselves to become entrepreneurial exporters of manufactured goods, analogous to Henry Turner of Bandonbridge, or indeed evidence of artisans who had become promoters of proto-industry by extending raw material on loan to subsidiary artisans or traders within the native Irish community.

Those settlers in Newtown Butler who identified themselves as traders seem to have been but slightly more enterprising than the artisans. Some traders seem to have concentrated on the needs of particular sectors within their community, and in this respect Ursula Robinson, with her deceased husband John Robinson, must have catered for the social elite since their biggest single loss, valued at £60, out of total loss of £123, was ‘in wines as sack, white wine, claret wine, and acquavita’. The clientele of Richard Knowles seems to have been less specialized, since his claim that 100 Protestants from

87 Deposition of Robert Barton, blacksmith (TCD, MS 835, fo. 73); deposition of John Right, butcher and innkeeper (TCD, MS 835, fo. 158); deposition of John Hayes, tanner (TCD, MS 835, fo. 116); deposition of Elizabeth Taylor (TCD, MS 835, fo. 176).
Newtown Butler had been killed in the disturbances was sustained by his assertion that he ‘being a butcher by trade had dealings with most of them’. However, despite his extensive customer base, Knowles seems to have considered farming more socially acceptable than butchering since he identified himself as a yeoman, and acknowledged that his principal losses were in cattle, which he valued at £37, and in his lease of land which he valued at £8. Robert Hancock, grocer, aged 25 years, was obviously only commencing in business since he estimated his losses at but £35 10s. There must, however, have been opportunities in the grocery trade since the estimate of £792 placed by Richard Walker, grocer, on his losses isolated him as the most prosperous of those traders in Newtown Butler who made depositions. Walker was one of the few who remained primarily a businessman since he valued his lease within the township of Newtown at £100, his shop wares at £250, ready money at £250, his ‘rendered tallow and butter’ at £7, and his cattle at but £23. The only thing unusual about Walker’s inventory is that he had so much money lying idle; a counterpart in Munster would have used such surplus cash either to expand his business or to lend at interest. Indeed, the only individual within the town who seems to have been seriously engaged with moneylending was Robert French, merchant, whose biggest itemized loss was due debts to the value of £207 9s.88

The obvious conclusion that can be drawn from this testimony, most of it concerning Newtown Butler established by Sir Stephen Butler in County Fermanagh, is that neither the farming, nor the artisan, nor the trading elements within the settler community in Ulster attained the same level of prosperity, nor proved themselves as enterprising, as had their counterparts in Munster. What I have said here, based on the depositions for County Fermanagh, sustains the generalizations on British settler society in Ulster that I have previously posited on evidence emanating from Counties Cavan and Monaghan alone. More encouraging still, it is corroborated by a local study of plantation society in County Fermanagh which draws upon a much wider range of evidence.89

That study, by John Dennis Johnston, approaches society from the top downwards, and indicates that the settler proprietors in Fermanagh quickly symbolized their authority through the construction of fortified positions in strategic places.90 Johnston is most admiring of the Scots in this respect but he also shows (as I have done in Chapter 4 for all areas of Ulster) that Scots

88 Deposition of Ursula Robinson, widow (TCD, MS 835, fo. 213); deposition of Richard Knowles, yeoman (TCD, MS 835, fo. 129); deposition of Robert Hancock, grocer (TCD, MS 835, fo. 115); deposition of Richard Walker, grocer (TCD, MS 835, fo. 182); deposition of Robert French, merchant (TCD, MS 835, fo. 119).

89 My earlier work on this subject was challenged in debate by Raymond Gillespie in Irish Economic and Social History, 13 (1986), 90–100.

proprietors initially proved more enterprising than the English in drawing tenants to their estates. However he finds that in Fermanagh, the English, and more especially the English servitors, quickened their activity during the years 1613–19 when tenants could be readily recruited in England because of the deep economic recession there. He also indicates that proprietors from England seemed more willing, or more able, than Scots to employ agents to manage their properties, and he indicates how the more dynamic of these managers quickly acquired property of their own in the county through purchase or mortgage transactions. Johnston’s evidence also reveals that English proprietors and middlemen proved themselves more enterprising than the Scots in taking advantage of the commercial and manufacturing opportunities in the county, and that the towns of Enniskillen, Newtown Butler, and Lowtherstown were their creations. All of these findings of John Dennis Johnston are endorsed by evidence from the depositions made by 143 members of the settler community in Fermanagh, as is his further conclusion that plantation society in the county was very stratified, with a small number of successful landowners and professionals dominant over the ‘more humble folks whose lowly status meant that they hardly differed except in nationality and religion from the natives’ who continued to occupy the lower ranks of what quickly became a settler-dominated community.

Evidence from the depositions also bears out what Johnston has to say of those settlers who reached the top of the social pyramid in County Fermanagh. Individuals such as Nicholas Willoughby, Esq., of the barony of Coole; Ann Blennerhasset, the widow of Francis Blennerhasset, Esq., of Hassetsford; and Alice Champion, widow of Arthur Champion, Esq., of Shanoge showed through the inventories they presented as part of their depositions that they had attained a level of economic success that was commensurate with that reached by settlers of similar status in any part of Ireland. All three held property in several counties, and all estimated their losses in thousands of pounds. Their testimony also alluded to the substantial investment they had made in developing their properties and identified the means by which they had advanced themselves. Ann Blennerhasset supplied little detail on what she had lost besides mentioning that it included lands, castles, houses, and farms, as well as crops and stock on the land, and the outlay involved in ‘building improvements’ on the lands and farms in Counties Fermanagh, Cavan, and Monaghan, and on an ironworks which her husband had managed. More precise information on the improvements

92 Ibid. 77–9.
93 Deposition of Nicholas Willoughby (TCD, MS 835, fo. 184); deposition of Ann Blennerhasset (TCD, MS 835, fo. 236); deposition of Alice Champion (TCD, MS 835, fo. 196); Raymond Gillespic, ‘The Murder of Arthur Champion and the Rising of 1641 in Fermanagh’, Clogher Record, 14 (1993), 52–66.
promoted by the Champions emerges from the deposition of Alice Champion, where she made reference to the castle and mansion at Shanoge together with jewels, plate, and ready money to the value of £820 and ‘household stuff, hangings, carpets, bedding, and linen with other implements and furniture’ to the value of £500. The Champions had stocked their property in Fermanagh with sheep and cattle ‘of English breed’, and they apparently cultivated spring as well as winter corn. A detailed inventory of his losses in Counties Fermanagh and Monaghan was provided by Nicholas Willoughby, and they included large quantities of wheat, barley, and oats, a flock of 240 sheep, a herd of 200 oxen, cows, and younger cattle, and ‘about 40 stud mares as well as other mares, colts, and garrans’. Willoughby’s house at Carrow in the barony of Coole seems to have been furnished just as luxuriously as that of the Champions at Shanoge, because he estimated at £275 his loss in plate, household goods, apparel, and linen.

Even more interesting is the information on how these particular families had advanced themselves to the elevated position they enjoyed within settler society in Ulster. All three held some land in freehold, but more extensive properties were leased from other landowners and were then rented out in large blocks to subtenants on annual terms that allowed for the increase of rents as the properties were improved. The depositions indicate that they were also in the business of lending money, and the names of both Nicholas Willoughby and Arthur Champion do indeed appear as creditors in the lists of the Irish Statute Staple Book in Dublin. Willoughby divulged that he had lost up to £800 in ready money and that two of his properties were held by him ‘in mortgage for monies lent’, one for fifteen years to come and the other for twenty-six years to come. Alice Champion mentioned that she and her husband were owed £697 by ‘bonds, specialities, conveyances, and assurances for money lent and trusted’. Those who were thus placed under an obligation to the Champions are not identified in the depositions, and if most were native proprietors who had run into financial difficulty, the deposition shows that the Champions had also made use of their money to promote themselves at the expense of planter neighbours. Besides the manor and lands at Shanoge, which was the initial foundation of their wealth, the Champions had acquired the manor and lands of Castle Coole from Captain Roger Atkinson and Edith, his wife, for an annual rent of £20 which was to increase to £100 on the death of either one of the Atkinsons. Then, after the death of the surviving partner, the property of Castle Coole was to revert ‘to Arthur Champion and his heirs for ever’.94

This arrangement reveals how an astute manager in Fermanagh was able to gain possession of a property that produced an annual rental income of

£200 for little more than the payment of a retirement pension to the original owners. Professionals who had moved into the county enjoyed similar opportunities to advance themselves, although not to anything like the same level of affluence. Clergymen seem to have been particularly successful in promoting themselves and their children in County Fermanagh. They were able to do so because the Church, and its supporting institutions, had been well provided for under the terms of the plantation in Ulster, and clergymen were thus able to employ their surplus income to extend their holdings in the county. How this could be done is evident from the deposition of the Reverend George Fletcher. His parsonage paid him an annual income of £200, and his stock on his parsonage lands in 1641 was estimated by him as worth £270 in cattle and £60 in corn. He also owned household goods, books, plate, apparel, and ready money to the value of £150, and he claimed that debts to the amount of £360 were owing to him from British and Irish neighbours. The size of this sum, and the fact that similar amounts were owing to the other Protestant clergy from County Fermanagh, suggests that moneylending to their neighbours was one means by which these clergymen advanced their fortunes and established a footing for family members. More of the income that came from their church lands must have been used to pay entry fines to landowners who would accept them as tenants. George Fletcher had acquired a long lease on an extensive property from Nicholas Willoughby, another from Christopher Whittendale, yeoman, of which sixteen years were still unexpired in 1641, and a third extensive lease from Mr John Hamilton for the duration of Hamilton’s life.95

Other clergymen from the county identified similar arrangements they had transacted with the Protestant proprietors there. One Robert Flack of Mullaghmore, the ‘son and heir to Robert Flack, clerk, deceased’, claimed gentry status for both himself and his brother Philip Flack. That he considered himself entitled to do so is suggested by his ownership of ‘freehold lands of inheritance of clear yearly rent of three score pounds whereupon there was built one fair house or castle which cost the building six hundred pounds’. He was able to afford this style of living because he also possessed the rents and profits of considerable church land besides other leases of property, and he had stocked an extensive home farm and engaged in lending money to his neighbours. Another church family that made a social impact on the county was the Slacks, three members of which, all from the parish of Kinaley in the diocese of Kilmore, tendered depositions. The first of these, James Slack, clerk of the parish, was a man of apparently modest means enjoying, besides an annual stipend of a mere £7, ‘one lease during Mr Bedell his incumbency of a piece of land called Cullin on which [he] had built two

95 Deposition of George Fletcher (TCD, MS 825, fo. 105); Gillespie, ‘The Murder of Arthur Champion’, also points to the Champions as moneylenders.
houses from the ground’ which he valued at £25. The second, more prosperous, member of the kin was Martha Slack, widow, and daughter of Edward Hatton, archdeacon of Armagh, deceased. She estimated her total losses at £600 which was accounted for principally by rents from her land at Kinaley, a further lease, with sixty-nine years unexpired, of a substantial property which she had been granted by Sir Stephen Butler and which had devolved to Sir William Balfour; a lease near Enniskillen granted her by the earl of Meath and Sir Samuel Maynard which had seventeen years to run; and a further lease of a ‘great tate’ granted her by Humphrey Galbraight, dean of Clogher, and Ebenezer Middleton ‘authorised by Sir William Balfour’. The third member of the family was Edward Slack, who held from David Creighton a lease of a tate and a half of land, with thirty-one years unexpired, which he valued at £60; and a second lease, which he valued at £180, of a ‘great tate’ with twenty years unexpired which he too held from Humphrey Galbraight and Ebenezer Middleton. While these deponents did not identify themselves as relatives it seems likely that Martha was the widow of a clergyman who had previously served in the parish, and that James and Edward were sons who would eventually inherit the property that remained in her charge. If such was the case it again provides evidence that clergymen could advance themselves socially and economically in Ulster because it was well recognized that they had money to invest in the property and they were generally known to be prudent tenants. However, the fact that clergymen can be identified among the most enterprising in Ulster again points to the relative poverty and conservativeness of the artisans and traders among the British settler population in that province.96

These depositions from clergymen and their children reveal that economic and social advancement could be attained by enterprising settlers in County Fermanagh provided they had money to pay entry fines and improve the property. So also do the depositions from those who held civil offices in the county and even some of those who assumed the description ‘yeoman’. Thereafter, however, the depositions reveal the economic chasm that was identified by John Dennis Johnston. This yawned between the relatively small number of affluent gentry and professional deponents and people of modest means who categorized themselves by trade or occupation. Thus Richard Walker, grocer, was the one person involved in trade in Newtown Butler who by 1641 had attained any degree of material comfort.

This portrayal of the structure of settler society in County Fermanagh is significant because it conforms with what I have depicted previously of the settler community in Counties Monaghan and Cavan. There too the depositions suggest that the farming and artisan population had attained but modest

96 Deposition of Robert Flack (TCD, MS 835, fo. 201); deposition of James Slack (TCD, MS 835, fo. 167); deposition of Martha Slack (TCD, MS 835, fo. 168); deposition of Edward Slack (TCD, MS 835, fo. 170).
comfort, and there is scant evidence that they had any significant involvement with moneylending, much less with the encouragement of proto-industry. Quite the most successful of the traders in those counties whose depositions have endured was William Smith of Belturbet, County Cavan. He seems to have been a retailer rather than a producer of manufactured goods since, besides horses and English cows to the value of a mere £17, he calculated a loss of £300 worth of shop wares, itemized as broadcloths, kersies, friezes, hops, iron, steel, stockings, and tobacco. He also estimated a loss of £110 in ready money, household goods to the value of £240, and the furnishings of a second house which had been ‘pawned’ by Sir Alexander Gordon as security for a loan of £60.97 The small number of deponents in those two counties who categorized themselves as ‘gentlemen’ were usually wealthier than the norm, and some of them had diverted their surplus cash into moneylending. However their depositions suggest that, unlike the gentlemen deponents in Munster, they do not at all seem to have been involved with ‘progressive’, ‘experimental’, or ‘alternative’ agriculture. Instead, they engaged upon the same mixed farming as the yeomen, and like them they had invested in milch cows, bees, bulls, horses and mares, sheep, beehives, butter, bacon, and furnishings.

The social superiors to these gentlemen in Counties Cavan and Monaghan, as in Fermanagh, were a small group of wealthy gentlemen and senior clergy who estimated their total wealth in thousands of pounds, and above them the knights, and noblemen, who maintained residences commensurate with their wealth and social position. 98 These latter possessed land in several counties, usually in the contiguous counties of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, but sometimes further afield. The detailed inventory of his residence at Sweden in County Cavan (listing even an Irish harp) supplied by Lieutenant Arnold Cosby indicates that his mansion and its surrounds was every bit as impressive as that described by Sir Hardress Waller in Castletown, County Limerick. Moreover, Cosby, like Waller, engaged upon the selective breeding of cattle and horses on enclosed parks close to his principal residence. Cosby also promoted scientific tillage farming on his property, although not to the same extent as Waller, and most of this may have been on his property in Queen’s County which he valued equally with his Cavan estate.99

These truly wealthy deponents from Ulster clearly gave as exemplary a lesson in civil living as did their counterparts in Munster or elsewhere in the country. Any evidence that survives concerning the promotion of manufacturing enterprise in Ulster also comes from these depositions of the social

97 Deposition of William Smith, merchant (TCD, MS 833, fo. 189).
98 See, for example, deposition of Ambrose Bedell, gent., son of the late lord bishop of Kilmore (TCD, MS 833, fo. 105); deposition of Edward Philpott, Esq., of Belturbet who had married the widow of Sir Stephen Butler (TCD, MS 833, fo. 182).
99 Deposition of Lieutenant Arnold Cosby (TCD, MS 833, fos. 124–5); deposition of Sir Hardress Waller (TCD, MS 829, fos. 284–90).
elite rather than from lower down the social scale. Mention has already been made of the involvement of the Blennerhasses with ironworks in County Fermanagh, and it is likely that Alexander Knight, iron-founder from The Garrison in that county, had been employed by the Blennerhasses until he was forced to seek work elsewhere because ‘of some discontent given him by the master of the works’.100 This ironworks was probably analogous to that erected by Sir Thomas Staples at Lissen near Cookstown in County Tyrone where, according to his widow’s recollection of twelve years later, he had employed thirty or forty workers.101 Such endeavours were dwarfed by the iron-smelting enterprise promoted by Sir Charles Coote in Counties Cavan, Leitrim, and Sligo. His agent valued the total investment that Coote had made in these enterprises, combined with two years’ profits, as £7,548 7s. 10d., and he calculated that the annual profit on the forges, combined with the rent generated by Coote’s land in these three counties, amounted to £1,194. Coote’s biggest investment was in his double forge and furnace, with associated bays, at Dowbally, County Cavan. He had built another furnace at Drumanlasse in County Leitrim, and he also suffered from the loss of boats, cots, and oxen which he had used for transport, as well as cordwood and coals at Dowbally, bar-iron at Sligo, and cast-iron, cordwood, and coals at Drumanlasse. Here, certainly, was an enterprise which bears comparison with any in Munster, but, significantly, it had been inspired by what was happening in Munster and was partly the product of a business deal of 1630 between Sir Charles Coote, the earl of Cork, and John Bellowe of London whereby Bellowe agreed to deliver to Sligo once every six months for six or seven years 150 tons of iron for smelting.102

This enterprise by Coote was not only exemplary but was accepted as such both by John Winthrop in 1643 when advising on how best to promote iron manufacturing in the forests of Massachusetts, and by the Boate brothers in 1652, when they were expounding on the economic potential that Ireland would offer once it was brought under the firm control of godly Protestants.103 Therefore, since the relatively poor performance of the settler community in Ulster, both as farmers and manufacturers, cannot be attributed either to ignorance or to lack of encouragement and example from their betters, we

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100 Deposition of Frances Knight (TCD, MS 835, fo. 126).
101 Deposition of Roger Markham, servant to Captain Bagwell (TCD, MS 839, fo. 17); deposition of Lady Charity Staples, 1653 (TCD, MS 839, fo. 68); deposition of Sir Baptist Staples, 1653 (TCD, MS 839, fo. 74).
102 Deposition of John Bourk, gent., agent for Sir Charles Coote (TCD, MS 833, fo. 223); Agreement between Cork, Coote, and Bellowe 30 July 1650 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 17, no. 25).
103 ‘Sir Charles Coote’s Account of his Ironworks [1643]’, in The Winthrop Papers, vol. iv (Boston, 1944), 393–5; Gerard Boate, Ireland’s Natural History (London, 1652), repr. in A Collection of Tracts and Treatises Illustrative of the Natural History, Antiquities . . . of Ireland (Dublin, 1860), 1–148, see pp. 112–15 where Boate mentioned that these mines did not prove as profitable to Coote as those he had developed at Mountrath despite the fact that they produced a better-quality ore.
must look for a deeper explanation. The most obvious one is that settlers in Ulster came in considerable part from Scotland or the north and north-west of England, and therefore could not be expected to match the achievements of the settlers in Munster who seem to have been drawn heavily from the more economically sophisticated southern half of England, with a few coming from the Netherlands. This explanation, which was not accepted by historians of Ulster when I first proposed it in 1985, bears repeating because recent scholarship on rural society in Lowland Scotland has made it abundantly clear that divisions between rich and poor were wide, and expanding, and that the farming and artisan population lived so close to bare subsistence that investment by tenants in the improvement of their farms was an impossibility. Scottish migrants to Ulster would, obviously, have been less capable than those who remained at home of fostering proto-industry or cultivating agricultural improvement because, as was noted in Chapter 4, many of them had already incurred debt in making the move to Ulster. Furthermore, as was also noted in Chapter 4, many of those Scottish settlers who did make their way to Ulster during the early years of the plantation to settle in plantation towns such as Stewartstown were primarily interested in acquiring land, and wished to pursue their crafts only in so far as this would supplement their income from farming. The result of such settlement satisfied the government that its conditions were being complied with, but the founding of towns was also accepted as the symbol of success which would explain why, in 1622, Sir William Stewart reported proudly of his town-building achievement. Twenty years later he claimed to have suffered a loss of £2,000 from the destruction of his house, the church he had built, the livestock and crops on his home farm, as well as two market towns and ‘certain villages’ he had erected in the vicinity of Newtownstewart. Significantly, in neither instance was any claim made for an investment by either the proprietor or his tenants in the promotion of manufacture. 104

Less is known of the capabilities of the English settlers who made their way to Ulster. Most who settled there at the outset of the plantation scheme seem to have been disbanded soldiers, or were urban artisans or professionals who soon negotiated tenancies-in-chief for themselves, frequently with more than one proprietor. Some of these became the ‘gentlemen’ of later years whom we just witnessed living in conditions of relative affluence, but whose social and economic advance was achieved primarily through the acquisition of further land rather than through the development of what they already held or through investment in manufacturing. Quite obviously, other English people, some of them farmers and artisans, settled in Ulster over the course of time and these also feature in the depositions. The destruction of the town of Dungannon, which had been admired by the commissioners of 1622, was

104 Deposition of Sir William Stewart (TCD, MS 839, fo. 45).
described ruefully by Captain John Perkin in his deposition.\textsuperscript{105} Similarly in County Armagh several deponents spoke proudly of the ‘brave royal plantation’ and the ‘plantation eight miles square’, mostly English in character, that had been established in the vicinity of Loghgall and Portadown.\textsuperscript{106} Unfortunately, because of the paucity of depositions from these counties, the inward investment resulting from this English migration into Ulster remains obscure.

Another factor which would explain the relative lack of economic progress among the Ulster settler community was that the plantation there was more recent, and, as was explained in Chapter 4, proprietors in the plantation, especially undertakers, were pursued relentlessly by the government to satisfy the plantation conditions. They would thus have been left with little profit to invest in the farms they were assigning to their tenants, and it was only the truly committed who were prepared to take the risk of promoting manufacturing enterprises in the hope that these would ultimately enhance their rent rolls.

Perhaps more important than either of these factors in explaining the sluggish economic performance of plantation society in Ulster, as compared with that in Munster, was the question of location. Planters of the better-quality land in Munster, and their tenants, were fortunate to find themselves on estates which were well drained by rivers which had ancient port towns at their mouths which, in turn, had secure trading relationships with towns in the south and south-west of England and Wales. Once foreign Protestant traders had established a presence in these towns, or, as in the case of Youghal, came to dominate the town, they could readily expand upon these connections to establish contact with markets in the Netherlands, with the wine islands in the Atlantic, and even with the nascent English colonies in North America and the West Indies. Through these connections they were able to find lively markets for their agricultural output, for processed natural resources such as fish, tallow, and timber supplies, and for the manufactured goods produced locally from raw materials, notably wool and hides, that were abundantly available throughout the province. This, probably more than anything else, explains the enthusiasm for investment and improvement evident among all sectors of planter society in Munster, and not only among the elite.

Ulster, by comparison, enjoyed none of these advantages. The waterways of the Erne, the Swilly, the Foyle, and the Bann did not have any consequential urban centres at their mouths, and the improvised port towns of Derry and Coleraine, as well as established ports, such as Belfast, and

\textsuperscript{105} Deposition of Captain John Perkin (TCD, MS 839, fos. 40-4); see also the deposition of Anne Bollingbrooke, widow of John Bollingbrooke of the free school (TCD, MS 839, fo. 30).

\textsuperscript{106} Deposition of Francis Leiland, of Drumadmore, yeoman (TCD, MS 836, fo. 98); deposition of Margaret Phillips, widow of Thomas Phillips, linen weaver (TCD, MS 836, fo. 66).
Carrickfergus and Newry on the north-east coast, never matched the commercial importance of the Munster ports during the first half of the seventeenth century. Worse still for Ulster, these ports either looked out on the uninviting waters of the north Atlantic, or eastwards towards Scotland whose western ports provided but limited markets for Ulster produce. Furthermore the towns in Ulster experienced a weak economic stimulus compared with the strong boost provided by the south of England to the economy of Munster. Even then, much of the interior of Ulster was distant from these natural waterways, and settlers in these areas had to look instead to the overland market provided by Dublin. Thus Dublin became the economic as well as the political capital of many who had settled in Ulster.

6.5. The British Presence in Leinster

One would expect from the received version of seventeenth-century Irish history that there would be little point in comparing the British presence in Leinster with that in the other provinces of Ireland. Most authorities agree that Dublin city, as the seat of government and as the effective centre from which the Church of Ireland was managed, was the home of those who held leadership positions in these institutions, and it is also accepted that Protestant clergy, many of them graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, had been appointed to parish duties in the counties of the Pale. However, apart from this limited number of people and apart from those Protestants who had come into the possession of land in those few areas of the province, notably King’s and Queen’s Counties as well as Wexford and parts of County Longford, where plantation had taken place, it is presumed that the province of Leinster was firmly under Old English influence. Moreover it is suggested that the province also remained the heartland of Irish Catholicism, and especially of the revived Catholicism inspired by the continental Counter-Reformation, because priests returning to Ireland after an education on the Continent could rely upon the support of the Old English landed elite and merchant patricians who remained confidently in control of their localities.107

While it is valid in several respects, this representation of Leinster society makes insufficient allowance for a significant Protestant community being present there and it will come as a surprise even to specialists that the number of Protestants from Leinster who made depositions in 1641 far exceeded that for the province of Ulster, and that it falls short of the return from the province of Munster by fewer than 400. When the 1,064 individuals with Leinster addresses are located on a map, it becomes clear that an urban presence was as striking a feature of Protestant settlement in that province as it was in

107 This is the impression conveyed in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, vol. iii (Oxford, 1976); in Colm Lennon, The Lords of Dublin in the Age of Reformation (Dublin, 1989), and even in Ford, The Protestant Reformation.
Munster and Ulster. Of the Leinster deponents a total of 267 individuals associated themselves with Counties Dublin and Wicklow, and of these the overwhelming majority gave addresses in Dublin city or in the cluster of smaller urban communities, such as Finglas, Miltown, Tallaght, Castleknock.

Map 6.4. The distribution of British settlers in Leinster c.1641

Note: This map reflects the distribution of those British Protestants with Leinster addresses who made depositions in the aftermath of the 1641 insurrection.
Portmarnock, Coolock, Swords, Balruddery, and Rathfarnham, that abutted the capital on three sides. It seems safe to assume that those Protestants who made depositions were members of a minority settler community within what was still a predominantly Catholic city, dominated by Old English merchants. The most prominent deponents, as one would have expected, were a significant number of officials, associated with the city corporation as well as with the Church and the state, and while many of these indicated that they had held property in counties far distant from Dublin, all of them also held valuable possessions in the city and environs. The extent to which much of the land in the vicinity of Dublin, where the leaders of Dublin’s Catholic patricians had been dominant until well into the sixteenth century, had slipped into Protestant ownership was unwittingly revealed in the deposition of James Bentley of Dublin city, clerk, where he identified ten principal castles and residences close to Dublin that had become symbols of Protestant power in the years previous to 1641.

Another influential group among the Dublin deponents was many gentlemen, with their subordinate yeomen, farmers, and husbandmen, who held land in close proximity to the city and in the surrounding countryside, while the more prosperous of these also held title to land in counties remote from Dublin. To these were added some merchants and entrepreneurial artisans, notably clothiers, vintners, innkeepers, and goldsmiths, whose lists of losses again provides evidence of far-flung landed interests as well as their possession of property in and close to the city. Far more numerous than these were the

108 The Dublin depositions are filed under TCD, MSS, 809, 810, 811.
109 From the Dublin corporation we have the deposition of Thomas Wakefield, Mayor of Dublin (TCD MS, 809, fo. 342); for the Church we have depositions from a great number of parish clergy, as well as a series of depositions concerning property owned by William Bulkeley, archdeacon of Dublin, or members of his family (TCD, MS, 809, fos. 253, 256, 259, 260, 261), and two depositions (TCD, MS 809, fos. 313, 314) concerning the property of the archdiocese of Dublin; the state officials (great and small) who gave depositions, or on whose behalf depositions were made, were Sir William Sambach, solicitor general (TCD, MS 809, fo. 263), Sir Gerard Lowther, chief justice (TCD, MS 809, fo. 293); Thomas Parry, marshal of the Four Courts (TCD, MS 809, fo. 323), Thomas Wilkinson, attorney general of Chancery (TCD, MS 809, fo. 354), Sir George Shirley, chief justice (TCD MS 810, fo. 178); Matthew Bentley, messenger of the Council board (TCD, MS 810, fo. 226), Roger Parr, clerk of the court of Exchequer (TCD, MS 810, fo. 237), John Pooley, deputy usher of the Court of Wards and Liveries (TCD MS 810, fo. 297), James Kerdiff, attorney in the Court of Exchequer (TCD, MS 810, fo. 317), and John Sayer, attorney, King’s Bench (TCD, MS 810, fo. 341).
110 Deposition of James Bentley, Dublin city, clerk (TCD, MS 810, fo. 223); see also the deposition of Thomas Howell of St Patrick’s, receiver of rents for the archbishop of Dublin (TCD, MS 809, fos. 313, 314), which alludes to diocesan property in close proximity to the city; for the earlier Catholic merchant dominance of the area see Lennon, The Lords of Dublin.
111 See, for example, the deposition of John Wakefield, Dublin city, gent., who claimed title to property in Belfield, County Meath, as well as land in County Wexford (TCD, MS 809, fo. 344). See, for example, the deposition of Robert Bennett, Dublin city, alderman, who held farms in Ballymore Eastace, County Kildare, in County Meath, in Carlingford, County Louth, and elsewhere throughout Ireland (TCD MS, 810, fo. 310), or the deposition of John Woodcock, Dublin city, goldsmith, who held a farm in County Meath (TCD, MS 810, fo. 193).
artisan of modest means—and their widows—whose skills ranged from butcher, glazier, slater, cooper, blacksmith, shoemaker, skinner, beer-brewer, fishmonger, brickmaker, bricklayer, barber-surgeon, wheelwright, miller, cutler, tailor, baker, gardener, to those trained in such arcane pursuits as ‘[w]oade man’, farmer of allum, stationer, coachmaker, coach-harness maker, silk weaver, musician, and seller of strong waters. To these were added individual artisans, such as Henry Gee, surveyor, and Nathaniel Bennett, battery master, whose skills were essential to the work of government.113

The principal attraction of Dublin for people with such diverse talents was that they were encouraged to pursue their crafts in the many manufacturing enterprises that were being sponsored by their betters in the city and its vicinity, while many may have settled in Dublin in the hope of finding a local market for their goods and services. At the same time, they were strategically located to supplement their earnings from their trades by taking leases of land from the officials and churchmen who owned property close to the city, and who had acquired estates in counties and provinces remote from Dublin, either through grants from the crown or through astute purchase. To this extent, the artisan settler population that was attracted to Dublin made it possible for those Protestants who had acquired occupancy of land in or close to the city to create Protestant enclaves within a wider Catholic community. The existence of this artisan population also facilitated the concern of senior officials in Dublin to promote the official effort to Protestantize those parts of the country where land was gradually coming into Protestant possession. Most of this change of ownership was, as was noted in previous chapters, being effected through plantation, but the depositions for Dublin indicate more clearly than any other source how the change from Catholic to Protestant possession of land throughout Ireland was being accelerated through commercial mechanisms.

This information comes to us because deponents from Dublin, as from elsewhere in Ireland, itemized not only the loss of their actual possessions, but also of what might potentially become theirs because of debts that were due to them. This aspect of the Dublin depositions reveals the extent to which, by 1641, Dublin had become the financial as well as the political capital of Ireland, with Protestants, most of them recent arrivals in the city, enjoying a particularly important function within this financial network because of their ability to connect it to the larger financial world of England. That it was so linked becomes immediately apparent from depositions such as that given by Robert Culme of the city of London who had come to Dublin to recover £2,900 he had lent in small sums to ‘several persons in Ireland’, and unsurprisingly Culme’s name also appears among those listed as creditors on

113 Deposition of Henry Gee of Dublin city, surveyor (TCD, MS 810, fo. 169); deposition of Nathaniel Bennett, Dublin city, battery master of the king’s artillery and also a clothier with interests in Newmarket, County Cork (TCD, MS 810, fo. 309).
the Irish Statute Staple Books. William Coventry, ironmonger, of the city of
Chester, but now of Dublin, was similarly engaged in an effort to recover
small sums, which amounted to £600, from debtors with residences stretching
from Dublin, Dundalk, and Strangford to Belfast, Carrickfergus, Derry,
Enniskillen, Newtown [Butler], Downpatrick, and Killefin in County Down.
The unfortunate Edmond Nulty from the parish of St. Clements Co.
Middlesex, tailor, declared himself utterly disabled, and unable to return
to London for fear of arrest by his own creditors, because of a series of sums,
amounting to a total of £498, owed to him by named Irish gentlemen, some
Protestant but mostly Catholic.114

More generally the depositions from Dublin indicate that individual
Protestants, of whatever rank, who had made some money were also engaged
in lending, frequently with land in various parts of the country as security on
loans. A prime example is Matthew de Renzy, whose father we previously
encountered as a struggling, if opinionated, planter in the Irish midlands, but
who later procured an estate for himself in the Wexford plantation. Matthew
Sr. had also acquired a Dublin residence where he held £1,007 in silver and
gold at the time of his death in 1634. The son obviously followed where the
father left off. Thus, by 1641, Matthew de Renzy, Jr., had built up an impres-
sive portfolio of debtors who had designated land in Counties Kilkenny and
Wexford as security on the money which they owed him, and further evidence
of his lending is recorded on the Irish Statute Staple Books.115 Some senior
administrators also employed the profits of office to engage in financial deal-
ings with, for example, Sir William Sambach, solicitor general, holding bonds
in 1641 to the value of £3,800. The experience of Sir Philip Perceval, whose
mortgaging activities in Munster were discussed when considering his estate
records, suggests that the extent of Sambach’s business involvement is plaus-
able, although Sambach’s name does not appear among creditors on the Irish
Statute Staple where Perceval occupies many columns.116

Altogether more specialized and single-minded as moneylenders were those
deponents who assumed the description ‘merchant’ or ‘goldsmith’ and whose
inventories show that they were dedicated to lending money on the security
of land either in their own right or as agents of moneylenders in England.
For example Bartholomew Drope, Dublin city, merchant, claimed to have

114 Deposition of Robert Culme (TCD, MS 809, fo. 273); deposition of William Coventry (TCD,
MS 810, fo. 128); deposition of Edmond Nulty (TCD, MS, 809, fo. 317); Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha
(eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 85.
115 Information on de Renzy, Jr., is available in TCD MS, 809, fo. 218, which concerns his prop-
erty in the midlands, and in TCD MS 810, fo. 95, which concerns his property in Wexford and his
financial transactions; Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, p. 88; for infor-
mation on de Renzy, Sr., see Chapter 4 above, pp. 176–7, and Brian Mac Guairia, ‘A Planter’s
Funeral, Legacies and Inventory: Sir Matthew de Renzy (1577–1634)’, Royal Society of Antiquaries,
Journal 127 (1997), 18–33.
116 Deposition of Sir William Sambach, Kt., solicitor general (TCD, MS 809 fo. 343); on Perceval
see above, pp. 328–9, and Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 133–4.
Note: This map is based principally on testimony given in the 1641 depositions by those Protestant merchants and entrepreneurs who gave the city of Dublin, and its environs, as their base of operations in Ireland. It takes no account of the trading contacts of Dublin’s Catholic merchants.

Map 6.5. Dublin’s network of Irish commerce c.1641
had due to him in 1641 ‘from such as he conceived to be solvent men in the kingdom of Ireland, upon judgements, statute staples, by specialities, and by book, eleven thousand pounds of principal money, one thousand pounds interest, and three hundred pounds costs in suits of law’, and consistent with this claim is his listing among creditors on the Irish Statute Staple Books. Thomas Humphrey of Dublin city, gent., who had acted for four years as ‘agent’ for Thomas Stones of London, merchant, ‘for reserving on the debts’ due to Stones, appears to have been less discerning than Drope since those who owed money to Stones included the notoriously insolvent Lord Maguire of Enniskillen and Hugh McMahon of County Fermanagh, as well as many other Irish landowners of doubtful financial worth in Counties Monaghan, Tyrone, and Donegal. The list of debtors supplied by other deponents suggests that they had confined their financial dealings to particular parts of the country with, for example, James Johnson concentrating on County Galway. Others, however, such as John Eddis, Dublin city, merchant, seem to have been promiscuous in their lending practices since those who owed Eddis multitudinous small sums of money were merchants, chapmen, and yeomen from places as far apart as Athlone, Wicklow, Kildare, Louth, Portumna, Cavan, Dublin, Wexford, Longford, Tyrone, Sligo, Leitrim, and King’s and Queen’s Counties.117

The question of how this high level of indebtedness affected relationships between these Protestant entrepreneurs and their numerically dominant Catholic dependants will be considered in the next chapter. For the moment, it should be sufficient to note that the information provided by the deponents on their business activity suggests that they complemented rather than displaced the established Catholic elite in the city. Moreover, the lists of debtors they identified in their depositions probably represent but one side of what were complex networks of mutual dependency. This suggestion is given substance by the deposition of John Crooke and Richard Sergier, stationers. This pair had, for five years before 1641, ‘kept a stationers shop well furnished with Marte [French market] and English books for, and at such rates, as this kingdom was [previously] not supplied with all’, and they had catered for ‘ministers and customers of all professions through the kingdom’, who had left them with outstanding debts to the value of £600 on ‘several parcels of books’. The multidenominational dimension to their

117 Deposition of Bartholomew Drope, Dublin city, merchant (TCD, MS 810, fo. 231); Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 92; deposition of Thomas Humphrey, Dublin city, gent. (TCD, MS 810, fo. 157); deposition of James Johnson, Dublin city, merchant (TCD, MS 810, fo. 159); deposition of John Eddis, Dublin city, merchant (TCD, MS 810, fo. 196); for details on the activities of an apparently specialist moneylender see the deposition of Nathaniel Stoughton, Dublin city, goldsmith (TCD, MS 810, fo. 181); the subject of credit in Ireland at this time is discussed in the general, as well as in the particular of the function of the Statute Staple in providing security on loans, in Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 1–35; I am grateful to Jane Ohlmeyer for permitting me a view of this introductory chapter while it was still in typescript.
enterprise seems clear from the further testimony of Crooke that before the rebellion ‘divers times and very frequently the priests, friars and others that resorted to his shop to buy books enquired very earnestly for a book called Mariana which he had not’.\textsuperscript{118}

Other positive contributions of the settler community to the general welfare of Dublin were broadening the commercial reach of the capital and bringing it into closer association with enterprises that were being promoted where plantation was under way. Many of those Dublin residents who had acquired property in the provinces, as was noted in the case of Matthew de Renzy, concentrated their lending activity upon the provincial area where they held land, while others used the money they had made in trading or financial endeavours to invest in manufacturing possibilities in the provinces. The depositions of many of them suggest that they were especially active in extending their interests into Ulster, thus compensating for the general poverty of the planter community there which hindered their ambition to turn the natural produce of that province to commercial advantage. Thus Edward Blennerhasset, gent., had held a lease, which he considered worth £256, of an iron mill in County Down, while James Hoole of Dublin city, merchant, ‘but late of Thornton Co of Lancaster in England’, had lost at Kilrae in County Londonderry, to the value of £35, ‘timber for which he had bought and paid for to make a barque’.\textsuperscript{119}

Dublin, both as a capital city and as the location in the province of Leinster where the most consequential Protestant community had settled, unsurprisingly exerted a commercial influence which impacted on the whole country as well as on its immediate hinterland. While recognizing the importance of the national role which Dublin enjoyed from the seventeenth century forward, the local changes promoted by a sizeable incoming settler population, mostly English but including some Dutch, Scots, and French people, was also critical. These were sometimes more skilled in manufacturing, agricultural, and commercial pursuits than the indigenous Old English population. The Dutchman Derrick Huiberts, and his son Anthony, had settled at Holmpatrick and Lambay Island where Derrick had developed a fishing enterprise and controlled five and a half fishing boats ‘with all the tackle and furniture to the same belonging’ which his son Anthony valued at £100, and Derrick had become sufficiently prosperous to become a lender of money on the Statute Staple. These were some of those ‘Dutch’ traders who, as one Protestant had observed resentfully in 1632, did ‘so swarm in Dublin &c that they [had]

\textsuperscript{118} Deposition of John Crooke and Richard Sergier of Dublin, stationers (TCD, MS 809, fo. 207); I am grateful to Dr Joan Thirsk for her suggestion that ‘marte’ stands for French market; if Sergier were a Huguenot he would obviously have had ready access in France to Catholic as well as Protestant literature.

\textsuperscript{119} Deposition of Edward Blennerhasset (TCD, MS 810, fo. 118); deposition of James Hoole (TCD, MS 810, fo. 316).
eaten out all our native merchants and mariners’ by importing manufactured goods ‘impost free’ and exporting ‘every year a million of hundred weights of rendered tallow . . . and salt hides undressed [which were] utterly forbidden in England to be shipped out by our English merchants there’. The English settlers in Dublin were not anything as passive as is suggested in this complaint, if we are to judge from the report of William Myles on the property of Archdeacon William Bulkley. The archdeacon possessed a particularly well-equipped farm with ‘great iron-bound carts, new cart wheels, ploughs, carts and a great store of timber for carts, wheels and ploughs’, the parks on his farm were railed, and the archdeacon’s property included orchards, gardens, a mill, and quickset hedges. There is nothing to suggest that this level of enterprise and comfort could not have been matched by several Old English landowners and farmers, but Sir Thomas Newcomen, Bt., seems to have been consciously seeking to supersede customary practice by the introduction of three score ‘of the best sort of English rams’ to service his flock of 2,900 sheep. William Cooke, gent. must also have been seeking to foster a model herd since he claimed ownership of ‘1,500 choice English sheep, and 100 English cows’ on the farm which he rented from Richard Wingfield of Powerscourt.

Settlers of lesser social consequence would also seem to have introduced modest innovations in the traditional agronomy of the Pale, with, for example, John Husband of Santry cultivating large quantities of peas and beans together with oats and barley, under the generic description of ‘summer corn’, which complemented his winter crop of wheat and bere (barley). Thomas Campion, ‘oade man’ from the parish of Kilmichael in the barony of Rathdown, was even more innovative since he listed ‘oade and oade seed’ to the value of £30 among his losses, while Edward Pollard, husbandman, of Glasnamucky, County Dublin, cultivated ‘a garden of potatoes and other roots’. Settlers were also associated with the introduction of technological innovation. Robert Kennedie, city of Dublin, Esq., probably a Scotsman if we are to be guided by his surname and orthography, and certainly an active lender on the Dublin Statute Staple, possessed a ‘breeke kilne’, seemingly for the manufacture of brick; Honor Poolley, widow, had a ‘French kilne’

120 Deposition of Anthony Huiberts, parish Balruddery (TCD MS 809, fo. 315); deposition of Anthony Huiberts, son and heir to Derrick Huiberts of Holmpatrick (TCD, MS 809, fo. 306); Sarah Doughtie, widow, identified Derrick Huiberts as a Dutchman (TCD, MS 809, fo. 280); Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 111; complaint over Dutch and French merchants, 1632 (BL Add. MS 46,920A, fo. 36); another likely Dutch, or possibly Huguenot, deponent was Hugbart Cromphant of Milnarstown, County Dublin (TCD, MS 809, fo. 272).

121 Deposition of William Myles, town and parish of Dunlavin (TCD, MS 809, fo. 259); deposition of Sir Thomas Newcomen, Bt. (TCD, MS 809, fo. 288); deposition of William Cooke of Dublin, gent. (TCD, MS 809, fo. 267); deposition of John Husband of Santry (TCD, MS 809, fo. 287); deposition of Thomas Campion (TCD, MS 809, fo. 266); deposition of Edward Pollard (TCD, MS 809, fo. 332).
attached to her house; and John Locke of Swords lost ‘smith cooles’ to the value of £13, presumably for a forge.\textsuperscript{122} Indeed the incomers were so obviously capable of making inward investments that many of the Old English landowners could not refrain from having them as tenants, because they were prepared to pay higher entry fines or higher rents than the customary occupiers. Thus, to cite but three examples: Thomas Smith of Finglas, held a farm from Richard Long of Abbotstown, County Dublin, as well as four houses from Mr Ball of Ballygall; Daniel Foster rented his farm from Richard Archibald of Flemington, County Kildare; and Thomas Mason was a tenant of Peter Barnewall of Terenure, Esq.\textsuperscript{123}

This attention to the influence that the settler population in Dublin exerted upon the areas closest to the city is pertinent because the impact of Protestant settlement upon society in the other counties of Leinster was primarily a local one and, in these counties also, Protestant settlers in towns seem to have been most potent in promoting change within their localities. The depositions for those parts of the province of Leinster beyond the immediate reach of Dublin suggest that the largest urban Protestant settlement had flourished in Queen’s County where 79 of the 187 deponents for that county identified themselves as urban residents. These came from Sir Charles Coote’s settlement at Mountrath which was the address given by 45 deponents, from the earl of Londonderry’s town of Ballinakill which returned 17 deponents, from Maryborough which was given by 10 deponents as their place of residence, and from Mountmellick where 7 deponents had lived.\textsuperscript{124}

Another Leinster urban settlement with a significant Protestant presence was Athy in County Kildare to which 43 of the 169 deponents from that county belonged, and the appearance of 7 deponents from each of the towns of Naas, Kildare town, Maynooth, and Kilcock, 5 from Dollardstown, and 4 from Monasterevin provides witness to significant Protestant settlement in each of those towns.\textsuperscript{125} In County Carlow the most consequential Protestant community seems to have established itself in Hacketstown which was cited as their address by 15 of the 52 deponents from that county, while the appearance of 5 deponents from each of Carlow town, Leighlin Bridge, and Haroldstown, as well as 4 from Williamstown, is suggestive of a consequential Protestant presence also in those places.\textsuperscript{126} Of the total of 90 deponents from County Meath 11 came from each of the towns of Navan, Kells, and Moyglare, and 9 from Trim, while 9 of the 17 deponents from neighbouring

\textsuperscript{122} Deposition of Robert Kennedie, Dublin city, Esq. (TCD, MS 809, fo. 290); Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha, eds., \textit{The Irish Statute Staple Books}, 115; deposition of Honor Pooley, widow (TCD, MS 809, fo. 323); deposition of John Locke of Soord (TCD, MS 809, fo. 294).

\textsuperscript{123} Deposition of Thomas Smith of Finglas (TCD, MS 809, fo. 227); fragment of deposition of Daniel Foster (TCD, MS 809, fo. 284); deposition of Thomas Mason (TCD, MS 809, fo. 304).

\textsuperscript{124} Depositions for Queen’s County (TCD, MS 817).

\textsuperscript{125} Depositions for County Kildare (TCD, MS 813).

\textsuperscript{126} Depositions for County Carlow (TCD, MS 812).
County Louth came from Ardee, Drogheda, Dundalk, and Carlingford.\textsuperscript{127}

Similarly, of the total of 80 deponents from King’s County, 11 were associated with the settlement of Sir Lawrence Parsons at Birr, 5 with Lord Digby’s settlement at Geashill, and 3 were resident in Tullamore.\textsuperscript{128} Forty-seven deponents identified themselves as County Kilkenny residents, and of these 12 gave as their address Castlecomer, a manufacturing centre established by Sir Christopher Wandesforde, and 6 came from Kilkenny City.\textsuperscript{129} In Longford 10 of the total of 56 deponents for the county gave their address as St Johnstown, and 3 each came from Castle Forbes and Longford Town, while 8 of the 31 deponents from County Westmeath gave their address as Kilbeggan.\textsuperscript{130} County Wexford is unusual in that most of the 63 deponents from that county associated themselves with plantation castles and estates, with only a few identifying themselves as residents of the towns of Gorey and New Ross.\textsuperscript{131}

Presumably, as in Dublin, these Protestant urban settlers in provincial Leinster had established themselves in communities that were still predominantly Catholic, but this account of the distribution of deponents within provincial Leinster will indicate the importance of towns to settlement in all areas except County Wexford where most deponents were identified as tenants on plantation estates. In order to illustrate the function of urban settlement the experience of Queen’s County might be considered as typical of the nature of British settlement in Leinster during the seventeenth century.

Queen’s County, like Munster, had been subjected to an official plantation in the sixteenth century. This, however, had resulted only in the establishment of a chain of fortified positions, each of which was provided with some adjacent land for its maintenance. This scheme had led to the permanent settlement in the county of some military families, and coherent communities of English settlers developed in the principal garrison towns. The early settlement had, however, been disturbed by the frequent and sometimes prolonged revolts of the sixteenth century, and those who then settled in the province enjoyed uninterrupted occupancy only when more peaceful conditions came to prevail after 1603.\textsuperscript{132}

Some descendants of the Elizabethan planters in Queen’s County, such as Lieutenant Arnold Cosby whom we encountered also in County Cavan, were still prominent in the county by 1641, and a few of their number, including some Hovendens and Cosbys, had been so absorbed into their locale, as Spenser had predicted would happen, that they were prominent among the

\textsuperscript{127} Depositions for County Meath (TCD, MS 836); depositions for County Louth (TCD, MS 834).

\textsuperscript{128} Depositions for King’s County (TCD, MS 814).

\textsuperscript{129} Depositions for County Kilkenny (TCD, MS 812).

\textsuperscript{130} Depositions for Counties Longford and Westmeath (TCD, MS 817).

\textsuperscript{131} Depositions for County Wexford (TCD, MS 818).

insurgents in the rising of that year. The intended role of the Elizabethan planters as leaders of the Protestant interest had, by the 1640s, been taken over by a fresh group of settlers, most of them officeholders in the Dublin administration. They sought to add to their social prestige by the acquisition of land, and they were attracted to Queen’s County because it contained a modicum of good-quality land that was reasonably proximate to Dublin. Some property was acquired by English officeholders through purchase and mortgage transactions, while more was obtained by fraudulent means through a calculated misuse of office.

As a consequence, an English Protestant landed elite had come to dominate Queen’s County by the middle of the seventeenth century, and this elite included some of the most influential people in the Dublin government. The most forceful of these was Sir Charles Coote, whom we also encountered in Cavan, but whose Leinster property lay in the town and barony of Mountrath. Others who emerged as leaders of a new settler community were Thomas Ridgeway, earl of Londonderry, whose property, the manor of Galen Ridge-way, lay in the vicinity of Ballinakill; Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely, who held substantial properties at Monasterevin and Mountmellick; and Charles, Lord Lambert, who also held property in the vicinity of Mountmellick. The English-based George, Lord Digby (and son-in-law to the earl of Cork), also held an estate in the county, and substantial properties were held there by George Grymes, Esq., and by Oliver Walshe, an Irish Protestant who occupied a position in the Court of Common Pleas.

Most of these, and others besides, invested heavily in the construction or repair of residential castles and in the development of ornamental grounds and estate towns or villages. The earl of Londonderry, for example, purchased his property at Ballinakill from the Cosby family, the original Elizabethan grantees, ‘and afterwards planted, built and made a town corporate . . . which cost by estimation £10,000’. This figure, which suggests extravagance, was no more than what Clanricard spent on Portumna Castle and Antrim on Dunluce, not to speak of what Cork spent on his many residences in Munster. In Leinster, also, the principal planters invested heavily in the establishment of manufacturing towns, where artisans from England settled. That promoted at Mountrath by Sir Charles Coote seems to have been the most substantial,

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133 See the deposition of John Barnard (TCD, MS 815, fo. 167); Barnard had been a soldier in the Elizabethan wars and listed those of English surname who participated in the insurrection.


135 Depositions for these individuals are as follows: TCD, MS 815, fos. 142, 144, 149, 154, 180, 221–4, 335, 358, 371; for a further deposition concerning all the Irish properties of Adam Loftus, Lord Viscount of Ely, see that of Henry Parry and Luke Dobbin, Dublin city, gents. (TCD, MS 809, fo. 318).

136 TCD, MS 815, fo. 358.
since forty-five individuals from there made depositions in 1641. Many of
these were textile workers employed in woollen manufacturing or in the linen
and fustian works that Coote established there. Philip Sergeant, who identi-
fied himself as the overseer of these works, placed a value of £716 on Coote’s
losses in fustians, linen cloth, and cotton yarn, while another servant of Coote,
named Isaac Sands, provided an inventory of the woollen cloth and weaving
equipment to the value of £560 that had been lost as a consequence of the
rising. These ‘broadcloths, broad bays and serges, both coloured and plain’,
had been ‘sold (but not delivered) by articles of agreement to merchants at
Youghal . . . who were to transport them to Spain and the Low Countries’.

Output from the ironworks that had been got under way by Sir Charles
Coote and by Adam Loftus, Lord Viscount Ely, and from the coal mining
that had been promoted by George Grymes, was transported to the Munster
ports, taking advantage of inland waterways, and the servants of Lord Ely
claimed that he had lost £3,000 because of the ‘spoiling and loss of iron-
works with the stock and improvement thereupon’. Such enterprises also
created the need to import skilled workers to Queen’s County, and one John
Winsmore, who had been employed at Mountmellick, alleged that he could
earn £50 a year from his skill as an ironworker. The aspect of ironworking
in which he was most proficient was not specified, but he included among
his belongings some ‘writings of consequence as instructions for the casting
of brass and iron ordnance’.

Such exceptionally skilled workers would have been carefully chosen in
manufacturing centres in England or elsewhere and invited to Queen’s
County by the principal English proprietors, who would also have borne most
of the cost involved in setting them up in business. Artisans with more
commonplace skills associated with leather making, coal mining, and timber
processing seem to have been attracted by the availability of raw materials;
and, unlike their counterparts in Ulster, it would appear that they themselves
bore the principal cost of developing their farms and promoting their crafts.
Thus, for example, a smith named William Cooke who had been brought to
the county by George Grymes had invested £100 of his own money in
acquiring a coal mine and in purchasing ‘materials for that work’. At the
same time, Cooke received from Grymes a farm on a long lease (of which
fifty-six years were still unexpired in 1641), but for this he had to pay an entry
fine of £220 and to invest a further £200 ‘in building and ditching’. The case
of Thomas Campion, a tanner who had settled at Mountrath under Sir
Charles Coote, is analogous to that of Cooke. He found it necessary to lay
out £100 in the ‘planting’ of his tanyard, the erection of a residence, and
the acquisition of two leases of land. This investment would appear to have

137 TCD, MS 815, fos. 180, 351.
138 TCD, MS 815, fo. 154; on water transport to Waterford see Boate, Ireland’s Naturall History,
111–12, and on the statement concerning the ironworks at Mountmellick see TCD, MS 809, fo. 318.
generated an immediate income, because Campion claimed to have lost leather to the value of £200 in 1641 besides losses amounting to £60 in cattle, horses, and sheep. What was involved in getting a tanyard under way was spelled out more precisely by Matthew Morris of Maryborough, who described himself as ‘a great dealer’ who had ‘a great charge in hides’. Morris had invested an initial £60 ‘in planting and building on his tenement, tanhouses, a malt house and a stable’. Then he laid out a further £40 in ‘sowing his birch’, which was required to supply him with bark for tanning, and he expended as much as £100 at one time in purchasing ‘new green hides’, which were likely to spoil if they were not immediately treated in his brass pans.139

Those English artisans who had settled in Queen’s County seemed satisfied that their initial investment was justified by the opportunities that were open to them. Landlords had reason to be equally satisfied because they enjoyed an initial cash injection from the entry fines paid by English settlers, while the long-term value of landed property was enhanced by the improvements made by these artisan tenants. These processes were similar to what was happening in Munster, but they had no analogue in Ulster where incoming tenants were more interested in expanding their holdings of land than in gambling on the possibility of finding a market for any goods they might manufacture.

Arrangements made by the principal landlords when disposing of their estates in Queen’s County seem to have been strikingly similar to those made by them when leasing their urban properties. On these occasions, large parcels of land, sometimes with castles attached, were assigned to incoming English gentlemen freeholders. Many of these appear to have been drawn from the army, and the rule seems to have been that such gentlemen were assigned large holdings for terms ranging from fifty to ninety-nine years in return for entry fines that could be as high as £500, depending on the size and quality of the property. The tenant was then required to pay a small annual rent but was also obliged to improve the property. This work could take the form of ’enclosing of his whole ground with post and rail’, as it did in the case of Edward Benfield, or of ‘building of several shingled houses of clay, stables and offices’.140

It was always in the interest of these gentlemen tenants to develop a home farm from which they would generate a regular source of income and provide food for their domestic requirements. No cost was spared in this effort, and the outlay in house-building, field division, and the stocking of a home farm

139 Deposition of William Cooke (TCD, MS 815, fos. 144, 154); deposition of Thomas Campion (TCD, MS 815, fo. 158); deposition of Matthew Morris (TCD, MS 815, fo. 236).

140 For examples of gentlemen’s leases in Queen’s County, see TCD, MS 815, fos. 142, 169, 184, 185,198, 199, 209, 212, 246, 261, 268, 277, 328, 330, 358; the quotations are from TCD, MS 815, fos. 169, 199.
could sometimes exceed £1,000. All such tenants-in-chief promoted some mixed farming, presumably to meet domestic requirements; most also maintained a garden plot, where vegetables and sometimes potatoes were grown; and a few kept orchards. Thereafter, gentlemen tended to favour either tillage or stock raising on the home farm for commercial purposes, and it is not clear whether choices were dictated by the nature of the soil or by their own previous experience with agriculture. Those who opted for stock raising kept cattle, sheep, horses, swine, and poultry, and they specified in their depositions whenever their stock was of English breed. Those who opted for tillage farming produced wheat, oats, barley, and rye, and, like their equivalents in Munster and in the vicinity of Dublin, they also grew large quantities of peas and beans, presumably for fattening pigs.

Some of the native proprietors in Queen’s County followed the example of their settler counterparts and assigned sizeable estates to English gentlemen. The lure of entry fines may have determined their choice of such principal tenants, even when it was certain to provoke resentment among their kinsmen and followers. Barnaby Dunne of Brittas, who had already placed a strain on his kinship connection by converting to Protestantism, was the most active in this respect and claimed that he had settled English tenants on his estate ‘to the number of upwards of twenty’.

Those English Protestants who were assigned principal tenancies were alert to opportunity for social and economic advancement. Some did this by taking several leases from different proprietors while others expanded their holdings by accepting land as security on loans that they extended to native landowners. All such acquisitions were with a view to gaining a regular rental income that would compensate them for their initial outlay. Their preferred tenants were English husbandmen, and some proprietors were successful in attracting such tenants. Lieutenant Henry Gilbert, for example, claimed that he and Sir William Gilbert had jointly settled 500 English people (including wives and children of tenants) on their estate. Even when allowance is made for exaggeration, settlement on this scale would have been highly exceptional, and the depositions for the county suggest rather a thin scatter of English yeomen and husbandmen on the principal holdings held by English settlers in the county.

141 See, for example, TCD, MS 815, fo. 142.
142 See, for example, TCD, MS 815, fo. 198, 330.
143 See, for example, TCD, MS 815, fo. 184.
144 See TCD, MS 815, fos. 190–3, 230, 246; see also Kenneth Nicholls (ed.), The O’Doyne (Ó Dáinín) Manuscript (Dublin, 1983). This manuscript traces the career of Dr Charles Dunne, the first of his family to become a Protestant, who left his inheritance to his nephew Barnaby Dunne, also a Protestant.
145 See especially the depositions of Job Ward (TCD, MS 815, fos. 277–87) and Oliver Walshe (TCD, MS 815, fo. 149).
146 Deposition of Lieutenant Henry Gilbert (TCD, MS 815, fo. 328).
These English farmers followed the example of their social betters in the agriculture they pursued. Most appear to have been well equipped with iron ploughs, plough chains, and oxen, but carts with iron-bound wheels appear to have been in short supply. These cultivators indicated that they grew the full range of cereal crops while some harvested peas and beans in quantity and grew vegetables, including the potato.\(^{147}\) Some tenant farmers indicated that they had invested substantially in improving their properties, and a few revealed themselves to be specialist farmers. Richard Queensie of Mountrath, for example, specified that he kept eleven cows for milking, and Rowland Vaughan, who leased his farm from Barnaby Dunne, had concentrated on fruit farming, which provided him with an annual income of £20. He had apparently every intention of expanding his business, because he lost in 1641 ‘6,000 young trees of pears and apples of choicest sort’, which he valued at £40.\(^{148}\)

Such individuals were enterprising by any standard, but they were few in number in Queen’s County. Why this was so is nowhere mentioned, but it appears that the only concentrations of English settlement in the county were in the manufacturing towns and their immediate vicinity. Because they were thinly scattered, the English settlers in Queen’s County identified very closely with the proprietors who had first invited them there. This is revealed most explicitly in the case of John Fortune, who had settled at Ballinakill on an estate held by Captain Richard Steele, ‘a gentleman of his Majesty’s privy chamber’, from the earl of Londonderry. Fortune, in his deposition, claimed to have served Captain Steele for thirty years including involvement in the Thirty Years War; more interestingly he added that he was ‘by birth an Indian Pethagorian but now a Christian and lately an inhabitant of Ballinakill’.\(^{149}\)

What emerges from this study of English settlement in Queen’s County is that the principal resources of the county had been brought effectively into the hands of the settler community. A substantial acreage of productive land had come into English possession by 1641, and the raw materials in the county were being systematically exploited by communities of settler artisans. Land occupancy in the vicinity of these urban settlements had shifted in favour of these recent arrivals in the county, and some native proprietors had also been seeking to maximize their rental incomes by inviting some foreign settlers to become their tenants. However, most land in Queen’s County was still owned by Irish proprietors and farmed by Irish tenants and subtenants, and the shift

\(^{147}\) References to such matters are made in various depositions (TCD MS 815, fos. 167, 212, 227, 239, 292, 302, 321, 323).

\(^{148}\) Deposition of Richard Queensie (TCD, MS 815, fo. 215); deposition of Rowland Vaughan (TCD, MS 815, fo. 273).

\(^{149}\) Deposition of John Fortune (TCD, MS 815, fo. 322); deposition of Captain Richard Steele (TCD, MS 815, fo. 338).
that was taking place in both ownership and occupancy would have been
apparent only in the vicinity of towns and on the estates of the principal
Protestant proprietors of the county. Therefore the settlers were a distinct
but a very visible and dominant minority in a county that was still essentially
Irish in character. Not only that, but it was also a county that was essentially
Catholic, and there was more evidence than in the case of County Cork in
Munster that the native proprietors who had lost their property remained an
active force in the area. So also were the Irish tenants who had been pushed
off the better holdings on the estates of the new Protestant occupiers, and
sometimes also on the estates of Catholic proprietors, to make room for
foreign Protestants. In all these respects social arrangements in Queen’s
County were closer to those in Ulster than in Munster, but in spite of the
social dislocations that were still fresh in people’s minds, the new settler group
in Queen’s County appeared in control, their activities seemed highly prof-
itable, and there was no reason to believe, previous to 1641, that they would
not continue to flourish into the future.

Queen’s County was exceptional among the counties of Leinster only
because it had been both subjected to formal plantation, and identified by
several senior officials in government as a desirable place in which to settle.
However, the social and economic processes that we have witnessed there
were also in play throughout the province of Leinster, and this can be illus-
trated by reference to the depositions from those other counties. Everywhere,
as was noted, clusters of craftworkers had established themselves in the
provincial towns, and many of these succeeded in supplementing their arti-
sanal incomes by leasing farms of land. Protestant clergy were also in place
in every county and many of these had invited English co-religionists to lease
farms of church land from them, while, at the same time, many of them
strive to establish a permanent stake for themselves and their heirs through
acquisitions of personal property, either by lease or purchase, close to where
they held their church livings or further afield. William Lightbond of Kildare,
clerk, revealed his entrepreneurial bent when he estimated his losses through
the insurrection at £3,000. This sum was accounted for not only by the loss
of tithes, church livings, and his comfortable accommodation furnished with
gold, silver, plate, jewels, rings, damask, diaper, holland, linen, and ‘a very
good library of choice books’, but also by the loss of bonds and securities on
loans due to him by named Protestant and Catholic creditors, and by the
loss of several farms with crops and livestock in different parts of County
Kildare and in County Cavan.150

In the other counties of Leinster, as in Queen’s County, some native propri-
etors had, through either personal conviction or upbringing, converted to the
Protestant faith, and these tended to be active promoters of Protestant settle-

150 Deposition of William Lightbond (TCD, MS 813, fo. 225).
ment on their properties. Prime among these would have been the earl of Kildare, married to a daughter of the earl of Cork, and the earl of Ormond with Elizabeth his wife who had granted a lease on the manor of Williamstown in County Carlow to Richard Gibson, Esq., who, in turn, had introduced a significant settler community there.\textsuperscript{151} More dynamic, in this respect, were those Protestants—mostly English—who had recently come into possession of estates throughout Leinster. These were headed by officials as senior as the earl of Strafford who held a property at Jigginstown, near Naas in County Kildare, his brother Sir George Wentworth who held a prize property at Moyglare in County Meath, and Sir Christopher Wandesforde whose seat was at Castlecomer in County Kilkenny.\textsuperscript{152} These not only introduced significant communities of settlers on their estates, but cultivated a belief among these tenants that more rewards would come their way when further plantation was proceeded with. This, certainly, was the expectation of Rowland Williams, gent., who held a house and farm at Uske in County Kildare by lease from Adam Loftus, Viscount Ely, but who also cherished a ‘certificate’, signed by Strafford, ‘of his long service done to the crown for which he was promised to have a proportional share of plantation land estated upon him in the first plantation that should be settled’.

Promises such as those given to Williams were superfluous in those counties where plantation had already taken place. The significant settlement established by Sir William Parsons at Birr—already being called Parsonstown—in King’s County, and the evidence that can be gleaned from the depositions for County Wexford, point to most British settlement in those counties as having been the achievement of the more dynamic planters. Prime among these in Wexford were Sir Walsingham Cooke, Sir Arthur and Nicholas Loftus, Lord Esmonde, and Lord Parsons. Cooke—the son of Sir Richard Cooke who had been principal secretary and chancellor of the exchequer in Dublin during the reign of King James I when the Wexford plantation was erected—claimed that all the tenants on his manor of Parsonstown in the parish of Killenoghe were ‘English and Protestants to the number of 200 families’. Even if this were an exaggeration (akin to the claims made by the earl of Cork for his beloved Bandonbridge) this certainly would have been the target that all English proprietors in Wexford would have had in mind,

\textsuperscript{151} Deposition of Richard Gibson (TCD, MS 812, fo. 14); see in the same manuscript fos. 18, 25, 48; David Edwards, ‘The Ormond Lordship in County Kilkenny, 1515–1642’ (Ph.D. thesis, University of Dublin, 1998), 279–82, 298–310.

\textsuperscript{152} There is, unfortunately, no surviving deposition concerning the property at Jigginstown but specific mention of it was made in the depositions of John Rathborne, yeoman (TCD, MS 813, 243), and Thomas Carpenter, gent. (TCD, MS 813, fo. 290); the property of Sir George Wentworth was detailed by Thomas Kilvy, gent. (TCD, MS 816, fo. 223); and we learn something of Wandesforde’s property from his agent John Davyes (TCD, MS 812, fo. 195), and his park keeper Richard Harrison (TCD, MS 812, fo. 210); on Wandesforde’s acquisition of this territory see Edwards, ‘The Ormond Lordship’, 310–17.

\textsuperscript{153} Deposition of Rowland Williams, gent. (TCD, MS 813, fo. 323).
with a view both to increasing their rent rolls and to Protestantizing their estates.\textsuperscript{154}

Again, as was the case in County Dublin and in Queen’s County, the advantage that settler proprietors had gained by introducing newcomers as tenants on their estates was not lost on the indigenous landowners. Casual statements by some Protestant deponents in every Leinster county indicate that they rented all or some of the land they farmed from Catholic landowners. Since such references were usually made by deponents only in the context of complaining that, as the insurrection progressed, their landlords had expelled them from their farms and property, or had embezzled goods which they had entrusted to their safe keeping, they are probably indicative of a much wider practice of Protestant settlers holding leases from Catholic landowners throughout Leinster.\textsuperscript{155}

The advantage that an Irish proprietor could gain from such contractual arrangements with incoming Protestant settlers was spelled out clearly in the deposition of George Boothe, of Killyglynn in the parish of Ballyfeaghan in County Meath. Boothe’s principal concern, in making his deposition, was to complain of his landlord Thomas Geoghegan who had appeared to be a ‘loyal subject’ and to whom he had, ‘upon his the said Thomas his faithful promise to be true and just to this deponent’, left all his goods in ‘Geoghegan’s castle of Ballyfeaghan’. Trust was eroded when Boothe learned that Geoghegan, once he enlisted in Drogheda as a captain of 100 men in the army of the insurgents, had seized both the goods he had left in trust, and the farm that Boothe had leased from Geoghegan. In the course of lodging his complaint, and as he detailed his losses, Boothe revealed that he had, ‘about the year of God 1636’, first taken ‘to farm the said town of Ballyglynn from Maurice Fitzgerald, late deceased’, whose widow had then married Geoghegan. In the original agreement, Boothe claimed to have ‘paid unto the said Maurice and his wife the sum of three score pounds ster., for a fine or incombe for his lease being for the term of fifty-one years at the rent of £27 16s ster. And that afterwards [he had] paid unto the said Maurice the sum of £266 in mortgage of part of the said rent and built a house upon the said farm which cost him £300 and planted an orchard and garden and built several farmers’ houses and other houses or offices, and ditched and fenced the said farm, and other improvements which cost [him] about £100 ster. more at the least’. Then, on the death of Maurice Fitzgerald, Boothe was forced ‘to compound’ with James Fitzgerald, son and heir to Maurice, ‘for

\textsuperscript{154} Deposition of Sir Walsingham Cooke (TCD, MS 818, fo. 82); see also the deposition of Richard Greene on behalf of Sir Arthur Loftus (TCD, MS 818, fo. 78); John McCavitt, \textit{Sir Arthur Chichester: Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1605–16} (Belfast, 1998), 149–68.

\textsuperscript{155} See, for example, from County Kildare the deposition of Thomas Weldon (TCD, MS, 813, fo. 229); and that of Damien Hutchinson, gent. (TCD, MS 813, fo. 339); also of interest is the deposition of Roger Puttock, clerk, of Navan, County Meath (TCD, MS 816, fo. 132).
that he alleged the said estate was enfeoffed’ and Boothe had then paid James a further £30 ‘for the confirmation of his lease and for an addition of ten years more’. Then, proceeding from the belief that he was secure in possession of the farm, Boothe had stocked it with English cows, heifers, and sheep, and had sown ‘20 acres of country measure of pure wheat, and bear’. This meant that he could estimate at £1,100 the loss of his interest in the farm, combined with the debts which were due to him by Irishmen who had become rebels.  

This transaction, unusual only in its wealth of detail, indicates that the economic forces shown to have been in operation in County Dublin and in Queen’s County, as well as in the provinces of Munster and Ulster, were active also throughout Leinster. There also they were resulting in a gradual transfer in the ownership of land and resources from Catholic to Protestant, and from native to newcomer, even in those areas where Old English proprietors were most entrenched and where no plantation had occurred. In this instance an Old English proprietor, who may have been impoverished or who may have been cynically extracting a profit from a farm which was secretly encumbered, was forgoing his interest in that farm in return for an entry fine of £60 plus a small annual rent, which he subsequently compounded for a lump sum payment equivalent to ten years’ rent. Where Boothe acquired the money for the initial and subsequent investment is not divulged. It is possible that he got it on loan from any of the many money-lenders active in the locality or further afield, but his listing of a furnace among his losses suggests he had been originally an artisan, and that he was investing the profits he had made from his trade as a blacksmith, or an iron-worker, in the acquisition of land.

The temptation, or opportunity, to acquire ready money that was put in the way of Maurice Fitzgerald, and that proved equally attractive to his heirs, was open to most Catholic proprietors in Leinster as a British and Protestant presence spread itself throughout the province. Besides the cash-rich clergy and officials who were establishing themselves everywhere that good-quality land was available, there was, as was mentioned, a wide spread of artisans settled in the provincial towns. These ranged from people who were skilled in such mundane activities as weaving, felt-making, dyeing, tanning, carpentry, malt-making and button-making to those whose expertise lay in activities such as park keeping and land surveying that made their presence vital to both the government and the settler elite. This spread of talent also included individuals whose skills were necessary to the special enterprises that had been promoted by particular proprietors. This explains the presence, for example, of Robert Howell, ironworker at Castlecomer, and of Clawde Bonny of Gloaster, King’s County, ‘being by birth a Frenchman’ but who was already ‘in the faith and religion of a Protestant’

156 Deposition of George Boothe (TCD, MS 816, fo. 108).
when he had arrived in Ireland and had been employed together with other French and English Protestants by 'Philip Bigo, gent. master and owner of the Glasshouse as Gloaster, aforesaid'.

Such artisans, as well as the gentlemen, yeomen, and husbandmen who had taken to farming land throughout Leinster, also seem to have been progressive farmers, who favoured imported English over indigenous livestock, and who cultivated the full range of cereal crops, including peas and beans, which were esteemed both because they assisted crop rotation through their nitrogen-fixing properties and because they could be used for fattening pigs. The more enterprising, as was the case with settlers throughout the country, also experimented with exotic crops. John Holmstead of Clonahane, King's County—probably the son of the famous clergyman Richard Olmstead who had long been associated with Sir Charles Coote in promoting a model settlement at Mountrath in Queen's County—seems to have been an exemplary and an adventurous farmer. His inventory showed that he had cattle, horses, and milch cows 'of good English breed', but also 'a herd of swine, English and Irish, worth £22, besides a herd of goats'; that he cultivated 'corn of all sorts' but especially wheat and bere; that he harvested hay which was standing in ricks in his haggard, and made malt in a 'malt house of 50 foot in length and 20 foot in breadth of cage work, with an English kiln built with lime and stone'; and that he also possessed a 'certain hop-ground consisting of 2 Winchester acres or thereabouts planted three years' previously. More commonly, potatoes and other root crops were included by deponents in their inventories, and specific references to the potato were made by deponents from Counties Wexford, Longford, and Westmeath, besides those references already cited from Counties Dublin and Queen’s County.

All such references indicate that an enhancement in property values quickly followed upon the expansion of British settlement. This enhancement reflected a keener awareness of the profits, for farmer as well as tenant, that accrued from estate improvement, from the promotion of manufacturing, and from the introduction of more progressive agriculture. The other major change that was in process was the strengthening of market activity and the advancement of commercialism. It becomes clear from the depositions of

157 The park keeper was Richard Harrison of Castlecomer (TCD, MS 812, fo. 218); the surveyor John Wetton (TCD, MS 813, fo. 140); deposition of Clawde Bonny (TCD, MS 814, fo. 271).

158 See, for example, the deposition of Thomas Aylmer, Barbisowne, County Kildare (TCD, MS 813, fo. 387); on peas and beans see Thirsk, Alternative Agriculture, pp. 10, 49, and Edward Cocking, ‘Helping Plants Get More Nitrogen from the Air’, European Review, 8 (2000), 193–200.

159 Deposition of John Holmstead (TCD, MS 814, fo. 250); another Holmstead to make a deposition was Grizell, widow of Israel Holmstead of Conrad, King’s County (TCD, MS 814, fo. 251), and Emmanuel Boale, curate of Mountrath ‘under Mr. Holmstead’, also deposed (TCD, MS 817, fo. 35); on the ministry of Richard Olmstead see Ford, The Protestant Reformation, 205–6.

160 Potato references appear in TCD, MS 818, fos. 119, 124; MS 817, fos. 73, 133.
some settlers in County Wexford that they were exploiting the natural forests of the county to meet a demand for ship timbers, and one John Archer of Clahomond mentioned, when itemizing his losses, ‘a barque of mine’ in Wexford harbour, which he seems to have been using to convey timber to his timberyard in suburban Dublin.\textsuperscript{161}

The Protestant merchants, clothiers, innkeepers, chapmen, and victuallers identified in the depositions for every county of Leinster must also have played an important role in quickening the pace of market activity and brought those in the counties who were already active in trade into contact with a wider commercial world, as did their counterparts in Munster. Specialist traders such as William Bailie, silk trader of Hacketstown, County Carlow, and John Millner, linen draper of Tullamore, also came forward to make depositions. These were obviously catering for the needs of a new luxury market that had come into being as a consequence of the social transformation being effected through the expansion both of settlement and government influence into all parts of Leinster.\textsuperscript{162} These new merchants, who were mostly English but included some Scots, as well as the craftworkers of several nationalities were, of course, building upon a commercial and artisan base that was already well established and they had worked in co-operation with these newcomers in the years previous to the disturbances of 1641. Thus Charles Crafford of Navan could complain that Patrick Begg of Navan had, during the course of the rebellion, embezzled a pack of goods that had been entrusted to him by James Rees, an Englishman, and a second ‘pack belonging to a young Scottish merchant’, and that Richard Painter of Navan ‘commonly called the hopman’ had been robbed by Thomas Durra of Navan ‘a very rich tanner’. Similarly, Thomas Hide of Navan, gentleman, and his servant Patrick Cleere, were able to identify their assailants in Navan by craft as well as by name which suggests that they knew them well, and may previously have worked in concert with them.\textsuperscript{163}

The fact that most deponents, and almost all of high social status, provided lists of Irish people, and some English, who were indebted to them should not be taken to mean that they had been the first to introduce commercial lending into provincial Ireland. However, as was noted in the case of Dublin and Queen’s County, the arrival of newcomers facilitated a quickening of financial activity, principally by bringing people in previously remote areas into direct contact with the credit facilities available in Dublin and further afield. Thus when Robert Bath of the town and parish of Minehead in

\textsuperscript{161} Timber references appear in the deposition of Edward Harris (TCD, MS 818, fo. 64); that of William Amicon (TCD, MS 818, fo. 97); and the trader in timber was John Archer (TCD, MS 818, fo. 42).

\textsuperscript{162} Deposition of William Bailie (TCD, MS 812, fo. 45); deposition of John Millner (TCD, MS 814, fo. 234).

\textsuperscript{163} Deposition of Charles Crafford (TCD, MS 816, fo. 97); deposition of Patrick Cleere (TCD, MS 816, fo. 158); deposition of Hugh Kent (TCD, MS 816, fo. 171).
Somerset complained of the loss of £756 5s. as a consequence of the rebellion, he explained that part of his loss was accounted for by the theft of ‘thirty-four bags of English wool and fourteen hogsheads and barrels of tallow’, the other ‘part being in debt owing’ to him by people in Counties Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow, and Waterford, but especially by ‘John Watson of Athy, County Kildare, yeoman, and Patrick Archer of Kilkenny, merchant’. It is significant that while lists of those who had been drawn into this extended economic net of Dublin included names of people in Leinster, Ulster, and Connacht they seldom mentioned residents of Munster, other than Waterford. This would suggest that the web of commerce that was centred on Dublin was complementary to another web which drew upon the resources of the wealthier settlers in Munster and their overseas contacts.

6.6. THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN CONNACHT

If British settler society in Leinster might best be compared with that in Munster, then the settler community in Connacht might have had more in common with that in Ulster than in the other two provinces. That said, the settler presence in Connacht was fundamentally different from that in any other province because it was altogether smaller and more scattered, a fact that is explained first by the remoteness of the province from England and, to a lesser degree, from Scotland, second by its apparently slim economic resource base, and finally by the fact that, notwithstanding the best efforts of Wentworth, no formal plantation of the province had been proceeded with, other than in County Leitrim. The small number of individuals from Connacht who made depositions in the aftermath of the insurrection of 1641 (a total of 90 individuals for the entire province; 28 of them from County Leitrim, 20 from County Galway, 18 from Roscommon, 14 from Mayo, and 10 deponents from County Sligo) is therefore more reflective of there being fewer settlers in the province than of loss of life during the disturbances.

British settlement in Connacht, as in most of Leinster, was unplanned other than in the planted county of Leitrim. The plantation there, according to James Stevenson, clerk, had done little to change the composition of the county’s population, ‘both freeholders and others’ being natives other than ‘in the garrisons of Jamestown, Drumruske, Manorhamilton, and Newtown’. However, the fact that seven of those who made depositions came from Ballinamore and its vicinity, and five from Carrigallen, would suggest that the settlers in Leitrim, as in all planted counties except in Wexford, tended to gravitate towards towns. So also do the declared occupations of those who made depositions. These included one who described himself as ‘Esq.’, a few

164 Deposition of Robert Bath (TCD, MS 812, fo. 236).
165 The depositions for Counties Leitrim, Galway, Mayo, and Sligo are filed as TCD, MS 831; those for County Roscommon as TCD, MS 839.
gentlemen, and clergymen or their widows, but, more significantly, one joiner, one tanner, one clay potter, one felt-maker, one glover, one blacksmith, a widow who had owned both ‘brewing vessels’ and ‘carpentry tools’, and Thomas and Christopher Waller of Ballinamore, ‘two brethren and co-partners’, who worked as ‘clothiers’. Furthermore, while Stevenson rightly emphasized the continuing rural character of Leitrim society, he himself had lost, besides his dwelling house, ‘14 more thatched cottages’, which suggests he was attempting to foster a communal settlement on his church land. All of the deponents, like their Ulster counterparts, were engaged upon mixed farming, and there is no evidence to suggest that any of them had promoted any significant innovation in agriculture or manufacturing, although the brothers Waller had constructed a tuckmill, cultivated ‘garden roots’, and supplied the full range of ‘merchantry wares’ which they described as ‘wools, yarns, cloth, dying stuff, working tools, and instruments belonging to trade of clothing’. Again, as in Ulster, the settler population was truly British, in that it included Scots as well as English, and even some Welsh. Thus, when identifying those settlers in the parish of Carrigallen who had ‘revolted to Mass’, Heleanor Adshed included ‘Roland ap Robert a Welshman’, whom she accused of having murdered her husband; Humphrey Low, an Englishman and ‘a cooper by trade’, who, she claimed, had been enlisted to make pikes for the enemy; and ‘Metland Lemon, a Scots widow woman and family’.

Some of the deponents mentioned that they held leases from Lord Parsons, with Raph Carr implying that the farm on which he held a lease for seventeen years had come ‘stocked with English cattle’. Thomas Lewes appears to have been agent for Parsons since he claimed to have held ‘a bond of my Lord Parsons which was five hundred pounds left in my custody for moneys and security due to his lordship’. Others indicated that they fostered close connections with settlers in neighbouring Counties Cavan and Longford, and many indicated that they fled in those directions when they were disturbed by the insurrection. This suggests that the settler population in Leitrim had been induced into the county by proprietors who owned land also in those planted counties.

If the settler population in the planted county of Leitrim can be identified as a spillover from neighbouring planted counties, that in Counties Sligo, north Mayo, and Roscommon can, even more so, be described as the product

166 Deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48); the artisan depositions are TCD, MS 831, fos. 21, 23, 24, 27, 31, 33-41, 44.
167 Deposition of Thomas and Christopher Waller (TCD, MS 831, fo. 44).
168 Deposition of Heleanor Adshed (TCD, MS 831, fo. 33); an undoubted Scots settler was Archibald Stevenson whose infant daughter had her brains beaten out by the rebels because she was ‘a Scotsman’s child’; deposition of Susanna, wife of Archibald Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 43).
169 Deposition of Raph Carr (TCD, MS 831, fo. 27); deposition of Thomas Lewes (TCD, MS 831, fo. 20); for others who identified themselves as tenants of Parsons TCD, MS 831, fos. 31, 37.
170 See TCD, MS 831, fos. 30, 31, 34, 35-37, 47.
of geographic spread. The first facilitator of such a drift was the more regular appointment, from the 1630s forward, of Protestant clergy to diocesan and parish vacancies. Those who received such appointments were soon followed into the western counties by relatives who took leases of church lands from the incumbents, and who sometimes expanded upon this base by acquiring other property within their localities, either on lease or through mortgage. This was a process that we also witnessed in Ulster, and, as with Ulster, some of the clergy appointed in both Sligo and Mayo were Scots. Andrew Adaire, Esq., who claimed to have suffered a loss of house-furnishings, cattle, horses, sheep, and corn in north Mayo to the value £1,400, was probably the son, or close relative, of the Scotsman Archibald Adaire who had been bishop, 1630–40, of the united dioceses of Killala and Achonry. In any event, Adaire identified strongly with the Scots in his locality and looked northwards to seek the origins of the revolt in Mayo that ultimately led to the loss of his possessions. The first disturbance in Connacht was, he claimed, an onslaught that was launched against the ironworks of Sir Charles Coote in County Leitrim, and he then traced its spread to the town and county of Sligo, and ultimately to Mayo. Adaire contrasted the steadfastness of clergy such as William Oliphant, vicar of Ballysadare and Enagh, ‘a constant preaching minister, a Scotsman’, who was martyred for his faith at the siege of William Crofton’s residence of Templehouse, with the unreliability of English people such as Richard Rutledge and Sir Henry Bingham. He accused Rutledge, the custodian of the earl of Cork’s castle of Bellick who had denied protection to the English and Scots who had sought refuge there, of being ‘a Papist’, and he alleged that Bingham, in Castlebar, had attended mass in the hope that this apostasy would save his life and goods.171

Moreover, as Adaire and others testified, when the settlers in Counties Mayo and Sligo came to recognize the hopelessness of their position with the intensification of the rebellion, most of them sought to escape northwards either into Leitrim and Cavan, or exceptionally by boat from Killala to Killybegs in Donegal. Those Protestant settlers who sought instead to move southwards towards Galway were a relatively small contingent, and it seems reasonable to suppose that those who preferred to escape northwards were retracing the route by which they had first come into Connacht, or were making their way to places where they expected to find support of friends and relatives. This, however, is not to suggest that they were but recently arrived in Connacht. On the contrary, Jane Stewart, widow of the merchant Thomas Stewart of Sligo, stated that her husband had been a merchant of the town for twenty-six years.172

172 Deposition of Henry Bringhurst, Esq. (TCD, MS 831, fo. 187).
Adaire’s narrative advanced the claim that 600 ‘people’ in Sligo and Mayo had lost their lives as a consequence of the rebellion. If by this he meant settlers alone then his estimate was grossly exaggerated, since the evidence that can be gleaned from the depositions, and from other sources, suggests there were coherent communities of Protestants—Scots and English mixed—only in the towns of Sligo, Killala, and, possibly, Castlebar, and that the only other settlers in those counties were small numbers of clergy, landowners, principal tenants, and the dependants of all three, who lived scattered throughout the countryside usually where the land was of good quality. Some native proprietors throughout Connacht had also introduced small clusters of tenants to increase their rent roll, as was already noted in the case of the earl of Clanricard in County Galway. Myles Burke, Lord Viscount Mayo, himself a Protestant at the outset of the insurrection, seems to have retained some Protestant tenants in that county, and one deponent from Roscommon mentioned that Charles O’Connor had ‘divers English and Scottish Protestants who were his tenants in Ballinafad’.173

Clergy throughout the province owed their appointment to the state, and their situation was determined by the location of church land. This explains the initial settlement at Killala in Mayo, and the archiepiscopal seat in Tuam was likewise the principal locus of Protestant settlement in County Galway. Protestant ownership of property throughout Connacht owed much to the sixteenth-century activities of the provincial presidency, considered in Chapter 2, and this explains the significant communities of settlers in such places as Castlebar in County Mayo, and Boyle Abbey in County Roscommon, as well as a Protestant presence in the town of Galway associated with the fort there. Any lands that subsequently fell into Protestant possession seem to have been the outcome of mortgage transactions which some of these initial settlers, or their kin, had entered upon. To this extent, Protestant presence in Connacht continued to be the product of spread from initial nodal points of settlement, and we find that some of the more commercially dynamic settlers in north Connacht remained closely associated with Sligo. Thus Amy, the wife of Francis Hawkesworth, tailor, of Boyle Abbey in County Roscommon was the widow of Edward Newsham, former clothier in Sligo town, and Henry Langford, clothier, of Boyle Abbey had, with his brother John, been partners with Robert Browne, merchant, and Browne’s son James, in an estate in Ardnaglass, County Sligo. Some outsiders who ultimately became landowners in County Roscommon and in the more fertile parts of eastern Counties Mayo and Galway first became acquainted with the possibilities that existed west of the river Shannon from the presidential outpost of Athlone on the eastern fringe of the province. The appearance of Anthony Brabazon of Roscommon among the ranks of the insurgents in 1641

173 Deposition of Elizabeth Holliwell, widow (TCD, MS 830, fo. 35).
indicates that Spenser’s misgiving over settlement in uncontrolled areas was borne out also by experience in Connacht. However, movement westwards had persisted, as is suggested by the presence among the Roscommon deponents of Michael Penock of Turrock in the barony of Athlone who was primarily a sheep and cattle man who cultivated some grain, but had also introduced a civil appearance to Roscommon with ‘a pigeon house with a great stock or flight of pigeons’. 174

When all the evidence for British settlement in Connacht is pieced together it produces the unsurprising conclusion that it was thin on the ground, and that, apart from the planted county of Leitrim, it contained few of those artisans who constituted the backbone of British settlement in Munster and Leinster. The most compelling indicator of the relative feebleness of the settler presence is that it was Catholic merchants from Galway and Sligo who were the principal sponsors and beneficiaries of mortgage transactions throughout the province. This however is not to suggest that, as a province, it would remain immune from outside influences so long as the threatened plantation was held at bay. It was noted in Chapter 4 that some Scottish proprietors in Ulster were alert from an early stage to the possibilities of acquiring land in Connacht through mortgage procedures, and attention has been devoted in this chapter to the involvement of greater and lesser Dublin financiers in lending transactions in Connacht. 175

Some evidence of this emerges in the Connacht depositions also. Ann Frere, widow of Dr Ambrose Frere who had lived at Knockvicar in Roscommon, suffered a loss not only of the usual livestock, household goods, and tithes that a clergyman in the west of Ireland would have possessed, but also of ‘bills of exchange for receipts of money due at Dublin’. Even more specific proof of the interest that outside commercial interests were taking in the profits that might be derived from land in Connacht comes from the deposition of John Ridge, Esq., who had established his base at the Abbey in Roscommon town. Ridge was married to a daughter of Roger Jones, a notable Sligo entrepreneur, which gave him immediate status in the society of north Connacht, as would his twenty-five-room house in Roscommon Abbey with its haggard with forty wainloads of hay, its stable, oxhouse, ‘French killhouse’, wool house, cowhouse and five dwelling houses for his servants. Ridge also prided himself on the possession of ‘lands of inheritance, lands in mortgage, and lands in lease’ in County Sligo which he valued at £1,300, and similar holdings to the value of £817 in the barony of Kilmaine in County Mayo which he had stocked with 4,350 sheep which he valued at £1,740. His holdings in Mayo, this time in the east of the county, were greatly

174 Deposition of Amy Hawkesworth (TCD, MS 830, fo. 39); deposition of Henry Langford (TCD, MS 830, fo. 36); deposition of Michael Penock (TCD, MS 830, fo. 38).
expanded by a loan of £500 which he had extended to Sir James Dillon, together with a further £800 in return for which Dillon gave Ridge a ‘lease of the castle of Bealaveele and seven quarters of land thereunto belonging for ninety-nine years at a peppercorn rent’. The essential point is that Ridge’s wealth was widely scattered with ‘capital and messuage lands, farms, rents, revenues and means’ in Counties Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Longford, Dublin, and Wicklow. The likelihood is that its foundations lay outside the province, in Templeogue in County Dublin and in County Wicklow, and that he had been attracted to Connacht in the first instance because he saw the possibility of acquiring land at a cheap price that was especially suited to his essential business of sheep grazing and wool production which, in the years before the rebellion, had alone generated him an annual income of £1,200. An income on this scale also explains why this Roscommon proprietor appears as a creditor on the books of the Irish Statute Staple.176

6.7. THE BRITISH PRESENCE IN IRELAND: APPEARANCE AND REALITY

The first impression conveyed by this portrayal of British settlement in all four provinces of Ireland at the mid-seventeenth century is its apparent omnipotence. This dimension to the British presence is likely to have captured the imagination of people who lived through the seventeenth century even more than it does those of us who are contemplating the scene from the remove of three-and-a-half centuries and with access to evidence that is but fragmentary. However, what does survive establishes that the newcomers exerted a major impact on the lives of all elements of the population of Ireland on a continuing basis, and it shows how the series of nearly autonomous lordships to which most people had previously owed their loyalty were forced to concede considerable ground to centralized authority. The strengthening of the administrative arm of the state to the point where it extended on a regular basis into the most remote areas of the country was obviously the first, and most potent, instrument of this transformation. The apparatus of officialdom, which was served almost entirely by English people, was discussed at the outset of this chapter. However the overlapping of jurisdictions, and the enforcement of legal decisions, meant that people throughout Ireland, and especially those at the lower reaches of society, must have experienced difficulty in distinguishing between the military, civil, and ecclesiastical powers of the state. Matters must have been rendered even more

176 Deposition of Ann Frere (TCD, MS 830, fo. 32); John Ridge (TCD, MS 830, fos. 14–16); O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land, 100–2; see also the incomplete deposition of William Cox which shows him to have had involvements similar to Ridge (TCD, MS 831, fo. 220); Ohlmeyer and Ó Ciardha (eds.), The Irish Statute Staple Books, 139.
confusing because many of these same officials were endowed with new fiscal powers to collect the subsidies to the state that had been approved by the Irish parliaments of 1634 and 1640.

This enhancement of the power of the state was quickly followed first by the consolidation of the position of the established Church in every parish of Ireland, then by the acquisition of some land by English and Scottish proprietors in most counties of the country, and finally by British tenants being granted leases of choice farms on the estates of native proprietors as well as on those of British settlers. Of equal importance in breaking down particularism would have been the presence in every town in Ireland of significant communities of artisans, merchants, and moneylenders or their agents, as well as chapmen and other itinerant pedlars who collectively introduced people in all parts of the country and at all social levels to a market-driven economy. Therefore, for many, the ubiquity of the British presence in Ireland was even more compelling than its seeming omnipotence, and this impression would have been inescapable for anybody who observed that officials, both senior and junior, and in Church as well as in state, had become prime owners of land in Ireland, and were active also in the money market that had become such a dynamic force for change in all four provinces.

Again it is not being suggested that commerce was unknown in Ireland previous to the seventeenth century or that internal trade was entirely reliant upon British traders. On the contrary, the first to acknowledge that they were but building upon what was already in place, and in association with Irish traders and grey merchants, would have been those whom we might regard as the most innovative. These too would have been the first to allude to the continued existence of blockages that had bedevilled trade in Ireland in earlier times. Prime among these would have been the absence of an Irish mint, and the consequent chronic shortage of specie because coin flowed out of the country as payment for manufactured and luxury goods. Some sought, as best they could, to operate a barter system and to build up credits in London which might subsequently be redeemed for liabilities they incurred there or further afield, but this did nothing to lubricate commerce, or rent collecting, within the country. Thus even John Walley, the astute agent of the earl of Cork, had to satisfy himself, as had traders in Munster in the sixteenth century, with circulating Spanish coin as if it were valid currency. Previously Spanish coin had been treated as a commodity because of its relatively high silver content, but it had since been ‘clipped’ and made counterfeit. However, as Walley put it in 1641, the ‘coin had been an exceeding great relief . . . in this time of scarcity of moneys’ and had become so ‘current’ that he had ‘not seen or heard of any that [had] doubted of [it]’, nor did anybody who received it from Walley ‘make a question of the weight or goodness of it’ nor did he himself want to be seen weighing it because, ‘for the common good it brings’, he wished ‘to add to the currency of it’. For all that, however, the scale and
scope of commerce was increasing, and this was largely due to foreign intervention working with customary traders.

Both the ubiquity and apparent omnipotence of the British presence were facilitated by the mobility of many people within the British settler community. The official duties of administrators, army officers, and churchmen required that they be ready to move whenever their services were called upon. Besides that, all members of the ruling elite, whether natives or newcomers, were expected to assume civic responsibilities within their counties, to serve as members of the parliament in Dublin if elected to that body, and to act as political lobbyists in Dublin and in London to defend their individual interests or that of a wider community. Then as the British members of this elite group extended their interests and responsibilities, and as they acquired estates in several different parts of the country, while retaining, or acquiring, land in England and Scotland, they had no choice but to move regularly between their various properties and duties.

We have, in this and previous chapters, noted such an accumulation of functions in the case of senior officials and prime landowners, such as the earl of Cork, Sir Robert McClelland, Sir Charles Coote, Lord Viscount Ely, and Sir Philip Perceval, but minor functionaries in Church and state also led a peripatetic existence. For example, it emerges from the deposition of the bishop of Cloyne, in east County Cork, that his principal income came from estates in Counties Meath and Louth and from a lease, with thirty-six years outstanding, which he held from the earl of Essex in County Monaghan, while the bishop of Kilfenora, in north County Clare, could have been but an occasional visitor to his see since he chose to reside in the lush countryside close to Maynooth in preference to the craggy outback of the Burren.

It comes as no surprise that British merchants and manufacturers within the settler community also travelled long distances, both within and outside Ireland to promote their business. The most venturesome of the long-distance travellers that we know of were the three individuals who were planters in the West Indies simultaneously with being settlers in Munster. All three of them, John Merritt of Churchtown in north County Cork, Thomas Sowther of the parish of Kilgobnett in County Waterford, and Andrew Hulton of Clonmel in County Tipperary, had their losses in the Irish insurrection reported by their wives, but only Mary Hulton identified the specific location of her losses.


178 Deposition of William Bishop, agent for George, lord bishop of Cloyne (TCD, MS 834, fo. 75b); depositions of Robert, lord bishop of Killfenora, and Michael Cusack his servant (TCD, MS 813, fo. 370).
husband’s West Indies interest, it being on the island of St Christopher.179 Traders overseas more commonly travelled to the ports in Britain that lay closest to Ireland, or to London and the Netherlands, while those involved with the making of pipe staves went occasionally as far afield as the wine islands of the Atlantic.

Established merchants in the cities pursued their trade into the countryside through chapmen and grey merchants, some of them English but others Irish, but they seem to have themselves been more directly involved with the moneylending aspect of their business and travelled into the provinces themselves, possibly to view the property that was being taken as a security on the loans. Trading and lending contacts established such networks as we have been able to trace from the depositions, with Munster and a good deal of the Irish midlands coming into the ambit of Munster port towns, especially Youghal, and Dublin coming to dominate business with southern Ulster, east and south-east Leinster, and with Connacht. These were not exclusive and there was much overlapping of business connections, and the picture would be rendered more complex still if we had data from the depositions on the trading networks established by the ports of Derry and Coleraine. However, even from the extant data, it appears that some commercial connections could override those patterns we have identified. Thus Mary Goodwin of Killeigh in County Down mentioned that she and her husband James had an interest in land in Tirawley in County Mayo associated with the wardship which they held of Edward Barrett, while John Wright, merchant, of Hollywood, also in County Down, bypassed Dublin to establish direct trading connections with the port of Wexford.180

It was the chapmen and traders of more lowly status, traipsing the countryside peddling cloth and consumer commodities, notably tobacco, to Irish customers, who most contributed to the fashioning of a single Irish market which interlinked with markets abroad, especially in England and Scotland. Simon Lightwood, a blacksmith of Kinsale, is a case in point. He was in Kerry when he was accosted by insurgents and might have been the prototype for the intinerant English trader depicted in Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis, since Lightwood was robbed of “a horse laden with tobacco and one pair of scales and weights”.181

Most such traffic followed regular circuits, but we learn from chance references that butchers, drovers, and itinerant traders, some of them Irish pedlars

179 Deposition of Jane Merritt (TCD, MS 829, fo. 159); deposition of Phillippa Bagg, wife to Thomas Sowther (TCD, MS 820, fo. 140); deposition of Mary Hulton (TCD, MS 821, fo. 76); see also MS 825, fo. 159 where reference is made to William Langdon of Dartmouth, a planter in the West Indies recently returned from there.

180 Deposition of Mary Goodwin (TCD, MS 837, fo. 6); deposition of John Wright, merchant (TCD, MS 837, fo. 18).

181 Deposition of Simon Lightwood (TCD, MS 823, fo. 24); Nicholas Williams (ed. and trans.), Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis (Dublin, 1981), 39–44.
who interacted with British merchants or artisans, traversed the length and breadth of the country either in search of markets for their goods, or to negotiate loans, or to track down debtors who were striving to evade them. Rosse Mac Mahon of Ballinteane, County Monaghan, was a ‘grey merchant’ who went ‘about the country selling’ tobacco, and was in Dublin on 22 October 1641 because ‘he was advised to come to buy tobacco by Tho. Garnon of Castleblaney and other grey merchants for that this was the principal time to buy it’. Loghlin McCaffrey was also from Ulster, where his father held land from Sir William Cole in County Fermanagh, but young Loghlin had been provided with accommodation in Kells, County Meath, by his aunt Katherin McCaffrey where Cahill Mc Scurlocke ‘carman [had] hired him to lead a car loaded with sheep skins and calves skins to Dublin’. The work in Dublin of Bryan O’Hara from County Sligo could hardly have been more salubrious than that of McCaffrey since he had gone to Dublin ‘with purpose to get his living by catching and making up herrings’, and having gone ‘to the place where herrings were taken [had] made up two barrels of herrings and got a pennyworth of tobacco for his labour’. Philip Mac Manus, from County Tyrone, had had a variety of employments which ranged from service and soldiering to harvest work and droving, and his boldest venture, before 1641, was accompanying ‘a Scotch drover into England to help to drive cattle, and went as far as Manchester and sold his cattle, and came back a fortnight after Lammans’. This activity would have been too strenuous for a man of the age of Patrick Maguire who had worked as a tailor at Kilmantane in County Fermanagh until the death of his wife, after which ‘he did go up and down the country to seek for work’ carrying only his ‘tailor’s shears and a pocket knife’, and he would make ‘for his host a pair of stockings’ whenever he was unable to pay for his lodgings. Another who made a living from the textile business that had been expanded out of all proportions by British manufacturers in Ireland was Brian O’Dire who had lived in Thurles, County Tipperary, for the twelve years before 1641 and had spent the last two of these in service to Redmond Mc Grah. After that, he appears to have commenced work as an itinerant trader on his own account and, having ‘bought a horseload of frieze cloth in several markets in Munster’, moved northwards to the ‘fair at Ogher in County Tyrone’ and then to ‘divers markets’ in Ulster, the last being ‘at the town of Cavan’ from whence he dispatched ‘his boy called Phillip’ back ‘into Munster’ to repay the money which ‘he had borrowed . . . to buy the cloth’ which now had been successfully sold. He himself proceeded to Dublin to recover 40 shillings which he had foolishly lent ‘to a scholar called Hugh Ocoglye when he was in the north at Newtown in the county of Fermanagh’.

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182 Examination of Rosse Mac Mahon, 14 Nov. 1641 (TCD, MS 809, fo. 58); examination of Loghlin McCaffrey, 5 Nov. 1641 (TCD, MS 809, fo. 107); examination of Bryan O’Hara (TCD, MS 809, fo. 124); examination of Philip Mac Manus, 2 Nov. 1641 (TCD, MS 809, fo. 65).
Members of the settler community with more permanent occupations could also be highly mobile and accustomed to travel. Almost all newcomers had, after all, made their way to Ireland, in the first instance, through migration, and, as was noted in previous chapters, many went there on a trial basis, and returned to England or Scotland for their families only after they were satisfied with their prospects. Many who remained in the country subsequently undertook further migration within Ireland when this was likely to bring them better land or more favourable conditions. Some settlers continued to move about in Ireland, or to switch back and forth between Britain and their place of settlement in Ireland to conduct business or to identify fresh opportunity. Thus it is not surprising to learn that Owen Franckland of Dublin was collecting debts at Loughgall in County Armagh when rebellion broke in 1641, nor that James Smith, gent., of Moneymore in County Londonderry happened to be in Dublin at that time. It would also seem that Smith had travelled there by boat, since his servant Anne Walton subsequently made her way there ‘by ship’. Not all traffic between places located on the coast was by water and some who travelled overland followed routes that we would now consider circuitous. Thus Edward and Margaret Moore, also settlers on the Londonderry plantation, happened to be on the road to Dublin when hostilities commenced, and they had travelled south-westwards to Enniskillen, and were making their way to Cavan when they were accosted. Hilkaigh Read, a settler in County Mayo, was in passage from England to Dublin when the blow struck, which would suggest that he intended to travel overland from Dublin to Mayo. On the other hand, Nicholas Mostian, whose family had been associated with Boyle Abbey in County Roscommon since the sixteenth century, was on the outward journey ‘to buy garden seeds’ in England when the 1641 insurrection occurred, and he would seem to have intended a sea crossing from Waterford since his first encounter with insurgents was at Kilkenny.\textsuperscript{183}

Such journeys to England are in themselves proof that settlers other than traders and members of the social elite maintained contact with their places of origin, possibly with a view to eventual return. These suppositions cannot be tested against substantial evidence because the materials for comprehensive community studies have not survived, but there are several chance statements from deponents that they had suffered the loss of title documents to property or debts in their home villages in England, or Scotland, during the course of the insurrection in Ireland. This is not surprising, nor does it

\textsuperscript{183} Deposition of Christian Stanhawe (TCD, MS 836, fo. 62); deposition of James Smith, gent. (TCD, MS 839, fo. 95); deposition of Anne Walton, servant to James Smith (TCD, MS 839, fo. 102); deposition of Edward and Margaret Moore (TCD, MS 839, fo. 112); deposition of Ann Read, widow (TCD, MS 831, fo. 40); deposition of Nicholas Mostian (TCD, MS 830, fo. 1).
prove that these settlers intended their stay in Ireland to be a temporary one, since many English settlers in distant Massachusetts also retained proof of title to properties in England, and relatively few of them became return migrants. However, Ireland—especially Munster and Leinster—was more contiguous to home than Massachusetts, and it is possible that people such as labourers, cottiers, timber workers, and fisherfolk, whose work was intermittent or seasonal, drifted to and fro between Britain and Ireland as opportunity beckoned.

Letters in the correspondence of the earl of Cork at moments of recession, and a few entries in his rent rolls, make it clear that town-based artisans could abandon their tenancies in difficult times. Similarly, John Bramhall, bishop of Derry, reported from Omagh in County Tyrone in 1640 that ‘the landlords’ there were suffering from land lying ‘waste’, with ‘great proportions everywhere . . . untenanted’, which, in turn, served to ‘bring down the rent of what is tenant’d’. Bramhall’s letter descended to a tirade against the ‘flitting Tartarians’ who had exacerbated the problem by conspiring to convert improved property into grazing land for their herds. However the fact that he cited ‘the Scotch troubles’, along with incidents of economic hardship, as a cause of lands being left waste suggests that those who had really flitted were tenants bound by contract who had returned to Scotland on the occasion of an acute crisis that was as much political as economic in origin.

Although the correspondence of senior officials in Ireland is dotted with alarms concerning economic or political dislocations in Ireland, Britain, or further afield that might place their Irish interests and investments in jeopardy, their appraisals were more often to the effect that the settlement of Ireland was but beginning, and that ultimate stability and more predictable profits would be achieved only after a comprehensive plantation programme had been implemented. The repeated articulation of this Spenserian mantra was noted in Chapters 4 and 5, and it now remains to show that it could also be justified on economic grounds, however unsound their underlying principles. Bishop Bramhall, who travelled westward to County Clare shortly after his first arrival in Ireland in 1633, noted that on his journey from County Meath to the passage over the river Shannon at Killaloe he had reached ‘the old Burre [Birr] or new Parsonstown before [he] met with any remarkable footsteps of a plantation or at least any society of planters’. The apparent prosperity of that settlement, ‘pleasantly situated in the heart of the kingdom in an indifferent good soil, well wooded and watered’, and the town ‘having

184 For examples from two extremes of the country see Elizabeth, wife of Michael Peirce, customs officer at Newry, County Down (TCD, MS 837, fo. 6); and John Moyle, Kiltaugher, County Leitrim (TCD, MS 831, fo. 47); on the Massachusetts parallel see David Cressy, Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, 1987), 191–234.

tradesmen of all kinds in it . . . and some pretty beginnings of clothing [cloth manufacturing]’, convinced him that the same would become general once all land was brought into the possession of enterprising Englishmen. He was further convinced of this when he visited the lead and silver mine at nearby Silvermines in County Tipperary, which he found to be proceeding ‘very prosperously’, and when he viewed the land lying between Birr and County Clare which was ‘generally fit to be improved, stored with turf and wood and limestone able to make their grounds rich’ and especially that ‘about the Abbey of Lurrah near the banks of the Shannon’. The scientific basis for his opinion was that the area had already been ‘planted with English’ in Norman times to ‘which the hedges and other badges in several parts of the country’ bore witness. However he, like Wentworth to whom he was reporting, believed that the land would require ‘a good intelligent husband’ to achieve its potential, because ‘the stupidity of the natives’ was such that they could not discern the true ‘disproportion’ between fertile and poor land, and their only ambition was ‘to glut themselves the one half of the year and to fast the other’.186

That senior officials believed in their own rhetoric is suggested by the plantation endeavours first of Christopher Wandesforde, the master of the rolls under Wentworth (who was to become Wentworth’s immediate successor as chief governor in 1640), and then the plantation efforts of Wentworth himself on the estate which he had carved out in County Wicklow. Their actions no less than their words identify Wandesforde and Wentworth as uncompromising supporters of the policy of continuing plantation (discussed in Chapter 5) which had been formulated before they had ever arrived in Ireland, and which its supporters wished to proceed with until all parts of the country had been absorbed into some formally sponsored scheme.

Wandesforde based himself at Carlow from an early date after his arrival in Ireland in 1633. From that vantage point he, like many others in government, kept an eye on the Ormond lordship which, as was noted in Chapter 5, had long been targeted for plantation. The issue was now more complicated for the government because Walter Butler, eleventh earl of Ormond and a Catholic upholder of traditional values, had died in 1633. His successor, as twelfth earl, was James Butler who was not only dogmatically loyal to the established Church but was both a client and supporter of Wentworth in government. Under these circumstances, the government considered a plantation of all the Ormond inheritance to be less urgent, and attention was focused instead on the peripheral lands of the lordship where the occupiers were either of Gaelic ancestry, or collateral branches of the Butler dynasty who remained attached to traditional ways. Prime among these lands was Idough, a former independent lordship of the O’Brennan sept which had remained a border-

186 Bramhall to [Wentworth], 17 Mar. 1633/4 (HMC, Hastings MSS, iv. 57–9).
land between Counties Kilkenny and Carlow. This area had, in relatively recent years, been technically incorporated within the Butler lordship, but the principal beneficiaries of this arrangement were the Brennans and James Butler, Viscount Mountgarrett, who was the upholder of the traditional values that had been cherished by the deceased Earl Walter. Since scant rent from the area was payable to Ormond, there was no reason for him to counter the government’s move to declare the area crown property. Instead, he, in conjunction with Robert Ridgeway, earl of Londonderry, who owned the nearby estate of Galen Ridgeway in Queen’s County, decided to co-operate with the official inquisition into the ownership of the property. The person nominated to head the investigation was Christopher Wandesforde who, in 1635, declared in classic fashion that the crown was the rightful owner of Idough, decreed that the O’Brennans and the other occupiers were but trespassers, and appointed the earls of Ormond and Londonderry as joint tenants of the crown for the entire area. This arrangement may have been no more than a front for sharp practice because Wandesforde, in association with Sir George Radcliffe, the chief secretary of Wentworth’s government, had previously taken a lease from Lord Londonderry of the ironworks attached to the Idough coalfield. Then, after he had declared Idough to be crown property in 1635, Wandesforde set procedures in motion which resulted in his purchasing all of Idough from the crown in 1636 as the manor of Castlecomer.187

This transaction involved several moves, but Wandesforde had already decided in June 1636 to ‘make a bargain with my Lord of Ormond for his part of Idough’, and he had written ‘a relation of my business of Idough’ to Wentworth, and by October 1636 was acknowledging Wentworth’s support in the business. Both the proposed purchase and Wandesforde’s involving the lord deputy in the proceedings were deliberate, because Wandesforde had it already fixed in his mind in 1636 that if Ormond would part with his proportion he would ‘venture upon pots at Idough’. What he meant by this was negotiating a deal with one Mr Browne, who had paid £12,000 to the crown for a monopoly of the manufacture, in all three kingdoms, of iron pots used in the making of army ordnance. Browne’s agent had been persuaded to inspect the ironworks at Castlecomer, but Wandesforde did not contemplate a joint manufacturing venture because the agent did ‘not bargain for our pots [and] refused to examine, indeed see, the accounts’. All that could be hoped for was to accept Browne’s offer of a licence to the Irish share of his monopoly for an annual payment of £4,000 and with permission to produce a maximum of 2,500 pots. Wandesforde seemed prepared to proceed on these terms, especially if he could use his influence with Wentworth to have a stop put to the continued importation of ordnance from abroad.

187 Dealings concerning Idough, and Wandesforde’s part in it, have been detailed in Edwards, ‘The Ormond Lordship’, 310–17.
Moreover he seemed persuaded by the argument of Browne’s agent that the terms being offered were favourable to Wandesforde ‘for that woods are far cheaper in Ireland’ than in England ‘whereby they may be enabled to under-sell the Swedes merchants’.  

The correspondence on the subject provides no further information on the details worked out, other than that in June 1638 Browne was making payment for pots manufactured at Idough. However what little information we have gives us an indication of what was afoot. Wandesforde, effectively, wished to put his theories into practice by promoting a manufacturing enterprise in Ireland which would, in the words of the royal monopoly, serve ‘for the breeding up of workmen (upon occasion) to be employed in the casting of brass and iron ordnance’. He had the possibility of doing this because of the mining lease which he and Radcliffe negotiated from Londonderry, but a mine alone would have been of little benefit unless they had access to land endowed with natural forest, which would give them a competitive edge as manufacturers over their competitors. Land also would presumably have made it easier for them to lure suitable artisans from England into Ireland by combining wages with leases of farms, and the rents would, in turn, have provided a stable income to the proprietors. Then, if both land and a manufacturing enterprise were attainable, all seemed ready for the creation of a model community, populated by enterprising English or continental Protestants, such as Bramhall had found so admirable at Birr. What remained unstated in this, as in all plantation schemes, was that existing proprietors and occupiers had to be removed before such a social experiment could be attempted. It would also have been clear to Wandesforde that what he was attempting was feasible only because he enjoyed access to government influence which was necessary to surmount the hurdles that stood in the way of achieving his ambitions. In this case the law, and ultimately government troops, were employed to clear the ground for settlement, and we are left to imagine that Wentworth’s Irish army, which was mobilized in 1638 with considerable involvement of Wandesforde, Radcliffe, and Ormond, was duly furnished with ordnance cast in the forges at Idough. Whatever of that possibility, it appears from the depositions for County Kilkenny that, by 1641, Wandesforde had gone some distance towards creating a model settlement at Castlecomer which was supervised by his agent John Davyes, and which provided employment to Richard Harrison as park keeper, and to Robert Howell, merchant, in charge of the ironworks. These three were, presumably, rewarded for their effort, but it is doubtful if this

188 Wandesforde to Sir George Radcliffe, 6 June 1636 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Add. MS C286, fo. 1); same to same, 22 June 1636 (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fo. 3); same to same, 22 Sept. 1636 (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fo. 16); same to same, 3 Oct. 1636 (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fo. 14); W. Browne, ‘Answer to the Proposition of the Undertakers of the Manufacture of Iron Ordnance &c in Ireland’ (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fos. 37v–39v); Wandesforde to Radcliffe, 23 June 1638 (Bodleian, Add. MS C286, fo. 22); TCD, MS 812, fos. 195, 218, 244.
embryonic British settlement had turned a profit for Wandesforde before it was summarily overthrown only five years after its establishment. 189

If Wandesforde acknowledged the necessity of government intervention to assist his efforts at Castlecomer, he, like Wentworth, would have argued that this would be no longer necessary once the government proceeded with its proposed plantation scheme. They would also have pointed to the potential profitability of such plantation endeavours, and it appears from a document among the papers of Thomas Wentworth that such estimations were based on careful costings rather than hearsay. This document, ‘Directions for Establishing a Plantation’, was composed by an anonymous projector of the second half of the seventeenth century, but is valid for our period because the figures which sustained it were derived from ‘an essay’ commissioned by ‘the late earl of Strafford his Lordship’s father’, and from ‘the late earl’s books’. The essential purpose of the exercise was to compare the relative costs of processing timber and promoting iron smelting at Wentworth’s estate at Wentworth Woodhouse in Yorkshire and at his property at Shillelagh in County Wicklow. The author proceeded from the assumption that producing commercial timber and iron smelting were interrelated, and he also constantly repeated his contention that the two together would contribute to the ‘improvement’ to the lands in question as well as to the ‘improvement of his Lordship’s fortune by his industry’.

In calculating the cost of bringing commercial timber to market, the author, or his predecessor of Wentworth’s time, took account of the cost of squaring the wood, the rates for sawing it, the cost of carriage per mile ‘from land to sea’, the relative costs of carriage by sea, the relative rates of lading from Hull and Ireland to London, and the relative costs of insurance from Hull and from Ireland to London. Based on these figures, it was estimated that the ‘charge of working up one rood of boards, carriage and transport’ to ‘London or some such market’ was £2 12s. from Wentworth Woodhouse, as opposed to £1 6s. from Ireland, and the author was confident that the ‘stock employed upon this improvement’ would, on this scale of cost difference, be defrayed after one-quarter of a year in production. The outlays which the author considered necessary would involve the construction of a wharf with a crane and houses at Arklow, and another at ‘Redriff, London’; the provision of ‘good sawing engines, of the like nature with that at Lambeth marth, to go by water or by wind’; and ‘the charge of providing and transporting over of one hundred and thirty sawyers out of England into Ireland and planting of them there’. The costs associated with the production of pipe staves as opposed to ‘ship timber or of timber for the construction of houses’ would, he estimated, prove greater because ‘more men must be transported for this service (being none of those commodities can be wrought by engine)’,

189 Sources as in previous note.
but he was still satisfied that, even with this additional cost, it would prove more profitable to produce staves and other ‘cooperware’ in Ireland than in Yorkshire.

Iron smelting was considered complementary to timber processing because it would make use of the waste wood, for the making of charcoal which was still required in smelting during the seventeenth century. The essential ingredients for iron smelting were, therefore, a plentiful supply of wood suitable for charcoal, ready access to running water for the working of a forge, and proximity to the sea so that the ore could be transported to the forge by ship from a mine in England, and the bar-iron could be conveyed back to England for sale. All of these factors seemed to be favourable in Ireland, and this again satisfied the author that ironworks could operate more profitably in Wicklow than in Yorkshire. His calculation lacked the precision of his costings for timber production because one essential variable which could only be calculated for a particular situation was the cost of purchasing a mine in England for 300 years, and the richness of the ore which that would produce. Everything else suggested that Ireland, or at least Shillelagh, would be the more profitable location for iron smelting, and here the author supported his case by citing the costs incurred there ‘by some persons’.

The essential factor accounting for the lower cost of production in Wicklow, according to this calculation, was ‘the wood being his own and by the cheapness of his Lordship’s land’. This, it was thought, would more than offset the infrastructural costs, and the charge of the ‘transplantation’ of labourers, woodcutters, masons, housewrights, millwrights, smiths, and wood-colliers, as well as such ‘men of mystery’ as bellows-makers, founders, finerymen, and hammermen. The unskilled workers, once they had been brought into Ireland, would, according to the author, be had for ‘one fifth charge than they be had in England for’, and the ‘men of mystery’ ‘after half the rates that they may be had in England’. He calculated, as had Phane Beecher in the sixteenth century, that lower wages would prove acceptable to workers in Ireland because they ‘could live at a fourth less charge than they can in England’. However, the essential consideration, especially where highly skilled workers were concerned, was that their work contracts would have ‘farms annexed to them (which will be without charge to his Lordship), such farmers being to pay for their farms’.

This last proposition proves that the promotion of manufacturing in Ireland, and the placing of tenants from England (and, in particular areas, from Scotland), were inextricably linked. They were even more linked, according to the ‘Directions for Establishing a Plantation’, because, as the trees were being felled, they would be ‘stubbed and the roots riven up for the improvement of the ground that the trees stand in . . . thus the ground will become arable and consequently the mould being good, as valuable as the lands of the like mould which is planted thereabouts’. Furthermore, the
stones would be collected by masons and wallers who would be engaged in
the ‘continued employment of cleansing ground from stones so it may become
arable while trees are standing’. This, for Wentworth, would have been the
ultimate proof that what he proposed when he advocated further plantation
was a ‘work of improvement’ which would lead to the enrichment of all
concerned and (although it was not stated here) to the Protestantization of
the country.190

He, and most other officials of his generation in Ireland, could speak confi-
dently of such a glorious outcome because what they witnessed before them
convinced them that plantation in Ireland would prove itself profitable indef-
initely, and would not incur any hazards that would not prove manageable.
These, from the evidence cited in this chapter, would appear to have been
reasonable conclusions to draw, but they had been reached without adequate
account being taken of the possible responses of the indigenous population
to the changes being promoted by the British who had taken up residence
in Wentworth’s Ireland.

190 ‘Directions for Establishing a Plantation’ (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 34 (15)),
esp. fos. 6–19. I am grateful to Julia Merritt for supplying me with a photocopy of this document
which extends to sixty pages.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Plantation and its Politics:
The Irish Responses

7.1. THE PROBLEM

Irish responses to the changes that were being openly espoused by the government, and those which were believed to be in prospect, have been touched upon in previous chapters, but the subject calls for more detailed consideration, not least because it has not received anything like the attention it deserves in the secondary literature. However, before proceeding to an investigation of the issues, something has to be said of the complexity of the problems to be addressed, and of the sources that will assist in their resolution.

One essential difficulty is that the responses to the changes that were proceeding at such a rapid pace, over a relatively short period, were almost as various as the people who encountered them, and no more than trends can be discerned within a plethora of responses. The issue is further complicated because most residents in Ireland were themselves active promoters of innovations of their own choosing while simultaneously seeking to turn the changes that were being spearheaded by the government to their advantage. Matters are rendered even more confusing by the fact that those Irish people of high social status who, for various reasons, sought to make a career on the continent of Europe made full use of the moral authority which they, as exiles, enjoyed over the friends and kin who had endured in Ireland to influence them in their choice of policy. Therefore, it is not sufficient to represent any element of the population of Ireland as passive sufferers who attempted valiantly, but ultimately unsuccessfully, to resist the changes that were pressing in upon them from outside. Rather, all people associated with Ireland, regardless of their rank or national origin, and whether they had remained at home or had made a career on the Continent, were active participants in a process that brought natives and settlers to establish working relationships which, however tenuous, persisted until they were all engulfed by the insurrection that beset the country in 1641. Therefore it would be entirely wrong to suggest that Catholic people in Ireland were consciously working towards that outcome, and it will emerge from what follows that most who remained in Ireland had been seeking rather to establish a niche for themselves within the social and governmental frameworks that had come into being in the aftermath of the Elizabethan conquest of the country. In the light of this it
appears that they, no less than the settlers who became the principal victims of that onslaught, were surprised by the insurgency of 1641.

In seeking to understand what led to 1641 some effort must be made to decode the cultural conversations between natives and strangers that were conducted over the first half of the seventeenth century. Such an endeavour presents a greater challenge than might first be imagined, because sources of the kind that one normally associates with the writing of social history hardly exist for Ireland of this period. Few parish records survive from the seventeenth century, and where they are extant they relate to Church of Ireland parishes, and therefore provide scant information on the majority Catholic population who aspired to live their lives outside the confines of the state Church.1 The records of ecclesiastical courts, which are frequently used to trace the spatial movement of people within European countries, have also generally not survived for Ireland, and again if they did exist they would probably tell us more of the settler population, which was largely Protestant, than of the natives who were mostly Catholic. Records of the central law courts, the circuits of assize, and of manorial courts have also, for the most part, been destroyed, so one is left to piece together something of the lives of ordinary people and of their interactions with their neighbours from more unpromising sources.2 These miscellaneous records include official correspondence, scraps of court proceedings, estate records, occasional crown investigations into society and government in Ireland, evangelical literature in English and Irish, prose and verse compositions in Latin and in Irish, Gaelic poetry composed within Ireland during these decades, and the sworn testimony of those settlers in Ireland who survived the onslaught of 1641.

7.2. THE IRISH AT HOME

The one element of the country’s population which has been accorded generous consideration in the recent literature on early modern Ireland is those who described themselves, and who continue to be described by historians, as the Old English in Ireland. These, as they have been depicted by


2 The exception to this generalization on the central courts is the surviving remnants from the Court of Chancery which have been used to such good effect by Kenneth Nicholls and Mary O’Dowd and the potential of which is discussed in Jane Ohlmeyer, ‘Records of the Irish Court of Chancery: A Preliminary Report for 1627–1634’, in Desmond Greer and Norma Dawson (eds.), Mysteries and Solutions in Irish Legal History (Dublin, 2000), 15–49; Jane Ohlmeyer, who kindly made this paper available to me in typescript, also informs me, on the authority of Patrick Little, that many Irish cases were pleaded before the English Chancery for which records do survive; see also Kenneth Nicholls, ‘Some Documents on Irish Law and Custom in the Sixteenth Century’, Analecta Hibernica, 26 (1970), 103–29; Mary O’Dowd, ‘Women and the Irish Chancery Court in the Late Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Centuries’, Irish Historical Studies, 21 (1999), 470–87.
Aidan Clarke, were primarily a landowning population of Anglo-Norman descent who were most firmly entrenched in the Pale, but whose influence extended throughout the province of Leinster, through large scopes of Munster, and into the province of Connacht. Their interests are also identified with the older port towns, and they are collectively represented as a community who, by virtue of their Anglo-Norman tradition, held the Gaelic population of the country in disdain, took pride in their allegiance to the law, language, and cultural norms of England, but offered their religious loyalty to the Pope. What is known of their political attitudes comes largely from the pronouncements of their spokesmen, who petitioned successive monarchs for the right to hold public office without being subjected to the oath of supremacy, which, as Catholics, they could not in conscience subscribe to. They could justify their petition on the grounds that their unbroken record of allegiance to the crown, since the Norman conquest of the twelfth century, more than offset any doubts concerning their loyalty that might have arisen because of their refusal to conform to Protestantism.

While claiming a privileged position for themselves, the Old English supported successive proposals of the government to confiscate the property of Irish lords who engaged in insurrection against the crown, even when this was at the expense of some of their own stock, as had been the case with the earl of Desmond and his adherents. However, some of their spokesmen invariably complained when they, because they were either Catholic or Irish born, were denied a share in the resulting plantations, and the Old English as a group were firmly opposed to the adoption of plantation as an instrument for reforming the county, because they recognized that any such policy would eventually threaten both their ancestral lands, and those estates which they had recently acquired from Gaelic or Gaelicized proprietors through commercial transactions. In order to avert such a disaster, the Old English leaders had striven collectively to win the agreement of the crown to the enactment in the Irish parliament of a bill, modelled on similar legislation in force in England since 1624, to the effect that any proprietor who had enjoyed undisputed occupancy of land for sixty years would have automatic title to that property. Historians have been able to trace the course of such negotiations, which culminated in the Graces of 1628, through official correspondence. On the basis of this evidence they have rightly concluded that the essential ambition of the Old English, during most of Wentworth’s rule, was the enactment of

legislation which would give statutory authority to what had been promised in 1628. In so far as they became constitutionally more ambitious in the 1640s it was, as Aidan Clarke has shown, to plead that Ireland was a separate kingdom, subject to the same crown as England, but not answerable to the English parliament.4

It is logical that the leaders of this group are normally represented in the secondary literature as constitutionalists with a deep concern to advance their interests through recognized procedures. This depiction is sustained by reference first to the deep-seated suspicion of the Old English towards the earl of Tyrone even before he entered into rebellion in 1595, second to their tradition, which was sustained right down to 1641, of sending some of their sons to be educated at the Inns of Court in London, third to their involvement with the Irish parliaments which were convened in 1585, 1613, 1634, and 1640, and finally to their role as Confederate Catholics, 1642–9.5 The most recent authority on the Confederacy has described its Old English members as ‘constitutional nationalists’ championing the rights and liberties of the Irish parliament against arbitrary rule. This concern is taken to be best illustrated by Old English parliamentarians combining both with Protestant members of the Irish parliament of 1640–1 and with some of the more extreme members of the English Long Parliament, to effect the overthrow of Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford. Making this point is considered to be valid for bolstering the case for Old English principled commitment to constitutionalism because Wentworth can be shown to have behaved tyrannically during his years as governor of Ireland. Less attention has been given in the literature to the fact that the Old English animus against Wentworth was explained primarily by his refusal to honour the king’s promise to have the Graces sanctioned by the Irish parliament, even when it was well known that the natural majority in that assembly was opposed to any relaxation in the laws against Catholics. By ignoring such awkward facts, historians have been able to represent the political culture of the Old English as a Hibernian variant upon the country culture of provincial England with the natural leaders of local communities seeking to monitor and divert innovations being promoted by political figures at court. The Hibernian coloration of this politics is usually attributed to the attachment of the more prominent members of the Old English group—


women as well as men—to the Catholic Counter-Reformation, rather than, as in provincial England, to Calvinist forms of worship.⁶

There is no questioning the importance of the Counter-Reformation as a spiritual movement in Ireland, and its promotion resulted first in the consolidation of the position of Catholicism in those parts of Ireland dominated by the Old English, and then in the extension of this reinvigorated religion to areas dominated by Gaelic Irish proprietors. This was the achievement primarily of significant numbers of people from Old English backgrounds who attended at Catholic colleges and seminaries on the European continent in preference to the English universities, where their counterparts of previous generations had attended, or at Trinity College, Dublin, which had been chartered in 1592 specifically to provide for the education and evangelization of future leaders in the Old English community. During the late sixteenth century some of the Old English graduates of these continental colleges still proceeded to the English Inns of Court to acquire a knowledge of the law which they expected would equip them for the official and legal careers they hoped to take up in Ireland. Increasingly, however, those who eventually made their way home after a continental education had abandoned the secular life to become priests, or nuns and brothers, and they returned to Ireland to engage upon missionary work, initially among their own kin but later in all parts of the country. While such activity, which enjoyed the support of Catholic landowners and merchants, was in direct opposition to the religious policy of the crown, it could plausibly be represented as complementing the civil, if not the religious, objectives of the government. Thus David Rothe, the continentally educated Catholic bishop of Ossory, was able to contend that the spread of reformed Catholicism in Ireland would serve to ‘eliminate barbarous customs, abolish bestial rites, and convert the detestable intercourse of savages into polite manners and a care for maintaining the commonwealth’.⁷

Such pronouncements, and the interpretations they have been required to bear, have received due attention in recent historical literature, but these historical arguments have sometimes disregarded the complexities of Old English society, and of Irish Catholic society generally, during the first half of the seventeenth century, and they sometimes also lead to a misunderstanding both of the constitutional priorities and of the cultural norms that


were espoused within the Irish Catholic community. On the constitutional front the lead was taken by people of Old English background, particularly those who had had a legal training in England as a preliminary to a parliamentary career in Ireland. Most Old English parliamentarians were indeed jealous of the sovereignty of the Irish parliament which they had regarded as a primary bulwark of Irish Catholic interests until its membership was augmented by ever increasing numbers of English, and some Scottish. This was consequent upon the extension of crown authority into all parts of Ireland and the associated introduction of settler communities into the provinces, principally through the process of plantation. After it was made evident to the Old English political leaders by their experience in the Irish parliament of 1613–15 that they had lost their dominance in a reconstituted Commons and Lords, they became less committed to parliamentary procedures until a parliament became necessary to ratify the particular legislation which had been promised them by the king under the terms of the Graces.8

These Old English parliamentarians, unlike opposition members at Westminster, were therefore not so much fearful of royal incursions upon their liberties as they were concerned over the determination of a hostile Protestant administration in Dublin to undermine their position as leaders of a Catholic community in Ireland. They were also afraid of the presumption of the stridently Protestant English parliament to legislate for Ireland, and this fear intensified as the gulf widened between the committed Protestant English officials in Dublin and the leaders of the Catholic community in Ireland, and as the administrators consequently contemplated the application to Ireland of the full thrust of the recusancy laws that had long been in force in England. It was principally to pre-empt this possibility that Patrick Darcy, an English-trained lawyer from Galway, advanced his arguments of the 1640s in defence of the sovereignty of Irish institutions; sovereignty, it must be said, that was defined in 1643 by hostility towards the pretensions of the English parliament to legislate for Ireland rather than by opposition to the prerogative powers of the crown.9

While Darcy’s argument in favour of a sovereign Irish parliament was to be developed further in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries by such Irish-based Protestant authors as William Domville, William Molyneux, and Jonathan Swift, as well as by some leaders of the American revolution, these subsequent authors were writing in entirely different contexts.

8 The controversy over the membership of the Irish parliament of 1613–15, and the resulting restructuring of any future parliament, has been treated in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 210–19; however it must still be emphasized that the change in the denominational balance of the parliament was effected by a reduction in the number of seats from boroughs in the Pale, as well as by the assignment of new borough seats to areas in the country that had recently been planted.

and it would be wrong to represent Darcy as a principled opponent of a drift towards absolutism. In so far as Darcy, or any of his Old English associates, wished to limit the powers of an authoritarian government, it was the parliament in England and the executive in Dublin, rather than the crown, which they feared. Therefore their essential differences with Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, during the course of his governorship in Ireland were that he proposed to include land that was in Old English possession within the plantation net, and that he wished to deny the Old English their customary right to plead directly with the king over the head of the Dublin administration. The fact that the Old English wished to make such appeals, and that, during the reign of King Charles I, they had recourse also to the Catholic queen, proves beyond question that Old English lawyers were essentially upholders both of the prerogative powers of the monarch, and of the sovereignty of Irish institutions. Indeed, they considered royal rule to be their ultimate shield against the hostility towards Catholic worship and proprietorship which was displayed consistently by the government administration in Ireland, by a stridently Protestant group within the House of Commons in England, and also by the subscribers to the National Covenant in Scotland.\textsuperscript{10}

If the true position of Old English leaders on the question of monarchical rule was left deliberately obscure there can be no doubting what guided John Cusacke, an Old English author of the 1630s, whose views appear to be so out of kilter with those of his kinsmen in Ireland that they have been ignored by most historians. Cusacke was a grand-nephew of Sir Thomas Cusacke who had been lord chancellor of Ireland during the 1550s and who has been credited with influencing the government in the pursuit of its policy of surrender and regrant towards the Gaelic lords of Ireland well into the 1560s. Like others of his kin, John Cusacke had been educated in Catholic universities and colleges in continental Europe; in his case seemingly in France. One consequence of Cusacke’s absence from Ireland was that the family inheritance, which he believed to be rightly his, had passed to his relatives who had remained at home, with the result that he was left to eke out a living in the vicinity of the English law courts and to conjure projects that would assist him in repairing his fortune. Not satisfied with the rejection of the suit he brought before the Irish courts for the recovery of his family possessions, Cusacke appealed his case to the courts in England, and in the course of doing so he provided an exceptionally detailed insight into the political loyalties of this one son of the English Pale in Ireland.

When Cusacke appealed to the English courts as being superior to those of Ireland, he justified his action on the grounds that Ireland was but a ‘colony’ of England, and enjoyed a relationship with England as a mother country ‘like unto that which is between a natural child and his parent’. Pursuing the logic of this argument, he averred that the decisions of all Irish institutions were subject to review by whatever bodies in England were nominated to that purpose by the monarch who was the ultimate arbiter on Irish affairs. The king was so empowered, he contended, because of the twelfth-century conquest of Ireland by King Henry II, and while Cusacke did not concede that the English parliament had the right to legislate for Ireland he was of the opinion that the Irish parliament was, in constitutional terms, a weaker body than its English counterpart, and had more restricted legislative functions, because it lacked the royal presence.

Cusacke’s concern to pursue his own interest against his kinsmen may go some way towards explaining why he departed from some of the constitutional propositions more commonly associated with leaders of the Old English, and especially with his long-deceased grand-uncle Thomas Cusacke, who had taken special pride in the monarchical status that had been conferred on Ireland by the Irish Act of Kingship of 1541. However, while denying that Ireland was a monarchy, John Cusacke was of one mind both with his ancestors, and with his contemporaries within the Old English community, in the veneration which he professed for the monarch, and in the pride he fostered for his own lineage, the descendants of ‘the English race there planted’ by King Henry II. Again, like some writers from the Pale during the sixteenth century, Cusacke insisted that this stock be ‘properly styled Anglo Hiberni [English Irish] . . . and not absolutely Hibernis [Irish]’, but he also obliquely dropped the usage Old English possibly because this implied that they were inferior as a people to the more recently arrived ‘colonists’ from England and Scotland. In any event, while supporting Thomas Wentworth, earl of Strafford, as a properly appointed representative of the crown in Ireland, Cusacke would have him know that Ireland was ‘not a land conquered but a land of conquerors’ where most of the property remained in the possession of descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo-Normans who were ‘in England honoured as her glorious offspring’ with entitlement to become ‘free Denizens of England’.

These opinions of a man who had become marginalized in both England and Ireland are of interest because, despite their quirkiness, they were not

totally discordant with the arguments and prejudices of the Old English leaders who continued to reside in Ireland. It is therefore possible that Cusack’s espousal of absolutist principles and the prerogative of the monarchy may have been more widely shared within the Old English community than is usually acknowledged. Certainly, despite their invocation of common law vocabulary, the spokesmen of the Old English interest were (as has been said) ultimately supporters of the British monarchy and its prerogative powers. In this they parted company with the leaders of the opposition in the English parliament. The priorities of Irish Catholic parliamentarians and leaders of the opposition in the English parliament to the government of King Charles I were different because their interests were different, or even diametrically opposed. However, it is also likely (as Linda Levy Peck has shown to be true in the case of John Cusacke) that the attachment of Irish Catholic parliamentarians to the monarchy owed something to the political principles to which many of them would have become introduced during their formal education in Catholic institutions on the Continent, or that others had heard expressed by their kinsmen who returned to Ireland after a continental education.

The suggestion that members of the Old English community would have been drawn towards monarchical authority in its continental aspect becomes plausible when it is considered that their contemporaries from the Gaelic community in Ireland who attended at the same continental institutions can be seen to have been influenced by the absolutist principles to which they had been exposed during the course of their seminary training. This is apparent because, as Breandán Ó Buachalla has demonstrated, the Gaelic Irish learned classes, even to the close of the sixteenth century, had such a weak concept of kingship that even fundamental symbols of monarchical authority, notably the crown, meant little to them. All this was to change dramatically under continental influence, and Ó Buachalla has, through his analysis of the literature composed in Irish and Latin by authors of Irish birth who had spent time in continental seminaries, shown how the concept of kingly rule, and the symbols associated with it, came to be identified by them as the only acceptable form of authority. These ideas would also seem to have been transmitted to several Gaelic poets who had remained in Ireland, with the result that two Ulster poets, Eochaidh Ó hEodhsa and Fearghal Óg Mac an Bháird, were in a position to salute King James of Scotland in 1603 as the legitimate claimant to a fictive Irish crown, ‘coróin iongantach Éireann [the wonderful crown of Ireland]’, as well as to the actual crowns of England and Scotland. This theme came to be repeated so frequently in Gaelic poetic and prose literature composed in Ireland over the course of the seventeenth century that Ó Buachalla can advance a persuasive argument that monarchical government came to be accepted by the learned Gaelic orders of Ireland as the natural form of rule, and the Stuarts as the legitimate successors.
to the ‘crown’ of Ireland’. This proposition gains further credibility in the light of Bernadette Cunningham’s study of the prose writings of Geoffrey Keating and John Lynch, the author of *Cambrensis Eversus*.12

If Breandán Ó Buachalla is correct in pointing to the potency of the continental influence in familiarizing intellectual leaders in Gaelic Ireland with the principles of absolute rule, it seems reasonable to assume that this same influence would have elicited the same response from people of Old English stock who attended at these same educational institutions, more especially since these already had a strong tradition of loyalty to the English monarchy. It is also likely that members of the Old English community played their part, during the early years of the seventeenth century, in effecting this change of allegiance within the Gaelic community. Attention has already been drawn to seminary priests from Old English backgrounds engaging in missionary endeavour in Gaelic areas of Ireland, and these are likely to have exerted some influence over the political attitudes of the Gaelic lords under whose patronage they operated. Another influence over the cultural, political, and religious attitudes of Gaelic landowners would have been those women from the Pale, and other Old English areas, who became wives to Gaelic and Gaelicized landowners and drew them closer to reformed Catholicism—a trend that was condemned by the zealously Protestant Turlough O’Brien from County Clare. Yet another group who came to exert influence over the previously Gaelic lords who endured in Ireland were lawyers from Old English background whose services were required to assist Gaelic proprietors to defend their land titles from official legal challenge. All of these trends were evident to the anonymous author of ‘A Discourse of the Present State of Ireland, 1614’, who noted with alarm how, ‘until of late’, it had been ‘evident’ that:13

the Old English race, as well in the Pale, as in other parts of the kingdom, despised the meer Irish, accounting them to be a barbarous people, void of civility and religion; and other of them held the other as an hereditary enemy; and so it would have continued for many years yet to come, had not this latter times produced a change, the occasion whereof proceedeth from these three heads ensuing. *First* their frequent marriages one with another, which in former ages were rarely seen. *Secondly* the meer Irish (by their travel abroad) are civilized, grown to be disciplined soldiers, scholars, politicians, and further instructed in points of religion than accustomed, whereby the

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12 Breandán Ó Buachalla, *Aisling Ghéar: na Stíobhartaigh agus an tAos Léinn* (Dublin, 1996), 3–66; Bernadette Cunningham, ‘Representations of King, Parliament, and the Irish People in Geoffrey Keating’s *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* and John Lynch’s *Cambrensis Eversus*,’ in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland*, 131–54. Bernadette Cunningham, *The World of Geoffrey Keating: History, Myth and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin 2000); I regret that this excellent volume by Bernadette Cunningham appeared too late for me to do justice to it, and I am grateful to the author for presenting me with an advance copy and for several conversations which assured me that our conclusions were in general agreement.

ancient dislike and contempt is laid aside. Lastly, the late plantation of New English and Scottish in all parts of the kingdom whom (with an unanimous consent) the natives repute an a common enemy; but this last is the first and principal cause of their union.

Another factor that facilitated fusion between the Old English and the Gaelic landowning families was that Old English lawyers, as well as their kinsmen who were involved in trade, were also liberal in offering financial and legal services to Gaelic landowners who were threatened either with insolvency or with loss of their lands through plantation. The money which they advanced on loan to needy lords was usually secured by mortgages on the land which the lords had in their possession, and these arrangements explain the transfer of substantial blocks of land in all provinces, except Ulster, from Gaelic to Old English occupancy during the first half of the seventeenth century. Much of this shift in ownership, which was most conspicuous in Connacht, occurred because many of the Gaelic and Gaelicized landowners were poorly able to adjust to the commercial methods of estate management that were necessary to survival under Stuart rule. However, it would also seem that many Gaelic and Gaelicized proprietors who realized that they did not have good title to their estates, and that ultimate dispossession was inevitable, were only too willing to part with these lands at bargain prices to Old English speculators before they became forfeit to the crown through the process of plantation. For their part, the Old English were agreeable to make such risky investments seemingly because they were confident that they would have the means and opportunity to procure good title from the crown for at least part of the threatened estates. While the evidence suggests that such stratagems were pursued most vigorously in Connacht, Bishop Bramhall reported with alarm of the same process under way in County Tipperary in 1634 where Sir Nicholas White ‘smelling a plantation’ had ‘almost for nothing . . . bought up sixteen or seventeen ploughlands in fractions, with the intention no doubt to get subtraction from them in gross, . . . a device [claimed Bramhall] formerly practised by their neighbours in the King’s County to the great prejudice of his Majesty’.14

The combination of these factors meant that the rigid distinctions that had once existed between landowners of Gaelic and Old English ancestry were rapidly eroded, and most indigenous landowners who chose to remain in Ireland were increasingly united by allegiance to a common Catholicism, and out of fear of a Dublin administration that was bent on their destruction. Under these circumstances Catholic landowners tended to follow the political lead of the small group of trained lawyers and parliamentarians who came

forward to negotiate on their part with the crown, rather than that recom-
mended by their kin who had chosen to reside on the Continent. Therefore,
those who have been identified in the literature as the representatives of
the Old English interest were really negotiating on behalf of all Catholic
landowners in Ireland. It was logical that these would uphold the concept
of a centralized monarchical authority, and they were supported in this
endeavour by all, whether Gaelic Irish or Old English, who had studied in
the seminaries on the Continent. Those associated with these colleges who
provided guidance on the subject of political allegiance during the first half
of the seventeenth century included scholars of Old English lineage, most
notably Peter Lombard, absentee primate of Armagh, and the priest/poet/
scholar Geoffrey Keating (Seathrún Céitinn). More fundamentally, in seeking
to establish the credentials of the Old English as missionaries who might
function equally well in Gaelic as in Old English society, these authors strove
to discount the historical animosity which had given an edge to continuing
conflict between the Gaels and the descendants of the Anglo-Normans for
hundreds of years.

The most effective means of deflating traditional prejudices and animosities
was to reinterpret Ireland’s antique pre-Norman past with a view to discred-
iting the accounts provided in the two twelfth-century texts of Gerald of Wales
(Giralddus Cambrensis), Topographica Hibernica and Expugnatio Hibernica. These
texts, which dwelt on the ‘barbaric’ and ‘unchristian’ character of life in
Ireland before the Anglo Normans arrived there, had served at the time to
legitimize the granting of the Papal Bull Laudabiliter which had sanctioned the
invasion of Ireland by King Henry II in 1172, and these same texts had been
repeatedly invoked by the descendants of these original Anglo-Normans,
down through the centuries, to support Old English claims to moral super-
iority over their Gaelic neighbours and to justify war against them. More
recently, these arguments had been adapted by promoters of the Protestant
Reformation in Ireland. The portrayal by Edmund Spenser of the ‘barbaric’
customs of the Gaelic Irish, considered in Chapter 1, was, for example,
slavishly imitative of Giralddus Cambrensis and those who followed in his
tradition.15

Foremost among the Irish scholars who undertook this task of revising the
historical memory by rewriting the historical record was the previously
mentioned Geoffrey Keating, a Munsterman of Old English stock, who had
received most of his training and early experience as a secular priest in France;

15 Giralddus Cambrensis, The History and Topography of Ireland, ed. and trans. J. J. O’Meara
(Harmondsworth, 1982); Giralddus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica, ed. and trans. A. B. Scott and F.
X. Martin (Dublin, 1978); John Gillingham, ‘The English Invasion of Ireland’, in Brendan Bradshaw
Hiram Morgan, ‘Giralddus Cambrensis and the Tudor Conquest of Ireland’, in Hiram Morgan (ed.),
Political Ideology in Ireland, 1544–1641 (Dublin, 1999), 22–44; on Spenser see Chapter 1 above, pp. 44–8.
Keating was a social as well as a religious reformer, and having acknowledged the continued existence of certain unfortunate practices that had been widespread among the Gaelic Irish in pre-Norman times he strove essentially to provide them with a past in which they could justly take pride. To this end, he composed a suitably Catholic synthesis of the several books which treated of the origins of Gael and of the sequence of struggles fought between succeeding waves of invaders for the dominance of Ireland. The result, entitled *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* (*The Source of Knowledge on Ireland*), was also intended as a refutation of the disparaging comments on the origins of the Gaelic Irish made by writers from Britain and the English Pale from the time of Giraldus Cambrensis to that of Richard Stanihurst and Edmund Spenser. Keating, in his preface to the *Foras Feasa*, engaged in a criticism of the sources and methodology of these authors and contrasted them with the concern of scholars of his own generation to support every assertion with verifiable evidence. This *Díonbhrollach*, or preface, to the text is so refreshingly original and persuasive that one is led to expect the ensuing text to be a model of modern historiography. Some scholars have lauded it as such, notably Breandán Ó Buachalla who credits Keating with displacing the lies of Cambrensis with *fíorstair na hÉireann* (the true history of Ireland). However, on closer inspection, there appears a gaping chasm between Keating’s stated intentions and his ultimate achievement, but there can be no doubting that his *Foras Feasa* is an effective piece of propaganda where, in the course of his reinterpretation of the pre-Norman history of Ireland, he seeks to displace one myth with another by arguing that the moral code in the ancient Celtic past had been reasonably proximate to that of Christianity. This contention was, in turn, deployed by him to explain why the Christian message, which had been brought to Ireland by St Patrick, had taken firm root in Ireland. All therefore served to refute the claim of Giraldus Cambrensis that the Norman conquest of Ireland had also been a Christian endeavour, and this refutation discredited the notion that those of Anglo-Norman descent, not to speak of the more recent conquerors of the country, were morally justified in engaging in continuous conflict with the Gaelic Irish. Then, having thus discredited the rationalization regularly advanced by members of the Old English community when displaying disdain for people of Gaelic origin, Keating proceeded to undermine the pretext frequently offered by Gaelic poets for continued hostility towards those of Anglo-Norman descent. He did this by representing the Norman conquest as but another in a long line of conquests that had produced the heterogeneous population that had been indigenous to Ireland since the twelfth century. All these who were Irish born and Catholic constituted for Keating a single community which stood in counter-distinction both to recent Protestant newcomers in Ireland and to Irish-born people who had forsaken their ancestral faith.
This summary will make it clear that it was no idle curiosity which drove Geoffrey Keating to devote himself to the writing of history, and his Foras Feasa ar Éirinn can be likened to the Franco-Gallia or to the contemporary English glorification of a Britonic past, such as we encountered in Spenser’s Faerie Queene, in that the primary purpose behind its compilation was to satisfy current political needs. For Keating the priority was to remove the cultural argument that had been the cause of continuous friction between the descendants of the Anglo-Normans and the Gael whom he would now identify collectively as Éireannaigh (Irish people), by which he meant Irish Catholics who would stand together against the common Protestant foe that sought to deprive them of their lands as well as the faith of their ancestors. 

The specific audience that Keating had in mind was never stated by him. However it has been assumed, for no other reason than that the text was written in Irish, that it was designed for the edification of the Gaelic population in Ireland. This seems illogical since its arguments were primarily an appeal to the Old English population to abandon their animosity towards their Gaelic neighbours. Therefore it would seem that Keating chose to write his text in Irish out of the belief that it would thus stand the best chance of reaching the attention of both elements of the Irish Catholic population. He would have thought this because, as a product of the Old English community, Keating would have known that Irish was widely spoken and understood within most Old English areas of Ireland, and at all social levels. This reality, which would have been appreciated by Keating because of his upbringing and ministry in the southern part of County Tipperary, in the diocese of Waterford and Lismore, has not generally been understood by many historians who have been so convinced by the assertions of Old English leaders that they were upholders of English culture in Ireland that they have assumed them to have been monoglot English speakers. However it is clear that some of the leaders of the Old English community who went to greatest lengths to assert their Englishness spoke Irish as well as English, while Steven Ellis shows that English language and legal procedures were understood, at least at the upper social level, throughout much of the supposed Gaelicized parts of provincial Ireland at the close of the middle ages. There is no proof that John Cusacke understood the Irish language, but his grand-uncle Thomas Cusacke

was considered sufficiently proficient to warrant his being regularly employed by the government in its conduct of business in the Gaelic lordships. It was also noted in Chapter 2, that Palesmen who had become officials in the provincial council when the composition of Connacht was being negotiated during the 1580s were especially valued because of their capacity to act as translators. Readers will also remember Richard Hadsor, a contemporary of John Cusacke and like him a habitué of the English Inns of Court, who, on the strength of his knowledge of Irish and of Ireland, was employed on the commission of 1622. Previously, Hadsor had come to prominence as legal adviser to the Ulster lords who had attended at the court of King James after their surrender in 1603, and it is probable that he made a living by handling Irish legal business before the English law courts.17

The many adventurers from the Pale who sought to establish themselves in the more remote provinces, and especially in Connacht, during these decades must also have known the Irish language before they ventured outside their place of origin. There is no reason to suppose that these were more accomplished linguistically than the Palesmen who remained at home, since one landed family from the Pale, that of the Nugents, barons of Devlin, produced two men, William and Richard Nugent, who achieved recognition as accomplished Gaelic scholars.18 Thus while the surviving evidence does not allow us to speak definitively on linguistic matters, it seems that there were few people of rank within the Old English community who did not know some Irish; a point that meets with Donal Cregan’s contention that ‘almost all the Confederate Catholics could speak Irish with greater or lesser fluency’. Even the Protestant and Anglicized James Butler, earl of Ormond, who had spent his formative years in England, knew some Irish, and Cregan has alluded to the negotiations between Ormond and Bishop Heber MacMahon with MacMahon speaking in Irish and Ormond in English and each understanding the other ‘perfectly’. The lawyer Patrick Darcy certainly spoke Irish since, otherwise, he would not have been able to manage his County Galway estate, and the chance reference to ‘Onora Ny Relye’ from County Fermanagh having been a servant to ‘Mr Darcy the lawyer in Schoolhouse Lane’ in Dublin suggests that he maintained an Irish-speaking household in the capital. Knowledge of Irish would obviously have been more widespread among people at the lower social levels in the more Anglicized parts of Ireland, not least because many of the farming and servant population


would have been migrants from the nearby Gaelic areas. In-migration meant that Old English landowners of the Pale would also have needed to know some Irish to deal with their subordinates, but the indigenous population of the Pale, even in the areas closest to Dublin, seem to have spoken Irish. For example, Edward Leech of Lambay Island, when travelling to Dublin by way of Clontarf in 1641, encountered ‘many of the women of the villages thereabouts gathering cockles (as usually they do) who shouted aloud siggy Sassinigh; siggy Sassinigh, that is there comes English, which this deponent conceiveth was to set on the people to arms’. Such evidence of Irish being spoken by the lowly population in the most Anglicized parts of Ireland suggests that when seminarians of Old English background were trained in continental colleges to engage in missionary work in both Irish and English it was as much out of recognition of the linguistic balance within the communities from which they themselves had originated, as it was out of the concern to have them serve as missionaries in the Gaelic regions of Ireland.

If, as is now becoming evident, most of the Old English population in Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century could function in Irish and English, it seems obvious that Irish was the more effective language to use whenever one wanted to reach out to Catholic people at all social levels and in all parts of the country. Those at the upper reaches of Gaelic society who chose to remain in Ireland were, as was noted, becoming increasingly familiar with English manners and English ways, but relatively little English seems to have been understood beneath the level of the ruling stratum within the Gaelic, and many of the Old English, lordships. Furthermore, the charge was frequently made that the lords wished it to remain so, one commentator asserting in 1615 that ‘the Irish lord keeps his people in ignorance of religion, laws and the English tongue’. If this was true then the Irish language would have been the more useful medium for general communication, and those whose messages seem to have had most influence with the Irish Catholic population were missionaries, of Old English as well as of Gaelic ancestry, who pronounced on the subjects of religious reform and political allegiance, sometimes from the safety of the seminaries on the Continent. The missionaries not only strove to cultivate a consciousness among the different segments of the Irish population that they were a single people united by a common religious allegiance, but they were also essential intermediaries between the Irish Catholic community in exile and the Irish who had chosen to remain at home, and in both capacities they provided moral and political guidance

19 Cregan, ‘The Confederate Catholics in Ireland’, esp. pp. 494–6; on Darcy’s housekeeper see ‘Examination of Donel Mc Rory, 30 Oct. 1641’ (TCD, MS 809, fo. 38); deposition of Edward Leech, 12 Dec. 1641 (TCD, MS 810, fo. 244); the phrase ‘siggy Sassinigh’ may be a phonetic rendering of siad iad Sasanaigh, meaning, literally, those there are English.

20 E.S., ‘A Survey of the Present Estate of Ireland, anno. 1615’ (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, EL 1,746, fo. 14).
to the leaders of those who remained at home and to those who were resident on the European continent.

7.3. THE IRISH ABROAD

Once account is taken of the designs of continentally trained priests to dismantle the cultural barriers that had obtained for centuries in Ireland, it appears that the essential division among traditional Irish elites was not, as previously had been the case, between lords of Old English and Gaelic lineage, but rather between those who remained in Ireland and those who opted for life on the Continent. Those of gentry background who responded to the changes that were being enforced by the government by taking refuge on the Continent were, by their very actions, making an uncompromising statement. Whether they were victims of plantation, or younger sons who could not expect to inherit any property once English common law came into practice, or people who could not contemplate living under a Protestant regime, these gentry exiles either became pensioners of the Spanish crown or enlisted as officers in the Irish regiment that was established within the Spanish army stationed in Flanders. The officers were responsible for establishing communities in exile, which included women as well as men, in the various garrison towns of Spanish Flanders and they maintained regular contact with their kinsmen who had remained at home, not least because they needed their co-operation in mobilizing fresh recruits for the continental service without which the Irish regiment would have melted away through the heavy attrition associated with service in Flanders. These, and the Irish priests who served as chaplains to the Irish regiment, were watchful for any opportunity to stage an armed invasion of Ireland which would facilitate a cancellation of the plantations which had been imposed upon the country and a reinstatement of Catholicism as the official religion of Ireland. Because these exiles occasionally revealed their aspirations, the movement of men and information between Ireland and the Continent was always regarded with suspicion by the Protestant population in Ireland, but the government had, from the outset of the century, concluded that, for all its drawbacks, the continued recruitment of soldiers for Spanish service should be permitted because it served to rid the country of fighting men who would otherwise be a security threat within Ireland itself.21

Those of the exiles who became pensioners (the most distinguished being Hugh O’Neill, earl of Tyrone, who had been denied access to the Spanish

court but enjoyed Spanish support in Rome until his death there in 1616) soon became disillusioned with their mendicant position in foreign lands and hankered after a return to their former glory in Ireland. Their spokesmen, either priests who had accompanied their patrons into exile and then entered into Counter-Reformation seminaries to round off their education, or members of the Gaelic learned classes who trained for the priesthood after they had reached the Continent, bewailed the loss of property and status the Irish lords had suffered because of military reverse and the ensuing plantations, and they too expressed concern that the people they had left behind in Ireland would be persuaded to betray their ancestral faith for that of the planters. After the treaty of London of 1604, which restored peace between the British and the Spanish monarchies, there was scant prospect that they would have an opportunity to resolve these problems in the short term, and they were left hankering after a renewed breach between England and Spain which, they hoped, would reopen the possibility of a Spanish invasion of Ireland.

The political preference of these exiles, like that of John Cusacke, was generally for monarchical rule, but it is clear—despite the valiant efforts of Breandán Ó Buachalla to persuade us to the contrary—that the support of the exiles for the Stuart claims to the crown of Ireland was always tentative and qualified. Thus while in his capacity as Catholic primate of Armagh in exile, 1601–25, the Old English cleric Peter Lombard adhered to the preferred political position of the reigning Pope in advocating loyalty to the Stuarts, the faithful whom he addressed, whether in Ireland or on the Continent, could hardly forget that this same Peter Lombard, only a short few years previously, had prevailed upon the papacy to declare the revolt of Tyrone a religious war, and Lombard had then wanted Ireland to become a dependency of King Philip III of Spain. It was consistent with his revised teaching that Lombard, with his Gaelic associate Flaithrí Ó Maol Chonaire (Florence Conroy), the nominated Catholic archbishop of Tuam, should, in the years after 1618, become an active supporter in Spain of the proposed match between Prince Charles and a Spanish infanta, and under these circumstances, as Glyn Redworth has ably demonstrated, these clerics could formulate documents by which the Spanish royal house would seek to negotiate with the English monarchy for a toleration for Catholicism in Ireland. However, it was equally unsurprising in 1625, when the collapse of those marriage negotiations brought Spain and England close to war, that the Irish clerics on the Continent should then lobby the Spanish government to include an invasion of Ireland, under the command of the sons of the deceased earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, as part of their military strategy. Who would have become king of Ireland, in the event of such an invasion proving successful, was never spelt out, and it was at this juncture that the exiles toyed with the idea of Ireland becoming a republic; perhaps modelled after the United
Provinces rather than Venice, where a landed oligarchy would wield effective political authority, albeit under some remote monarch, or perhaps, like Savonarola, with Christ as king of the republic. It is probably true, as Breandán Ó Buachalla has argued cogently, that the persuasions of these clerics in exile familiarized the entire Catholic population of Ireland, both those at home and those in exile, with the concept of the island of Ireland being a single kingdom rather than a multiplicity of lordships, and he clinches his argument with the reminder that the last of the great Irish annals (compiled in Ireland in the years after 1626 by the Franciscan Brother Micheál Ó Cléirigh who was dispatched from Louvain for that purpose) was entitled Annála Ríoghachta Éireann (The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland). While these exiles, whether clerical or lay, soldiers or pensioners, might have introduced their more conservative kin in Ireland to new political concepts, they would also, and perhaps unwittingly, have exposed these same kin to the equally novel idea that subjects of a monarch might engage in insurrection to save the royal person from the influence of evil counsellors, since this too was integral to the theory of monarchical rule then prevalent in Catholic Europe.

While seeking to provide pointers for future actions that might lead to a recovery of something of that which had been lost as a consequence of the recent war and plantations, the articulate members of the Irish community in exile were particularly concerned to foster a consciousness among the Old English and Gaelic Irish populations that they were a single people united by a shared historical experience and by allegiance to a common Catholicism on the island of Ireland. This idea came easily to those who viewed happenings in Ireland from the perspective of the European continent, and it could be conveyed by them with apparent innocence as, for example, Geoffrey Keating wishing a fair passage to the letter which he was sending to his friends in ‘an inis naomtha neambocht’ (the holy fertile island).
Some scholars, taking their cue from Brendan Bradshaw, believe that they have fulfilled their vocational responsibility to prove the existence of an Irish Catholic nation uniting Gaelic Irish and Old English whenever they encounter the word *patria* in any Irish compositions of this period. Historians of continental Europe have, however, taught us that *patria* was a term which could be applied as readily to a person’s locality or ancestral estate as to a native land, and this was no different from the meaning attached to the term in Ireland even by many of those who followed the cause of the Catholic Confederation of the 1640s which pronounced themselves to be united *pro deo, pro rege, et pro patria*. If political attachments in Ireland of the mid-seventeenth century could still be local and personal, they were even more so a hundred years earlier, and the best efforts of Bradshaw, and his disciple Marc Caball, to read history backwards with a view to isolating those sixteenth-century Gaelic poems that can be construed as a call to all Irish Catholics to take arms against a common Protestant foe have produced but a scant return. Of these ‘Fúbún fuibh, a shluagh Gaoidheal’ is the only poem where an unambiguous animus against all things Protestant and English is articulated. This composition is so exceptional by the standards of the sixteenth century that it is more likely that it was an element of the wider seventeenth-century Catholic endeavour to refashion the memory of Ireland’s experiences of the previous century to meet Counter-Reformation expectations. This suggestion is all the more plausible because the earliest known manuscript copy of the poem dates from the seventeenth century, and this fact, as well as the sentiments expressed in the poem, would indicate that it is wiser to accept it as a product of the seventeenth century than to assume that it belongs to the sixteenth century merely because it refers to events of the 1540s.

Therefore, because the number of sixteenth-century Gaelic poems that give expression to what Marc Caball has called ‘pan-insular’ sentiment is

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26 Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Native Reaction to the Westward Enterprise: A Case Study in Gaelic Ideology’, in K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. H. Hair, *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America* (Liverpool, 1978), 65–80; Caball, *Poets and Politics*; Marc Caball is, to my knowledge, the first to proceed quantitatively, and it is clear that the 16th-century poems—mostly relating to the 1590s—which conform to his prescription are a minute fraction of more than 1,000 compositions which date from 1566 onwards; see Caball, *Poets and Politics*, 2.

small, and because most of these exceptional compositions date from the 1590s when Counter-Reformation influence in Ireland was already strong, it seems safer to attribute this broader perspective to Counter-Reformation influence than to seek, however valiantly, for an indigenous source for such sentiment. There can be no doubt, however, that Gaelic verses composed in exile, like that of Geoffrey Keating just cited, provide altogether more reliable witness than anything written in Ireland to a growing belief among Catholic leaders that relations between the historic Catholic inhabitants of Ireland should be brought to correspond with the geographic integrity of the island.28

More particularly, and more persistently, the writers on the Continent, clerical as well as lay, looked to the immediate past and bewailed the opportunities that had been lost to prevent the advance of the English interest and Protestantism in Ireland. At one level they sought to revise the historical record by writing of the sixteenth-century conflict as if it had been a religious war with the two long-established elements of the population of Ireland—Old English and Gaelic Irish—united in a single and simple cause. This proposition, which we saw being given poetic form in ‘Fúbún fúibh, a shluagh Gaoidheal’, was put most effectively in Philip O’Sullivan Beare, Historiae catholicae Iberniae compendium, and in Peter Lombard, De regno Hiberniae sanctorum insula commentarius, and it is clear from each of these compositions that the authors hoped that alliances of the future would be as they would have liked them to have been in the past.29

Then, in further support of the arguments advanced under the authority of history, Geoffrey Keating and his contemporary clerics in exile engaged upon a course of religious instruction, aimed at both the clergy and the educated laity in Ireland, designed to assist them in defending the tenets of Catholicism against the anticipated onslaught of Protestant reformers. The primary purpose of the course was, therefore, to make Catholics in Ireland aware of the points at issue between Protestants and Catholics, to equip their leaders with arguments designed to refute the Protestant challenge, and to inspire to self-improvement those whose personal lives fell short of the exemplary.

The catechetical literature produced on the Continent for distribution in Ireland consisted of three parts. First, a fundamental catechism by Bonaventure Ó hEodhasa was made available, presumably for the instruction of the laity; second, more elaborate manuals, treating of novel liturgical forms

28 There are many poems of exile, besides this well-known one, where the poet writing from a foreign vantage point can comprehend Ireland and its traditional inhabitants as a coherent whole. Some of these poems are discussed in Marc Caball, ‘Faith, Culture and Sovereignty: Irish Nationality and its Development, 1538–1625’, in Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts (eds.), British Consciousness and Identity: The Making of Britain, 1533–1707 (Cambridge, 1998), 112–39, esp. pp. 118–20, and 117; Bradshaw, The Irish Constitutional Revolution; Ó Buachalla, Aisling Ghéar, 70.

29 Philip O’Sullivan Beare, Historiae catholicae Iberniae compendium (Lisbon, 1621), ed. Matthew Kelly (Dublin, 1850); Lombard, De regno Hiberniae sanctorum insula commentarius.
or of doctrines in contention between Protestant and Catholic, were compiled, seemingly for the better instruction of the native clergy; and third, works such as Florence Conry’s edition of Desiderius or Antoin Gearnon’s Parrthas an anma (Paradise of the Soul) were provided to assist the personal devotion of those, whether lay or cleric, who were previously familiar with essential Catholic doctrines. All of these texts were modelled on works that had already proved successful on the Continent, but none was a direct translation since each had been adapted to suit the peculiar needs of the Counter-Reformation mission in Ireland. Thus, for example, Florence Conry’s Desiderius was an abridgement of the Catalan text of 1519 to which some original passages, seemingly composed by Conry himself, and devoted to a refutation of Protestant doctrine, had been added. Furthermore poetic summaries of the more important of these printed treatises were composed by those on the Continent who were skilled in Gaelic verse.\textsuperscript{30}

This use of poetry to propagate religious views was not novel and was but one of several techniques employed by the missionaries to assist them in the dissemination of their ideas. Equally fundamental was the use of spoken Irish rather than the classical Irish of the bardic schools to convey their message. Aodh Mac Aingil was unperturbed by this breach with convention since, as he put it, their concern was to teach religion rather than language. Yet another technique was the tendency to represent as traditionally Irish those elements of post-Tridentine religious practice that were known to be innovative, while some long-standing social practices which were seen to be in direct conflict with Catholic teaching were alleged to have been corruptions which had only reached Ireland following the breach of Henry VIII with the papacy. Thereby, as had been done independently by Geoffrey Keating in Foras Feasa ar Éirinn, the idea was advanced of a Celtic golden age whose moral code was in complete conformity with Catholicism. To this end Aodh Mac Aingil insisted in his treatise on penance that his book contained nothing ‘achd an seanphort aithridhe do sheinn Pádraig’ (but the old penitential refrain sung by Patrick); this despite his insistence that the sacrament of penance be dispensed only by priests who had been trained in a Counter-Reformation seminary. More to the point, the most innovative aspect of the sacrament of penance as redefined at Trent—the rigid distinction drawn between the Christian making satisfaction to God and his making reparation to his neighbour—was averred by Mac Aingil to have been traditionally Irish. He sustained his case by reference to the mortifications that the saints of Ireland

had reputedly endured for their sins; mortifications, he claimed, that had no equivalent in Christendom. But it will be clear that the novel missionary technique was that first mentioned: the employment of verse to convey basic doctrines and prayers to a generally illiterate population. Reliance on the written rather than the spoken word, as Raymond Gillespie has suggested, is usually a consequence of a shortage of preachers, but some Catholic missionaries were so confident of the effectiveness of harnessing verse to serve their purpose that they expressed satisfaction at the general illiteracy of the Irish population because it shielded them from the heretical doctrines of Protestantism that were just then being printed in the Irish language.31

These stratagems for propagating the Catholic message are what one would expect of a Counter-Reformation literature, but the final and more surprising aspect of these writings is the attention devoted to the means being made available to the individual to establish a direct relationship with God through the cultivation of private devotion. This dimension appears only in the more advanced works designed for those previously well instructed in Catholic doctrine, and its inclusion may have been intended to compensate for the fact that Irish Catholics did not have available to them on a regular basis the sustenance of mass and the sacraments that the Council of Trent had decreed as essential aids to true spirituality. Another factor which explains this emphasis on spiritual self-sufficiency is the fact that some Irish texts, such as Desiderius, derived from originals that were products of the mystical Iberian reform movement that pre-dated the Council of Trent. Equally important in explaining the emphasis on pietism is the fact that Irish Counter-Reformation authors usually spent considerable time in the Spanish Netherlands, and some are known to have been in close contact with theologians, including Jansen and his pupil Jansenius, who were noted for their attachment to pietism. Whatever its origin, the influence of mystical Catholicism on the writings of at least some of the Irish missionaries is clearly evident, and pietism is therefore also likely to have had an impact on their preaching on the Irish mission.32

Those in Ireland who were introduced to Counter-Reformation literature and teaching were thus being exposed to a religion that was both highly pietistic and highly combative. Special care was taken to explain where Protestants had deviated from the truth, and Irish Catholics were provided with ready-made answers to counter the anticipated challenges that would be advanced by Protestant theologians to particular doctrines. In the event

of this failing them, Irish people were familiarized with the vituperative vocabulary that had been coined in Catholic Europe to counter the vilification that Protestant preachers had been wont to hurl at objectionable persons and practices within the Catholic Church. The horror of Luther’s sexual engagements with his wife, a former nun, was described in lurid detail, both Luther and Calvin were charged with being sodomites, and accounts were provided of the sexual misdemeanours supposedly engaged upon by the mother of Martin Luther with the Devil—this last giving origin in the Irish language to the neat patronymic ‘Luitéir Mac Lucifer’ (Luther, son of Lucifer).33

While this religious literature in the Irish language was intended primarily to cultivate a new religious consciousness in Ireland, some of those associated with the Counter-Reformation strove also to foster a new political awareness among the would-be leaders of Catholic Ireland. Not only did they cultivate the myth of a glorious Celtic past where Christianity had been able to establish firm roots, but the continentally trained writers of Gaelic and Old English backgrounds were also united in interpreting the Irish military struggles of the sixteenth century as a religious conflict, and they implied that landowners, whether Old English or Gaelic Irish, should likewise abandon their traditional rivalries to oppose the menace of Protestantism. While generally supportive of the principle that subjects were obliged to obey existing secular authority unless they were specifically absolved from doing so by the papacy, those who had been trained on the Continent had difficulty in disguising their ambivalence towards the existing authority in Ireland, and Catholic spokesmen in Ireland continued to complain that the natural leaders of the Irish Catholic community were not permitted to perform an appropriate advisory role in government.

Generally speaking, new elements were added to the range of literature that had traditionally been composed in the Irish language as a consequence of this missionary endeavour, and much of this new writing was the work of people who had no previous association with Gaelic composition, and of individuals from the more Anglicized parts of Ireland. Furthermore those writing from the vantage point of the Continent sought to persuade those in Ireland who belonged to the hereditary learned families that they should abandon their preoccupation with dynastic issues and employ their talents to support the missionary effort. This point was put most emphatically by Florence Conry, who dismissed as escapist and worthless the disputation between Ulster and Munster poets, known as _Iomorbhágh na bhFíleadh_ (The Contention

33 Ó hEodhasa, _An Teagasc Criostaidhe_, 15–18; Ó Maoil Chonaire, _Desiderius_, 125–6, 131–5; Keating, _Tri bhos-ghaoithe an bháis_, 124–50; Gearrónn, _Parthas an anna_, 54–5; Mac Aingil, _Scáthán shacramuinte na haithridhe_, 159–60; for an introduction to vilification in a broad European aspect see R. W. Scribner, _For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation_ (Cambridge, 1981); and for the fabrication of contrasting images of Luther see Heiko A. Oberman, _Luther: Man between God and the Devil_ (London, 1993).
of the Bards), which absorbed the energies of many of the bardic poets still resident in Ireland at the outset of the seventeenth century:

Lughaidh, Tadhg agus Tórna
Filidh colcha bhur dtalaimh
Coin iad go n-iomad bhfeasa
Ag gleic fán easair fhalaimh

(Lughaidh, Tadhg, and Tórna, the learned poets of your land, are hounds of great knowledge, wrangling over an empty dish.)

So many of the Gaelic writers who executed their work in Ireland responded, over the long term, to these appeals from the Continent that Breandán Ó Buachalla is justified in speaking of a single learned class (aos léinn) in Catholic Ireland who took their leadership and inspiration, at least in spiritual matters, from the seminarians of Louvain, Bordeaux, and Salamanca. There were, however, many Gaelic poets, writing into the early decades of the seventeenth century, who would, for appropriate compensation, use their talents to praise English people, including Sir George Carew, who had been prominent in the conquest of Ireland, and poets seemed to have had no compunction about praising traditional patrons, such as the O’Briens of Thomond, who supported government policy, or Sir Henry O’Neill, who married an English wife. Also, as Ó Buachalla has emphasized, some members of the learned families of Ulster assisted the government in the preliminary survey work that facilitated the promotion of the plantation in Ulster, and some of these became native grantees under the plantation scheme. Even more ominous from the perspective of the Catholic interest, as Micheál Mac Craith has shown, was the tendency of some Gaelic poets to take an interest in the artistic endeavours of English men of letters, in the same way that English authors in Ireland, notably Spenser, investigated the function and compositions of the Gaelic poets. This curiosity of Gaelic writers obviously extended to the poetry of Sir John Davies (the attorney general in Ireland whom we encountered as one of the prime architects of the Ulster plantation, but also a major English poet admired especially for his long poem ‘Nosce teipsum’) since Micheál Mac Craith has been able to identify some surviving Gaelic verses which were in direct imitation of Davies’s English modes.

34 Flaitrí Ó Maolchonaire (Florence Conry), ‘Iomarbhágh na bhFilidh’, in Mhág Craith (ed.), Dán na mBráthar Mionúr, i. 126.
In political matters, however, writers in Ireland increasingly took their cue from the Continent, or responded to the reverses which they or their patrons had encountered in Ireland, to become strident opponents of changes which could be seen to be destructive both of the privileged position of poets in Irish society and of the lords who had customarily supported them. Already, in the sixteenth century, Laoiseach Mac an Bháird had contrasted the son of a Gaelic lord who had conformed in dress and comportment with English ways with his more valiant brother who would sleep on a bed of rushes in preference to a feather bed rather than compromise his principles. Far more potent were the seventeenth-century compositions which lamented the loss of a traditional aristocracy, noted for its generosity, now scattered in all directions (‘Do sgarsat lim leath ar leath’), who had been forced to give way to arrogant Scottish men and youths from London, (‘fir Albon, ógbháidh Lunnand’), who had divided all the lands among themselves, converted the broad plains of Ireland to acres (a reference presumably to land measurement and enclosure), and marked their ascendancy with a line of white(washed) multi-pillared courts all about the deer-bereft flank of Ireland.

Bánaighid bruidhne flaithfhear
tóghaid le tréan n-athfhlaitheadh
line lios bhfrosuaidneach bhfionn
um shlois n-osuaigneach nÉirionn.

Worse still, it was contended, these new proprietors of impure blood had no appreciation of poetry, or the sound of the harp, or the music of organs, or ancestor tales, and their arrival had meant that peasants now congregated in the houses of saints (‘Coimhthionól tuatha a ttigh naomh’), while God’s service had to be conducted under the shade of branches, and the vestments of priests were used as bedding for cattle.

Such moving exhortations not only attracted support from an increasing number of traditional Gaelic scholars, but appear also to have encouraged other non-professionals, besides priests, to try out their skills as versifiers. Notable among the gentlemen poets was Piaras Feiritéir, of County Kerry, whom we previously encountered as a compliant tenant of the earl of Cork. He, as is suggested in an elegy composed after his death in 1653, had a reputation for scholarly work in English and Irish, understood Latin, and was knowledgeable in the history of ancient Greece. In his early poetic compositions, as well as in his association with the earl of Cork, Feiritéir seemed to acquiesce in the changes that were taking place in Ireland to the point where he could write poems in praise of an Englishwoman, Meig Russell, who had,

seemingly, become the object of his affection. Even at this early stage he
could not disguise traditional aristocratic disdain for the mercenary acquisitiveness of the English settlers in Tralee, but in his later poems, when he had become a captain in the 1641 uprising and in the army of the Catholic Confederacy, he moved beyond this to advocate open opposition to foreign ownership of the land and government of Ireland, although not to monarchical rule.38

Shrill criticism of the changes that were besetting the country had been articulated much earlier by another non-professional poet, Donnchadh Mac an Chaoilfhiaclaigh, of whom we know little besides his being the author of a strident poem ‘Do frith monuar, an uan sí ar Éirinn’, which obviously relates to events of the 1630s in Ireland. For him Ireland’s calamity came not with the reigns of King Henry VIII or Elizabeth, as the clerics on the Continent would have had it, but rather from the succession of King James and his son King Charles:

go teacht iona rí do rí Seamus
is dá mhach ’na dhiagh do riar Rí Séarlas.

Mac an Chaoilfhiaclaigh held these monarchs responsible not only for the plantations and the dispossession associated with them, but also for the political dominance of the English and the Scots which had followed, and, more particularly, for the withdrawal of justice from Irish landowners, who faced false accusations which were being upheld before the courts by juries which were not permitted independence of judgement. Thus, as he described it, the inheritances of the traditional landowners continued to be systematically eroded, and (with Wentworth’s administration obviously in mind) Mac an Chaoilfhiaclaigh complained that this process was being further advanced through the workings of prerogative courts, as also by the central courts and the courts of assize:39

’s i gcrích Eachaidh a mairreann dá n-éis sin,
Court of Wards is cách dá léirsgrois,
meirse is cios is fis Exchéquer;
ciorrú stóir san tScómra Réaltach,
san King’s Bench a bhfuil dá séide,
is Cúirt na nEsbog dá n-argain d’aonguth.

38 Pádraig Ua Duinnín (ed.), Dánta Phiarais Feiritéir (Dublin, 1934), 126, 103–5, 121, and 74; this edition (pp. 84–8) attributes to Feiritéir the poem ‘Do chuala scéal do chéas ar ló mé’, which used to be well-known to the school-going population of independent Ireland, but this attribution of this lament for the downfall of Ireland’s aristocracy, which probably dates from Cromwellian times, is not certain.

39 Donnchadh Mac an Chaoilfhiaclaigh, ‘Do Frith, monuar, an uain sí ar Éirinn’, in Cecile O’Rahilly (ed.), Five Seventeenth-Century Political Poems (Dublin, 1977), 1–11, esp. pp. 8–9; I am grateful to my colleague Máirín Ní Dhonnachadha of Scoil na Gaeilge for advice on the loose translation of this passage which I have rendered in the past tense even though the present is the tense used in the original.
Verses such as this show how, as a consequence both of the persuasions
of Irish priests and literary people on the Continent, and of the outrage
of Catholic landowners in Ireland over the way in which they were being treated
by the administration, the outlook of Gaelic scholars in Ireland was under-
going change. The transformation in their attitude facilitated the concerted
literary effort that Catholics on the Continent considered necessary to raise
the consciousness of Irish Catholic leaders, whether Gaelic or Old English,
over the general issues which affected the position of the Catholic church
and Catholic landowners in Ireland. It also justified the fixed opinion of
Barnaby Riche, the notorious anti-Catholic publicist, that there was ‘nothing
that [had] led the Irish into error [more] than lying historiographers, their
chroniclers, their bards, their rhymers, and such other their lying poets, in
whose writings they do more rely than they do in the Holy Scriptures’.40

Those who viewed Ireland from the perspective of the Continent wrote
with the urgency that is manifest in their writings because they were aware,
from their knowledge of the general progress of the Protestant Reformation,
that Ireland was on the brink of being lost to Catholicism unless immediate
action was taken to redress the situation. Their particular concern was that
those natives who endured as landowners in the country would succumb to
the pressures of the state and to the missionary and educational endeavours
of the Protestant clergy to become Protestant. Continental experience showed
that wherever this occurred newly converted landowners usually co-operated
with officials in Church and state to force the compliance of their subordinates
with the Protestant religion. People within Ireland would have been more
conscious of the rapid change of religious allegiance that had occurred in
Scotland. This would have been especially evident to Gaelic poets who had
customarily regarded Gaelic Ireland (and more specifically Ulster) and Gaelic
Scotland as but parts of a single political and cultural entity through which
they might readily pass in search of patrons. These Irish poets were forced
to acknowledge that an enduring rift had been introduced into their Gaelic
world by the rapid progress made by Protestantism even into the highlands

40 Barnaby Riche, A New Description of Ireland (London, 1610), sig. c.
and islands of Scotland. One of the earliest to arrive at this conclusion was Fearghal Óg Mac an Bháird, who had himself travelled to fair Scotland (‘go fionnAlbuin’) in the 1580s, only to report sadly, and with some amazement, in ‘Dursan mh’eachtra go hAlbuin’ that he could never live contented or die happy where would-be patrons had forsaken the Eucharist and the mass.41

The loss to Catholicism of the O’Briens, earls of Thomond, during the later decades of the sixteenth century indicated that what had happened in Scotland might well be repeated in Ireland, even though the continued loyalty of the ruling O’Briens, as well as some members of their collateral branches, to their new-found religion had not yet resulted in their seeking to impose their beliefs upon their tenants, or to hinder the missionary endeavours of the Counter-Reformation clergy who worked within their lordship. However, as was noted in Chapter 6, the O’Briens did establish some English and Dutch Protestants on prime tenancies on their property, and while they continued to patronize Gaelic learned families, it was clear that their associations were increasingly with the Protestant landed families that had arrived in Munster with the plantations. Therefore, there was no knowing what the disposition of the family towards Catholicism or Gaelic culture might be in the future, and it is not at all surprising that Tadhg Mac Dáire Mhic Bhruadair, a member of the leading bardic family patronized by the O’Briens, should take the precaution of warning his patrons that he would make them feel a poet’s satirical power if they should attempt to deprive him of his property within their lordship.42 Moreover it was not at all certain that the example set by the O’Briens might not be followed by others because, as was already apparent to Mac an Chaoilfhiaclaigh, Catholic landed families from all parts of the country were being lost to the Protestant faith through the deliberate use of the Court of Wards to serve the purpose of winning Catholic heirs for the Protestant faith as well as suitable husbands for the daughters of Protestants. The most notable conquest, in this respect, was James Butler who succeeded as earl of Ormond in 1633, but it was clear that a continuation of this policy could well erode the religious allegiance of the Catholic elite.

Of more immediate concern to those in exile, at the outset of the seventeenth century, would have been the future disposition of the natives who were established as landowners under the Ulster plantation scheme. These, for the most part, were individuals who had broken early from the confederacy led by Hugh O’Neill during the Nine Years War to make their peace with the government independently of him. Therefore, it was not at all unlikely that

41 The break-up of a Gaelic world into Irish and Scottish sectors has been discussed admirably in Ellis, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors*, 250–64; on this subject see also Allan Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart*, 1603–1788 (East Linton, 1996), 56–87; on this particular episode see Caball, *Poets and Politics*, 80; Fearghal Óg Mac an Bháird, ‘Dursan mh’eachtra go hAlbuin’, in Lambert McKernan (ed.), *Aithdioghluim Dána*, vol. i (Dublin, 1939), 204–7.

42 Tadgh Mac Dáire Mhic Bhruadair, ‘Tairgidh mo sheachna, a shíol m’Briain’ (Dublin, RIA, MS 23D4, fos. 147–51).
such people would go a step further to support the religion favoured by the victors in that struggle. There was even more reason to doubt their continued allegiance to Catholicism because they now held their land in the province where Protestantism had suddenly gained its firmest footing, and under plantation conditions designed to ensure that all native heirs to property—if not the original grantees—would be forced to conform in religion.

Such considerations explain why the native landowners who chose to remain in Ireland, as well as the Catholic clergy who depended on their support, became the first target of the Catholic missionary programme directed at Ireland from the continental colleges with a view to preserving the allegiance of the native population to the Catholic faith. The best measure of the success of this missionary effort was that the only significant further losses to Catholicism from among the ranks of the indigenous proprietors, previous to 1641, were accounted for by individuals who fell prey to the workings of the Court of Wards. Furthermore, where losses were endured, the Catholic clergy lost no opportunity to win them back to the Catholic cause through persuasion. Barnaby Dunne of Brittas in Queen’s county who, with a few others of his family, had converted to the Protestant faith and had consolidated his new allegiance by marrying Sybil, the daughter of Sir Robert Piggott, detailed how, when he was sick in bed in February or March 1641, he had been visited in his house by Ross McGeoghegan, ‘titulary bishop’, on the pretext that Dunne was ‘one of his charge and that he was tied to labour to reduce him to be one of the Roman Catholic religion’. Dunne, although ill, seems to have welcomed this diversion and engaged with the bishop in ‘divers arguments and questions about religion, the king’s prerogative and supremacy’, and he was so proud of his performance that he recorded his side of the argument. His essential ground for rejecting the bishop’s request that he revert to Catholicism was that he had ‘several times sworn the oath of supremacy’ when accepting such appointments as justice of the peace and sheriff, and that he considered himself bound in conscience to honour his oath. McGeoghegan, according to Dunne’s narration, countered that ‘it was an unlawful oath’ because ‘God would not have any to have power above his vicar upon oath (meaning the Pope)’. However, Dunne believed that he had clinched the exchange when he had alluded to a king of Hungary who had been absolved from his oath by the Pope after he had sworn to assist the Turk against the emperor but who then suffered defeat in battle because ‘the Turk had called on Christ to take revenge on those who violated their oaths’.43

This, and a few similar narrations, gives us some insight into how the Counter-Reformation clergy in Ireland went about their task. However, their

43 Kenneth Nicholls (ed.), The O’Doyne (Ó Dúin) Manuscript (Dublin, 1983); deposition of Barnaby Dunne of Brittas (TCD, MS 815, fos. 190–3); on the solemnity of oath taking see Gillespie, Devoted People, 33–4.
essential work was not so much to recover souls as to preserve the faith of those who were still attached to Catholicism, and the continued loyalty of most indigenous landowners to Catholicism provided the Counter-Reformation movement with a base from which to engage in their pastoral duties among the ordinary population throughout the country. The steadfastness of the landowners in their Catholicism is remarkable when we note both the deprivations they suffered for their beliefs and their compliance with the wishes of the government in several other respects. However one factor, besides the strength of their faith, which might have influenced the landowners was that they needed Catholic priests to assist them in upholding their authority over their own subordinates just as the priests needed the support and protection of Catholic landowners so they could go about their duties without suffering official molestation.

7.4. NATIVES AND STRANGERS

The sources that have survived from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provide us with but an occasional glimpse into the minds and behaviour of the lower and middling ranks of society in Catholic Ireland. However it is clear from the rhetoric invoked by a succession of English observers to legitimize the final conquest of the country that they were satisfied that the common law would be welcomed as a liberating influence by the farming and commercial elements of the population who, by English (although not necessarily by Scottish) standards, appeared to be harshly exploited by domineering landowners in all parts of Ireland. Such observers excluded fighting men, Catholic clerics, and most members of the Gaelic learned orders from their predictions as these continued to be decried as parasites who would have to choose between converting themselves to useful pursuits and being harried under terms of martial law.

There is no means of estimating the success of the authorities in ridding the country of such unwanted people, to make way for the advancement of the productive poor, but native soldiers who had taken to the woods as woodkerne persisted as a threat to the newly instituted authority, particularly in Ulster, during the early decades of the seventeenth century. Thus George Canning, in reporting to his superiors in London on the progress of the plantation on the Ironmongers’ proportion, made frequent references to assaults on the settlers made by armed bands of natives. For example, in January 1615, he warned of rebels lurking in the woods ready to ‘light on passengers and rob them and sometimes light into the houses and do many villanies’ which extended to kidnapping English settlers and using them as a bargaining counter for their own pardons. In June of that same year he complained that his work in building an estate village was being hindered because his timber workers were fearful of the menacing presence of rebels in the woods. Worse
still, in August 1615 he reported that the agent of the Mercers’ Company, whose proportion was contiguous to that of the Ironmongers, had enjoyed a miraculous escape after he had ‘been set on by the rebels within four miles of his own house and shot through the breeches in two places’. John Browne and John Williams, leather-makers settled on the Mercers’ proportion, were less fortunate because they, and another Englishman, were stabbed to death by a band of nine woodkerne on the Wednesday after Christmas Day 1615, and a fourth Englishman was stabbed eight times and left for dead.44

Responses of this kind, as also the assault and robbery by Rowland Savage of Portaferry in 1611 upon the settler family of Alexander Mc Dowall on the manor of Arwhin in County Down, are such as one would expect in any society in the aftermath of a massive reallocation of land. The government, as well as the settlers, were also nervous about the possibility of some of the Irish proprietors who still held property in Ulster inviting their exiled kin-in-arms to return from the Continent. Such incidents and possibilities should not, however, lure us into thinking that the bulk of the native population were involved in, or even sympathetic towards, conspiracies against the government or the settlers. Canning, for example, was not deterred by these occasional assaults upon settlers in his neighbourhood, and professed that he ‘did never fear them’ because he always employed ‘sufficient strength, both at home and abroad’ to defend himself ‘from the danger of their malice’.45 More to the point, he was convinced that most of the Irish population on the property and its vicinity were timorous and would do anything to win acceptance as tenants on the land that had come into the company’s possession.

Already in October 1614, Thomas Perkins, who had been Canning’s predecessor as the Ironmongers’ agent in Ulster, had remarked that ‘the Irish tenants’ who resided on the company’s land were ‘very inquisitive to know what shall become of them being the more doubtful whether they shall stay or be displanted’, and he reported that, instead of resisting the planter presence, they had sought permission to remain and had had the temerity to ‘appear’ before the justices of assize ‘complaining of wrong done them in regard they [were] but poor undertenants holding lands at dear rents’. Both Perkins and Canning were in favour of retaining the services of these tenants, if only to maximize the company’s rental income, and each also called upon these same native occupiers to produce evidence that would uphold the company’s title to the property. Also when Perkins wanted to know what building materials were available on the proportion he relied on the wisdom of ‘the most ancient inhabitants’, and he conducted his first survey of the

44 Letters of George Canning (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (1), fos. 51r, 64v, 69-70, 109–110v).
proportion with ‘the help of such sufficient guides as [he] could hire’, two of whom provided him ‘with true information of the quality of each townland’.46

George Canning was unfortunate because he had no sooner taken over responsibility from Perkins for the management of the Ironmongers’ proportion in Ulster than a proclamation was issued directing that all natives be removed by May Day 1615. This alone, he observed, ‘had caused many of them to shift away’, but Canning personally recommended to the company that it should seek a reprieve for at least two or three years ‘for it cannot all be suddenly planted with English’. The company, for its part, was agreeable to permit the retention of all ‘such as will conform themselves to the oath of allegiance, going to church and English conformity’, and Canning soon reported that ‘some of the ‘natives’ had ‘promised [him] privately that they [would] conform themselves, but they [were] very fearful of their countrymen yet till these troubles pass over’. Such fears, according to Canning, were not without foundation, since the recent capture and hanging of an Irishman, while tending cattle on the Mercers’ land, was ‘for no other cause, but that his master, being an Irishman, had conformed himself and came to church’.47

Such intimidation did not deter native compliance, and it emerges that from then until September 1615, when it had been made clear to the Ironmongers’ company that no natives would be tolerated by the government on the property, the Company officials had been ready to accommodate ‘conforming Irish’ as equals with English and Scottish Protestants as tenants on their estate. Indeed, it was only when it was made explicit that Irish people who converted to Protestantism would not be accepted by the government as ‘British’ that Canning began seriously to recruit English freeholders. These were obliged by their contracts ‘to expel and put out of [their] lands all the Irish tenants upon lawful warning’. Even then, the record shows that this condition was never strictly enforced, and that compliant Irish subtenants were retained on the Ironmongers’ proportion. We are, therefore, left to suspect that Irish tenants who went to church may well have been passed off as English or Scottish settlers when the progress of the plantation was being subsequently monitored by crown officials.48

Whatever of that possibility there is no doubt that some natives were agreeable to attend Protestant services in the hope that their conformity would make them acceptable as tenants on the Ironmongers’ proportion, and it

46 Letter of Thomas Perkins, 2 Oct. 1614 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (i), fos. 29–30v); answer of Thomas Perkins to queries, 2 Oct. 1614 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17, 278 (i), fos. 31r–32v); Perkins to James Campbell, 20 Feb. 1614/15 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (i), fos. 33v–36r).
47 First account of George Canning, 13 Sept.–21 Dec. 1614 (London, Guildhall Library, MS 17,278(i), fos. 44r–45v); Instructions to George Canning, 2 Nov. 1614 (Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (i), fos. 49v–50v); Canning to Ironmongers, 9 Nov. 1614 (Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (i), fos. 46r–47v).
48 Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (i), fos. 62r, 63v, 66v, 69–70, 70v; articles of agreement between Canning and John Mandley of Coleraine, fos. 75r–77r.
emerges from the records of other estates in Ulster that such compliance was not exceptional. Reports of disturbances on the Mercers’ proportion might suggest that matters were different there, but a closer look at the atrocity of Christmas 1615 in the house of John Browne reveals that Browne’s wife had been running some kind of tippling establishment where she ‘had beer, wine, and aqua vitae to sell’, and that she, with her husband and John Williams, had been sitting by the fire with three Irishmen, ‘their neighbours’, when the intrusion of nine raiders occurred. No disturbance occurred until the raiders had been drinking for several hours, and while only Englishmen were ultimately murdered, the other people in the company did not escape unscathed; Mrs Browne and the three Irish neighbours were bound and gagged ‘with great sticks in their mouths’.49

Whether the tipplers were speaking English or Irish before the murderous intrusion, or what was the subject of their conversation, is not mentioned in the source, but the information that has survived indicates that cordial relations between settlers and compliant natives had developed on the Mercers’ proportion just as it had done on that of the Ironmongers. Nor were such cultural interchanges limited to the estates of the London companies in Ulster. An exceptional document, probably relating to 1622, compiled by Nathaniel Drayton, rector of a parish which covered some of the proportion granted to Lord Grandison in the Ulster plantation, indicates that good working relations between natives and strangers had also developed on that estate. This document listed ‘the names of the parishioners within the Lord Grandison’s Proportion that comes to church’, and included among these a distinct list of ‘the Irish within the same proportion that come to church and receive communion’. The listing concluded with the observation that ‘the Irish inhabiting within the parish not coming to church [were] near hand 200 copple [couples?], against which the thirteen Irish male heads of household identified as conforming in religion may seem insignificant. However, from the rector’s point of view it was a consequential gain since the total number of people who had taken Easter Communion in his church was ‘about 140’. This level of compliance is all the more remarkable when account is taken both of the persuasive and intimidatory measures taken within the local Catholic community to prevent apostasy, and of the absence of any payback for those who did conform in religion since compliance did not, until 1621, entitle any Irish-born person to remain on undertaker land. Moreover there is no reason to suppose that all members of those 200 Irish families on Lord Grandison’s proportion who refused to go to church were a disruptive element. On the contrary, if we are to judge from the reports of Bishop Bramhall from Omagh during the calamitous harvest year of 1640, the Irish who commanded some wealth, which was calculated principally in cattle,

49 Letter of Canning, 15 Jan. 1616 (Guildhall Library, MS 17,278 (1), fos. 109–10).
were anxious to maintain good relations with the Protestant proprietors so that they could obtain grazing rights at bargain prices on any land which had become waste for lack of British tenants.\textsuperscript{50}

Such trends suggest that the upholders of the Catholic interest in Ireland had good reason to be fearful that they would lose the religious, and perhaps political, loyalty of the more skilled or the more ambitious among the lower ranks in Irish society. The fact that natives who had been attendees at Protestant services previous to 1641 were identified in the depositions relating to the insurrection of that year constitutes further proof that some Catholics from all parts of the country had conformed to the state religion during the first half of the seventeenth century. For example particular resentment was expressed concerning the intolerance towards Protestantism displayed by John Doile of the Rock near Arklow in County Wicklow and Margery his daughter at the outset of the insurrection, because Doile had ‘been a Protestant until the beginning of that rebellion’ when he ‘revolted and [went] to Mass’. It is also worth noting that evidence of such conformity was more substantial from those areas where there had been a sizeable settler presence on the ground previous to 1641.\textsuperscript{51}

While the upholders of tradition, as on the Mercers’ proportion, might seek to minimize slippage from Catholicism through physical intimidation, another weapon at their disposal was that of ridicule. Here the most biting onslaught against those of lower status who would conform to English ways was that formulated in the anonymous prose tract \textit{Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis}, which, when taken with other Gaelic texts of a similar nature, constitutes further evidence of misgivings among the Catholic elite that they would be betrayed by their social inferiors.

\textit{Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis} was probably composed in Munster during the early seventeenth century, possibly by a priest, and certainly by an author whose sympathies lay with the old Catholic landed families of Ireland. It begins in a fashion consistent with European antiquarianism by tracing a genealogical stemma for the Irish peasantry. Thus where Spenser, in the \textit{View}, had been able to trace the several elements of the Irish political nation to barbaric progenitors, or where Gervase Markham, in ‘The New Metamorphosis’, could identify a demonic ancestry for Irish kerne, the author of the \textit{Pairlement} asserted that the progenitor of the peasants in all four provinces of Ireland was one Tomás Mór (hence the cognomen Clann Thomas). The mother of this Tomás, it was alleged, had been the daughter of a prince who

\textsuperscript{50} Nathaniel Drayton, ‘A True Relation of the Rectorie and Parish of Tawnatalee alias Mouterheyney’ (Manchester Papers, once filed in the PRO, London, as PRO 30/15/2/182; later in the National Library of Ireland, as MS 18,648; the NLI still holds a microfilm copy of the Manchester Papers (NLI Microfilm no. P. 6044) as they were organized when they were still in the custody of the PRO, under PRO 30/15/2/182; Bramhall to Wandesforde, 16 Apr. 1640 (HMC, Hastings MSS, iv. 86–8).

\textsuperscript{51} Deposition of Robert Hall (TCD, MS 809, fo. 340).
had served Laoghaire, son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, but his father in turn was a descendant of Beelzebub. Thus, significantly, Irish peasants were shown to belong to the same stock as that supplied by other Catholic propagandists to Martin Luther.\textsuperscript{52}

It was this accident of half-human ancestry, according to the author, which explained why Tomás Mór had not been expelled from Ireland, with all the other demons, or snakes, when St Patrick had engaged on the evangelization of the country. However Tomás Mór, despite having been christened by St Patrick, had not, because of his demonic paternity, been able to comprehend the truths of the Christian faith, and this incapacity, according to the author, had been transmitted by Tomás Mór to all his progeny, to whom it had proven impossible to teach the catechism, the mode of making confession, the commandments, the sacraments, grace before meals, or prayers. As a consequence, these had become an indolent, unskilled, cowardly, and debased population who flourished on loathsome food, wore coarse, ridiculous clothing, and wallowed in filthiness, with the result that they were condemned to serve in perpetuity as labourers to the nobles and aristocrats of Ireland.\textsuperscript{53}

Then, contradicting his condemnation of Irish peasants for their general ineptitude, the author of the \textit{Pairlement} described how the descendants of Tomás Mór had, on several occasions through the centuries, succeeded in accumulating riches at the expense of the aristocracy. On each such occasion, it was contended, the leaders of the peasants had aspired to negotiate marriages with women of higher rank, and various members of the nobility had been induced by avarice to succumb to these overtures which would result in their blood being mingled with that of serfs and churls. Such alliances had, however, led inevitably to the debasement of the bride since ‘however great the luxury and learning, honour and position the lower order acquire, they do not accordingly exhibit breeding or moderation’.\textsuperscript{54} Much of the text is devoted to graphic depictions of the Rabelaisian orgies associated with such weddings, which in turn provide evidence of the debased perversity of all peasants and any who would become their consorts. However, the more pertinent element of the text was that which described how, when the population of Ireland had been decimated during the Elizabethan wars, the peasantry had again begun to rise above their station and ‘to take holdings and to seek marriage alliances that were unseemly for them to seek or get; and gradually they became village headmen, and they began to make land expensive for the nobility, and set to dyeing their clothes stylish colours and to cutting

\textsuperscript{52} N. J. A. Williams (ed.), \textit{Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis} (The Parliament of Clann Thomas) (Dublin, 1981); this edition includes an English translation, pp. 65–98; the passages referred to in the original are pp. 1–3, and in the translation, pp. 65–7; on Spenser see above Chapter 1, pp. 48–9; Gervase Markham, ‘The New Metamorphosis’ (1600), London, BL, Add. MS 14,824, esp. fo. 19v.

\textsuperscript{53} Williams (ed.), \textit{Pairlement}, 2, 66.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. 4–7, 68–70.
them stylishly’. The slow upward movement of the peasants which was marked by such breaches of sartorial, no less than social, conventions was acknowledged to have suffered occasional checks, but again, after King James had ascended the throne, ‘Ireland was filled with peace and prosperity for a long time, and Clan Thomas set about sending their children to school and to study for the priesthood; and none of them was satisfied unless they sent them to be taught rhetoric and natural philosophy, and their daughters to learn silk-work and sampler-making’.

Such overreaching ambition of the peasants, according to the author, led to their inevitable downfall, because, due to their idleness, ‘land became more expensive, and the wealth of Clan Thomas began to diminish’. It was to devise some means of reversing this setback, it was contended, that the peasants had decided upon their own parliament in County Kerry where the members, while parodying the world of their betters, sought to set that world upside down. Their intention was to undermine the authority of ‘the idle nobility’ by inveighing against them, and, then, by bringing false witness against them, to convince the county jury and the justices of the peace, who, it was emphasized, were ill disposed towards the Catholic landowners, that it was these, ‘the idle aristocracy, the minor gentry, and the scroungers among tail-ends of noble families’, who had been responsible for the chicanery and cheating that the peasants themselves had been engaged upon for the past several years. Thus, it was shown that the peasants had achieved this final release from the bondage that had been imposed on them by St Patrick, not, as in past times, through imitating the modes of their betters but, rather, by taking the part of the English against their natural superiors. This final point was made graphically at the conclusion of the text in a description of an encounter between the assembled peasants and Robin, an itinerant English tobacco pedlar, whose mastery of the Irish language proved far better than the syntactically risible English that the peasant leaders could summon to bargain for the tobacco which was being proffered them. Here the author did not lose the opportunity to mock the peasants further when he described how they had imitated what was, by now, an English habit of tobacco smoking after they had clinched their bargain with Robin; ‘every man among them brought out his dirty, broken clay-pipe from the bottom of his jerkin or the ear piece of his cap, and they set to expelling smoke through their nostrils and the next moment to inhaling it deep into their gullets for a long time’ until they eventually broke wind.

Resentment over the social elevation of Irish people of humble status that had been facilitated by the extension of English rule in Ireland was also articulated by Gaelic poets of the early seventeenth century. Such opinions were most frequently advanced in the context of lamenting the rapid erosion of

the respect for the position of poet in society that had resulted from the incorporation of the Gaelic world into an English polity. Poets were especially vehement in their denunciation both of those people of Irish birth who mocked the function of the poets, and of those who succeeded in advancing themselves at the expense of their social betters by taking part with the English against them. Such denunciations underlined the widely shared belief that the cause of the Catholic landed interest in Ireland was threatened more by the avarice of their social inferiors than by the machinations of English and Scottish planters who could sometimes be represented as the social equals of native proprietors.57

The readiness of Gaelic poets ‘to incorporate newcomers or foreigners within Gaelic discursive framework’ has been treated effectively by Marc Caball in his analysis of some such poems of the early seventeenth century. However, in all such instances, particular foreigners were found acceptable only because it could be suggested that they had noble blood. Otherwise, as was noted repeatedly, references to English and Scots in the Gaelic literature of the period were usually to the effect that they lacked culture and were therefore no better than Irish peasants. That the poets were here doing no more than reflecting the attitudes of their patrons is suggested by the fact that these same distinctions were drawn in some of the English-language correspondence of the time. They are particularly striking in the sustained correspondence between the Barrys of the barony of Orrery in north County Cork, and Sir Philip Perceval, clerk of the Irish Court of Wards and a noted land speculator. The latter, as was noted in Chapter 5, had succeeded in coming into possession of most of the Barry estates because they had mortgaged their lands to him after he had facilitated their extravagant living first by paying off a plethora of small debts and then by funding a continuing flow of loans to them. In the succession of letters written between 1629 and 1640, initially by Nicholas Barry and then by his son John Barry, the authors always expressed love and respect for Perceval whom they regarded as a munificent benefactor, while they made scant reference to the exacting terms that Perceval was demanding for the loans he had been conceding so liberally to cover their outlays. Their respect for Perceval may have been explained partly by his willingness, in his capacity as a senior official in government, to assist them in defending their title to their lands both from prying English officials and from some legal challenges of their own kinsmen who were aided by these same officials in seeking to oust them from their lands. In later years, the Barrys were also reliant on Perceval because he had assisted John Barry in procuring a commission in the royal army sent to stand against the Scots

in the Bishops’ Wars, and because they hoped that Perceval, with the aid of Lords Muskerry and Ormond, would further Barry’s bid to secure a seat in the Irish parliament. John Barry hoped that this final assistance would make him ‘a Commonwealth man’ because his expectation of repairing his fortune by soldiering had been shattered once it was ‘ordered by the house [of Commons]’ in England that his troop ‘be given to some conformable man, one more acceptable to them’, he himself being ‘a Papist’. Barry’s religious allegiance, he felt sure, would not prejudice Perceval against him, any more than it had done his cousin the earl of Barrymore and his countess, a daughter of the earl of Cork, who had welcomed him to Cork’s English seat at Stalbridge. These, although Protestants, had displayed no prejudice towards him, because they, unlike the members of the English House of Commons, were people of noble mind and lineage who would never doubt his allegiance to the crown. 58

This particular correspondence is interesting for two reasons. First it illustrates that the innate social conservatism and blind snobbishness frequently articulated by writers in the Irish language, who enjoyed the support of Catholic landowners, was reflective of the attitude of these proprietors. Then it also helps explain the unusual position which the Catholic Church in Ireland came to enjoy during the reign of King Charles I, and particularly after 1628 when the Graces had been conceded by the king to the Catholics of Ireland. Previous to that date, as has been noted, many of the more strident supporters of Catholicism both in Ireland and the Continent had, for all their professions of respect for the Stuart monarchy, been ambivalent in their loyalty to the crown, and most of those on the Continent, and perhaps some in Ireland, had been prepared to resort to arms in the event of a renewal of war between England and a Catholic continental power. This attitude continued to prevail among those on the Continent who were most closely associated with the sons of the earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, but it was abandoned by Archbishop Peter Lombard, who, in a remarkable volte-face, turned his back against the idea of further military turmoil when he directed that all Catholics in Ireland should be agreeable to take an oath of allegiance to King Charles in return for a tolerance, although not necessarily a formal legal toleration, of their religion.

This exceptional political doctrine was sanctioned by the Catholic Church only because Archbishop Lombard had come to enjoy considerable influence at the papal court. Its official adoption by the papacy meant that the Catholic community in Ireland could be regarded as a church rather than a mission, which explains why the papacy could then pursue a unique policy of appointing a series of bishops, and then senior clergy, to Irish dioceses, despite

58 Caball, *Poets and Politics*, 118–23; letters of Nicholas Barry and John Barry to Sir Philip Perceval (BL, Add. MS 47,023, fos. 5, 6, 37, 51–2).
the fact that they would enjoy no official status or formal livings in a country which in legal terms was a Protestant jurisdiction. As this policy unfolded, after 1618, the selection of candidates for episcopal office seems to have rested with Lombard, who was careful to choose only those who he knew would be obedient to his directive on political matters. This meant that most appointments went to individuals of Old English lineage, and none went to people who were known to sympathize with the political ambitions of the exiled O’Neills and O’Donnells. Thus, because it was impolitic for King Charles I to be seen to be a persecutor of Catholics, it became possible for Lombard to construct in Ireland a Catholic Church which, in terms of the seminary education of its senior members, was closer to what had been envisaged by the Council of Trent than the church in any other European jurisdiction. Even more pleasing, in the eyes of Rome, was the fact that the selection of bishops had been finalized without any consultation with secular authority, although, in practice, the bishops, and also many of the parish clergy, were, of necessity, beholden to Catholic landowners or merchants (who were frequently their own kin) for protection and sustenance.  

All of this was achieved in defiance of the wishes of the government in Dublin, which was doubly infuriated by the fact that the number of seminary-trained priests in Ireland seemingly exceeded that of university-educated Protestant ministers in the country. Nor were such appraisals based entirely on guesswork or on rhetorical fulminations concerning the ‘swarms’ of Jesuits and seminary priests entering through Ireland’s ports, or on the fact that the gross calculations took account of the various dioceses in the province of Connacht where the Protestant clergy were thin on the ground. On the contrary, the certificate on the condition of his diocese, which lay principally within the Pale, presented by William, bishop of Kildare, to the commissioners of 1622 revealed that most of the churches in the seventy-three parishes of his diocese were in a ruinous state, that substantial blocks of church land had fallen into the hands of Dublin merchants, or Catholic and Protestant landowners from within the diocese who had failed in their responsibility to provide stipends for vicars or curates from the rental income of the properties they leased. Consequently, most of the parish clergy enjoyed but meagre incomes from their principal cures, and they augmented their livings by accepting vicarages sometimes in places far removed from their home parish. When it came to specifying qualifications, the bishop could name only thirteen incumbents who were both university graduates and preaching ministers, while William Pilsworth, prebendary of Donada, was described as ‘a student in the College of Dublin’. Of the remaining twenty-four ministers identified by the bishop he remarked, in all but a few instances, that they were ‘no

59 Cregan, ‘Social and Cultural Background’; I am grateful to my former research student, Dr Joseph McLaughlin, for information on Lombard’s contacts in Rome.
preachers’. When expressing himself satisfied as to the character of most of the ministers of the diocese he mentioned in several cases that this testimony was given only because he had no information to the contrary. However, the behaviour of Abraham Atkinson, rector of Culcorr, was said to ‘be sometimes worthy of reproach’, and Edward Tracy, vicar of Ballikill, was found to be ‘not of so virtuous a life as incident to his calling, yet tolerated with all in some measure in hope of amendment and in respect he doth perfectly read Irish’. Dennis Connor, chancellor of Kildare, was also commended for his experience ‘in the reading of Irish’, and William Grenan, vicar of Rathangan, and Daniel Enos, vicar of Tymorhoe, were similarly praised because they were ‘well experienced in the Irish tongue’; this again suggests that Irish was possibly the exclusive language of significant numbers of Irish people even in the heart of the Pale. 60

It was clear from his report, and even more so from the marginal comments of the commissioners, that this was not considered a satisfactory appraisal of any diocese, much less one that lay within a short distance of Dublin. However, even more distressing for the bishop than the dilapidated condition of his diocese was the fact that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction which he, with his archdeacon, held from the king was being challenged by ‘one James Talbot, a priest, who [was] vicar general to the titular popish bishop of Kildare and his substitutes, who [kept] actual courts, and decree[d] and determine[d] many matters both of instance and office often and in several places of the diocese at their pleasure’. This suggests that Talbot, his superior, and his associates, as well as their activities, were well known to the bishop of Kildare even if he refrained from identifying them. 61

The bishop of the neighbouring diocese of Meath was less reticent in his report to the commissioners where he supplied a list, which he obviously had requisitioned, of ‘the titular bishop, the vicar general with their surrogates exercising jurisdiction, besides fifty Jesuits, priests and friars exercising their functions in the diocese of Meath’. The fifty identified by him, with their bishop Thomas Dease and Ross McGeoghegan, ‘a Dominican friar’ who was to succeed Dease as Catholic bishop in 1628 (and whom we previously encountered seeking to convert Barnaby Dunne), were all clearly seminary trained. These were therefore certain to have been altogether more vigorous missionaries than the reading ministers who are likely to have been the principal element among the Protestant clergy in the diocese of Meath just as they were in the neighbouring diocese of Kildare. Several of the Meath priests were identified as people who had been expelled from the country but who had ventured back in defiance of the law. They had displayed such boldness, it was contended, because priests in Meath enjoyed the patronage and protection of influential

60 ‘The Bishop of Kildare his Certificate’ (Dublin, NLI, MS 8,013 ix).
61 Ibid.
Catholic landowners and their womenfolk (all of whom were identified) as well as of the merchant community of the town of Navan. Special mention was made of the continued presence of fifteen friars who had recently been ‘driven’ out of the friary of Multifarnham by order of the state, but who were now kept by ‘Andrew Nugent, Esq., in a farmhouse of his’. Particular resentment was also expressed at such visible defiances of the law as Dease engaging on a shadow visitation in ‘a place where the lord Bishop of Meath was in his last visitation with eight men in liveries about All Hallow tide last’, or Nicholas Ball saying ‘Mass openly in the church of Knockoman’, or the townsmen of Navan, in pursuance of the directive of Patrick Duff, priest, carrying ‘a cross openly in the streets before the dead, being carried to burial’.62

Evidence such as this was infuriating for those with a responsibility to uphold the Protestant interest in Ireland, because they could see that Protestantism could not hope to make further progress unless there was a dramatic improvement in the endowment of the Church, and unless the state recovered its authority to arrest Catholic priests and to penalize those leaders of the Catholic community who were facilitating the progress of Counter-Reformation Church in Ireland. The Protestant leaders were, as was noted, to be disappointed on all these fronts because, far from being prosecuted, Catholic landowners succeeded in negotiating a de facto tolerance for Catholicism from King Charles I. The resulting consolidation of the position of the Catholic Church in Ireland, even within reach of the government, was brought into full view shortly after the arrival of Thomas Wentworth as governor of Ireland in 1633. Then, as he sought to brief himself on the differences that had developed within the Catholic Church between the regular and secular priests of the archdiocese of Dublin, Wentworth became aware that the Catholic archbishop had been using the papal power of excommunication to uphold his authority over his clergy, and to prevent some of the secular priests from making use of the civil law to recover some of the income which they believed to be rightfully theirs, but which was enjoyed by the regular priests. While investigating this flagrant disregard of civil authority, the government procured lists of the Catholic priests ‘about Dublin in 1633’ which showed how they divided over this issue. The list of those supporting the secular position in the dispute provided the names of twelve secular priests, seven Capuchins, five Jesuits, nine Franciscans, eight Carmelites, two Dominicans, two Augustinians, and one Bernardine, while the list of those priests supporting the position of the regulars included twenty Franciscans, five Dominicans, six Bernardines, ten Capuchins, fifteen Carmelites, four Augustinians, and twenty-one Jesuits.

While the government could glean some satisfaction from evidence of divisions within the ranks of the Catholic priesthood, the combined lists pointed

62 For an edited copy of this document, also from NLI, MS 8,013 ix, see Robert J. Hunter, ‘Catholicism in Meath, c.1622’, in Collectanea Hibernica, 9 (1971), 7–12.
to a Catholic clerical presence in the vicinity of Dublin which far exceeded that of the Protestant clergy in the same area in terms of both numbers and the quality of their education. More alarming for the government was their discovery of how the Catholic community in Ireland could afford to educate so many seminary-trained priests. Proof of what was happening came when officials uncovered an endowment of £1,000 deriving from the will of one Plunkett, a Dublin merchant, and invested to produce an income from interest at 10 per cent which was ‘to be employed for the maintenance of students beyond seas, and fitting them for the sacerdotal function in Ireland’. What Plunkett had done was obviously common practice, so the government was forced to accept that the recruitment of seminarians would continue, unless the tolerance being accorded to Catholicism was withdrawn.63

State officials were undoubtedly correct when they attributed the progress of the Counter-Reformation in Ireland to the support provided to it by the Catholic landed and merchant elites, and it is therefore not surprising that it was these who negotiated with the king for the Graces which resulted in a relaxation in the application of the laws against the practice of Catholicism in Ireland. The personal commitment of these merchants and landowners to their Catholic faith was unquestionably the prime motivation behind this frenetic activity, but they were also obviously glad to have the opportunity to vindicate the political principle that had long been enunciated by Old English spokesmen, but which had now been endorsed by Archbishop Peter Lombard with the agreement of the papacy, that their allegiance to Catholicism in no way compromised their loyalty to the crown.

As the Old English elite, and those from Gaelic and Gaelicized backgrounds who made common cause with them, supported and protected the Catholic clergy who had returned from the Continent, these landowners and merchants expected that their loyalty to the Catholic cause would be reciprocated by the clergy. Scant extant evidence suggests that the priests did counsel the poorer elements of the Irish population to be dutiful towards their natural leaders, and to the king and queen, as well as to the Catholic Church. In doing so, the priests would have been halting the slippage of Catholics into the Protestant fold which had been happening during the earlier decades of the seventeenth century. However the lay patrons of Catholicism, most of whom had spent their careers in Ireland and England, did not appreciate that priests who had been educated in the seminaries of Catholic Europe, and who had been associated with the sensual splendour of post-Tridentine Catholic worship, would soon tire of the clandestine position under Catholic lay patronage and protection which was as much as their Catholic leaders had been able, or anxious, to negotiate on their behalf. It would have been

clear to the Catholic archbishop of Dublin that the differences that had arisen between the regular and secular priests within his diocese were due as much to the absence of an endowment for a Catholic Church, as to the aspiration of the regulars to achieve a public standing for Catholicism in Ireland. The further ambition of the Catholic clergy to transcend the tolerance of closet Catholicism that was being negotiated by their lay patrons was marked by their involvement with religious processions, by their recovery of traditional places of pilgrimage, and by their association with ‘Mass houses’ in more conspicuous places within the towns, including Dublin. Ultimately, their ambition was to make theirs a public religion which would enjoy toleration as well as tolerance within a Protestant state, and the identification of the Catholic archbishop of Dublin with this ambition was symbolized by his wearing distinctive clerical attire even when he, and his retinue, were received before Wentworth in person on the occasion of his investigating the differences between the Regulars and Seculars. In writing to Archbishop Laud, Wentworth in characteristic sneering fashion invited him to imagine the face of their clergy, such a one in truth as I never saw. The Archbishop in a black suit with a brown cloth cloak and a blue pair of stockings, a fat well-complexioned man, well-fed, I think you would have taken him to have been your country man of Reading if you had seen him stand by a piece of cloth in Leaden Hall. Their doctors in brown cloth suits with all the buttons of their doublets. The rest so suited in colours as John a Knocks [John Knox] with all the Presbytery of Scotland sure were never able to match them.

It is obvious, from such dramatic depiction, that the aspirations of the Catholic clergy who had returned from the Continent to Ireland had superseded those of the merchants and landowners who succoured them, and this divergence was to have important political implications for the future. Up to then, the advances made by the Counter-Reformation clergy in Ireland had had the effect of clarifying the lines of division between Catholics and Protestants in communities throughout the country which had already undergone dramatic reconstruction as a consequence of such phenomena as dispossesssion and plantation with the resultant in- and out-migrations of people. There is evidence from those decades that Protestant polemicists were still concerned, as they had been on the eve of plantations, over the possibility of the settler population becoming absorbed by the natives, and some Protestant clergy (presumably with landowners in mind) pointed to scriptural prohibitions against intermarriage between the children of Israel and heathens. However, most of those upholding the Protestant interest were still confident that they held the upper hand, and that the position of

64 Wentworth to Laud, 28 Aug. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 8, fo. 13).
65 Riche, A New Description of Ireland, sig. G; E.S., ‘A Survey of the Present Estate of Ireland, anno 1615’ (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Ellesmere MS, 1,746); Alan Ford, The Protestant Reformation in Ireland, 1590–1641 (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), 244–51.
Catholicism would inevitably wither away once the planned programme of plantation, which would ultimately effect all areas where Catholic proprietors were dominant, was implemented. For some, although not for Wentworth, these calculations were considered to have gone awry once the Catholic leaders negotiated immunity from the planned assault against them, and once they facilitated the erection of a Catholic Church which, in almost all respects except those of revenue and legal standing, replicated the Protestant Church which had been painstakingly assembled by the state. The emergence of two rival and parallel churches throughout the country exacerbated existing religious friction within almost every local community in Ireland, and it seems clear that Catholic missionary priests put a stop to the lapse of Irish people to Protestant services that had become commonplace during the earlier decades of the century, and they may even have recalled some apostates from the Catholic faith.

The demarcations which were now being insisted upon by the clergy on both sides exerted an immediate impact upon interactions between natives and newcomers in all parts of the country. Consequently, religious allegiance was becoming an increasingly important determinant of cultural and political loyalties. However, demands and expectations were not the same everywhere and the character of continuing cultural conversations between natives and strangers in particular communities was greatly affected by denominational balance within those communities. Thus where Protestants were in the ascendant, or lived close to the forces of the state, they attempted to compel the indigenous population to conform to their norms, especially where these were seen to be breaking from customary restraints upon their religious observance, while in those areas where Protestants were thin on the ground they proved much more accommodating towards their Catholic neighbours and were less ready to invoke the law to enforce the official religion.

Attention was already given to the alarm of the Protestant bishop of Meath in 1622 when people from the town of Navan had the audacity to impose Catholic forms upon funeral processions for their dead. This would have been a matter of grave concern to him not only because funerals were public events which attracted the attendance of Protestants as well as Catholics, but also because the churches and churchyards in his diocese, where Catholic merchant and gentry families would have been customarily buried, had long since been converted to Protestant use. It would, therefore, not only have been taken as a sign of weakness if Protestants permitted Catholic priests to design funeral processions after the popish manner, but it would have been tantamount to desecration because it would have involved Catholics conducting services of their choice on property which was under the bishop’s jurisdiction.

It is not clear if the bishop of Meath was able to resolve this particular problem to his satisfaction, but the burial of the corpses of Catholics in places
that had come into Protestant use was always a contentious matter, with Protestants wanting to take a firm stand whenever they were in a position to enforce it, and the more assertive contiguously trained Catholic priests wanting to dictate the form of the funeral service, thus enhancing their credibility within the Catholic community. Typical of the tensions that were arising was the complaint made to the state solicitor in 1617 by Thomas Rand, high sheriff of County Down, concerning ‘a Popish burial’ of the body of William Merriman from Shipland begg in the parish of Down. Merriman had been a Catholic, and William Morris and Geoffrey Wragg, as well as other Protestants who attended the funeral, informed the sheriff of the scandalous ceremony they had witnessed there. They identified those Catholic gentlemen, bearing the surnames Russell, Magennis, Dowdall, and St Lawrence, who were present, and described how an unofficial funeral service had been conducted ‘with the said body laid upon a piece of land called the Crevis Quarter’ about three-quarters of a mile from the church of Down. When the witnesses arrived at the scene they found ‘Aughley Mc Keele, John Fitzwalters, and one Sir Dougan all three popish priests, standing near unto the said corpse, and Aughley Mc Keele receiving the benevolence and devotion of divers gentlemen and others . . . and upon receipt of every gift the aforesaid priest caused the women to cry many blessings upon the soul of some of the parties friends deceased of him that did send the gift, and as the gift was in greatness so did the priest cry more blessings’. Then ‘one Patrick O’Berne, commonly called the Abbot of Saul, came near unto the said corpse and sat down, but so soon as the giving of alms was ended the said abbot rose up and nailed the coffin wherein the body was put, knocking the nails in with a stone’. Then the funeral party, led by William and Robert Merriman, accompanied the corpse to the town of Down ‘carried all the way in a ceremonious and Popish manner, the Abbot of Saul riding on horseback before the corpse until he came into the town, and then rode with his hat in his hand’. The witnesses were satisfied that the other priests did not enter the town, but they described ‘the Abbot of Saul riding bare headed before the bier, which bier was set down about the midst of the town’. Then four of the Russells ‘did take the said bier upon their shoulders and carried it about the cross where they set it down and the aforesaid Abbot did say divers prayers over the corpse which being ended the four aforesaid took the said bier up again, and carried it into the church where the said corpse was interred’.66

This form of service would have proven offensive to any Protestant on several grounds. Apart altogether from the pomp displayed in the procession, the saying of prayers first for the soul of the deceased, and then for the dead

66 ‘Examination Touching a Popish Funeral’ (San Marino, Calif., Huntington Library, Hastings MS 15:385).
relatives of those who had made offerings to the priests, bore witness to a belief both in good works as a means towards salvation and in purgatory. It is also possible that a mass for the deceased person had been said before the Protestant witnesses arrived on the scene, but the conduct of Catholic ceremonies, first in the relative seclusion of the countryside and then in the public square of a town, was, in any event, a symbolic challenge to civil as well as ecclesiastical authorities in the town of Downpatrick. The keening of women, a practice frequently reviled by English commentators on Ireland, would have pointed towards a pre-Christian as well as a popish aspect to the ritual, but the most alarming dimension to the burial, from the perspective of the Protestant clergy, was that a ceremony which concluded with burial within the Protestant parish church had been conducted without recourse to any minister. Worse still, the priests had converted the funeral into an occasion for raising revenue for themselves.  

The state solicitor was in a position, on the basis of the evidence supplied to him, to impose fines upon the Catholic participants in this particular service, because he was furnished with details of the offerings made to the priests by each of the Catholic gentlemen who attended the funeral. Presumably, directives were laid down, and enforced, for the conduct of future burials within the church and churchyard of Downpatrick, since this part of Ulster was, in 1617, becomingly increasingly Protestant through immigration from Scotland as well as England. Imposing regulations did not mean that the prescribed form of funeral services could not be circumvented by Catholic priests who were willing to challenge the authorities whenever they enjoyed the support of a local community in striving to preserve rituals which were important to them. This was proven most dramatically in the town of Kilkenny where, during the 1630s, the authorities began to insist that all burials within the town should be conducted by Protestant ministers after the Protestant manner. Those Catholics who wished to have their relatives interred with their ancestors within the confines of the historic churches in the town had no choice but to acquiesce, but in two notorious instances, the funerals of Sir Oliver Shortal and Alderman Nicholas Langton, the local Catholic community, and the priests who ministered to their needs, still succeeded in making a mockery of the prescribed regulations. In the first instance, Shortal was buried in St Canice’s Cathedral in a rigidly state-controlled service which obviously had to be endured by his relatives if they were to have his body interred in the family vault. Later, however, the widow of the deceased accepted the offer of the local Franciscans to hold a month’s

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mind service in the Franciscans’ own house in the city, and this was celebrated ‘promiscuously’ by the Franciscans and the Shortal family in defiance of the authorities. The relatives of Nicholas Langton may have learned something from this experience of the Shortals because when he died in 1632 he was buried secretly at night by torchlight in St John’s Priory, thus bypassing the role the Protestant clergy would otherwise have played in the funeral.68

Such gamesmanship, and the communal tensions that resulted from it, became commonplace wherever Catholic priests and Protestant ministers vied for ascendency within the same locality. The jealousies which stemmed from public confrontation frequently spread over into mundane interactions between Protestant and Catholic neighbours with convivial drinking sessions becoming challenges for supremacy. For instance, where Protestants believed themselves to be dominant they would call for a toast to the king, and Catholics in their company could only avoid the charge of disloyalty by responding with a toast to the queen, who, conveniently for them, happened to be a Catholic. Another consequence of such coat trailing was that ordinary people could aspire to become theologians, or even clairvoyants, and to convert commonplace encounters with neighbours into religious disputations. John Luker, the minister of Ballyvoghall in Dublin, recalled how, in January 1641, when he was being entertained to dinner by his Catholic neighbour Sebastian Finglas, they fell into ‘a discourse over religion’. On that occasion, Finglas took Luker into his confidence and advised him ‘to turn Papist, for that Popery should shortly universally reign over Ireland’ and he confessed that he ‘waited for that every day and knew it would be soon, and then all Protestant ministers must become schoolmasters or mechanics’.69

John Goldsmith, who served as parson of Burrishoole in County Mayo, needed no such reminder because he had always been keenly conscious of his vulnerability, working as he did in a community where there were few Protestants and where he was far removed from the power of the state. He was acquainted from his own earlier experience as ‘a Romish priest . . . in what blindness and ignorance the poor children of the Irish Papists in his parish, and in other parts of Ireland, were brought up, and [he knew] that not they alone but their parents (otherwise morally honest) were totally ignorant of the grounds and wholesome precepts and rudiments of God’s true religion. Therefore he (as became one of his function) used all the fair, gentle and prevalent persuasions and arguments he could, to draw them to learn and understand the same, and to resort to the deponent’s house to gain

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69 Deposition of John Luker (TCD, MS 810, fo. 168).
instruction there, and likewise to converse with him privately in matters of religion tending to their salvation.’ This stance, and Goldsmith’s general disposition towards the Irish Catholic population, could hardly have been in sharper contrast to that of those Protestant clergymen who ministered from a position of strength. Goldsmith’s evangelization strategy was also different from that adopted by ministers who were closer to the power of the state. Instead of invoking the law to compel people to attend at his church, Goldsmith attributed his success in drawing ‘the poor children of his parish to be catechised . . . as also the children of the richer sort (though Papists)’, to his munificence in giving ‘the parents of the children some money, and [lending] them divers cows freely sometimes by about 22 at once for a good time together and sometimes for two years and sometimes for a year divers cows by 13 at once’. Thus, according to his own account, he won the agreement of the parents to having the children ‘catechised every sabbath day . . . wishing that their priests would do as much’. 70

Goldsmith unfortunately made no mention of the language he used in his pastoral work, but it is difficult to imagine that he could have functioned as a clergyman in County Mayo without a good command of Irish. Certainly the evidence that has come down to us about everyday relationships between natives and newcomers in other parts of the country indicates that ability to communicate in the language of those on the other side of the cultural divide was determined (as it had been in the sixteenth century for interactions between the Gaelic Irish and the Old English) to some degree by rank, but essentially by the relative balances of the population in particular areas. Thus it is not surprising, when Colonel John Barry returned to his native province of Munster to recruit Irish soldiers for military service on the Continent, that he should have spoken English when he went about his business in west County Waterford, because, as was detailed in Chapter 5, the density of the English population there would have meant that English would have been the more commonly used language among natives as well as settlers in that locality. Edward Eastcott was therefore able to eavesdrop on the supper conversation that Barry had been having with his young lieutenant in the house of William Cooper, late sovereign of Tallow, because the two had been speaking English. Then, after Eastcott’s presence was espied, the ‘lieutenant made a sign to the said colonel with his hand and thereupon they spoke not any word of English concerning the former discourse’. 71

Similarly, when insurrection beset the staunchly Protestant barony of Maryborough in Queen’s County in 1641 Symon Needham of Ballycarroll assumed his customary assertive attitude towards the native Catholic population by calling out, ‘who is there Patrick?’ after he had been woken at night

70 Deposition of John Goldsmith (TCD, MS 831, fo. 192).
71 Examination of Edward Eastcott, 4 Nov. 1641 (TCD, MS 809, fo. 96).
by the noise of insurgents breaking the door to his yard. The uncomfortable awareness that he no longer controlled the terms of conversation was brought home to Needham when a voice from the darkness responded in English, ‘twenty Patricks if you will’, all determined to have him ‘out of [his] house’. Then, in the morning, when he saw a band of rebels, 500–600 strong, and presumably speaking Irish, ‘marching with drum and bagpipe’ towards his residence, even Needham recognized that his days at Ballycarroll were numbered and he immediately fled to safety. The experience of the iron-worker John Winsmore after the outbreak of insurrection in 1641 suggests that the linguistic balance was little different in the manufacturing town of Mountmellick in Queen’s County. He was then accepted as a refugee and hidden by David Dempsey in his house, but Winsmore could but guess from its ‘utterance’ the substance of the ‘sharp discourse’ in Irish between David Dempsey and another of the Dempsey kin, ‘for understand them I did not’. Winsmore’s curiosity was allayed on the following day because ‘the wife of one Howell Jones interprete[d] the [further] discourse between the said gent and the said David Dempsey’s wife’.72

In this instance John Winsmore was fortunate that Mrs Jones was at hand, because Mountmellick, like Tallow or Maryborough, was a heavily Anglicized area where most linguistic accommodation would have been made by the Irish who would have had no choice but to communicate in English with the settlers who had become dominant there. Evidence from those places where the English language had gained the ascendancy suggests that, both before and after the outbreak of insurrection in 1641, the natives sometimes spoke Irish among themselves with a view to concealing their intentions from their Protestant neighbours or captives. This effort at concealment proved generally not to be very effective because the wife of Howell Jones was not at all exceptional, and there were settlers in most parts of the country who had learned to speak, or at least understand, Irish.

This assertion appears surprising only because the issue of language use in early modern Ireland has hardly been addressed in the literature, and because some historians have proceeded from the assumption that English people were more culturally hidebound than any other Europeans of the early modern period, or that the advances made by Calvinist predestinarian theology in England determined that most English people (and presumably most Scots also) were uninterested in reaching out to those whom they believed to be culturally inferior to themselves. Investigation into dealings between English peoples and the foreigners with whom they came into contact overseas suggests that such assumptions are without foundation, and, in Ireland, the concern of senior Protestant clergy to couch their theological

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72 Deposition of Symon Needham (TCD, MS 815, fo. 233); deposition of John Winsmore (TCD, MS 815, fo. 154).
treatises and sermons in the format of controversy with Catholics would also indicate that they kept themselves informed on which doctrines were being advanced in Irish by their Catholic adversaries even if relatively few of the clergy who had come to Ireland from England had mastered the Irish language.\textsuperscript{73} Moreover, the evidence that can be adduced in relation to Ireland suggests that settlers (whether Scots or English) would have had no option but to acquire some mastery of Irish where that was the dominant language.

To say this is not to counter the established fact that English remained, as it had been for a long time in Ireland, the language of parliament and of most official business relating to legal, commercial, and Protestant church affairs, and whenever Irish was the language of conversation between natives and strangers these exchanges usually concerned mundane matters. Interestingly, however, the development of bilingual competencies on both sides of the cultural and religious divides meant that the two languages could be called into use for different elements of the same conversation between natives and settlers. Thus it appears that, ‘some time before’ October 1641, when Robert Osborne, rector of Clonkeen in County Louth, ‘discoursed’ with Garret Colley and one of his sons-in-law ‘about some moneys they owed [him] for tithes’, their conversation was in English, but Irish was then brought into play for a critical interjection by Garret Colley. After Osborne’s initial demand for payment, the more compliant son-in-law requested that he be given until Christmas ‘for payment of the money which he owed’. However Garret Colley offered only some ‘expressions of grief’ that any money should be liable to Protestant clergy for tithes and then, presumably for the benefit of his son-in-law alone, ‘expressed himself in an Irish rhyme’, which Osborne obviously understood, to the effect that ‘several persons should come, and amongst them Owen Roe O’Neill who should thrust out the black devils and then the tithes should be their own’.\textsuperscript{74}

It is apparent in depositions from all parts of the country that Catholics and Protestants who had lived as neighbours for decades were accustomed to conversing sometimes in English and sometimes also in Irish because there were some people everywhere, on either side of the religious divide, with various levels of competence in both languages. This emerging bilingual


\textsuperscript{74} Deposition of Robert Osborne (TCD, MS 834, fo. 17).
competence by many people in both communities explains why so many Protestant survivors of the 1641 insurrection were able to report both of the animated verbal exchanges they had conducted with their assailants, and of the plots which they had overheard being hatched by them whenever they had become their prisoners. In some instances the form of the surviving testimony makes it clear that the deponents understood Irish, while in other cases it is obvious that the conversations between assailants and assailed had been conducted in English. Thomas Greene from the parish of Drumcree in County Armagh ‘heard the rebels in their songs and discourse express that the English were meat for their dogs’, while Elizabeth Price from the parish of Armagh had sufficient linguistic competence to report both on what she had heard Sir Phelim O’Neill and other rebel leaders ‘pronounce’, which may well have been in English, as well as on what ‘some others of the rebels privately muttered and said among themselves’. This latter must have been spoken in Irish because the parties ‘often’ included ‘rebels of the common sort’, and Elizabeth Price did mention that some of what she overheard was ‘in Irish words’. Alice Poore of Murphystown in County Dublin seemingly used English when she pleaded on her knees with Mrs Talbott of Kilgibbon for a return of some of the money that had been taken from her so that she could purchase corn for her starving children. However the conclusive response to her plea came from Mrs Talbott’s daughter ‘Katherin [who] spoke in Irish that it should not be restored unto her’. Katherine Dolbier, a settler in Cork, was similarly able to understand spoken Irish since, after she had overheard Robert Beer cry out to his wife Joan in English as he was being hanged in the next room, she then heard ‘one of the Irish say in Irish it shall not be long before she follow thee’. On the other hand, the account provided by a clergymen from the town of Kilkenny named John Keavan, of the occasion when Joseph Rothe of Freshford, and ‘merchant to the lord Mountgarret . . . took occasion to fall out with him . . . at the house of Patrick Murphy (now mayor of Kilkenny)’, suggests that they spoke English. It seems so, because Rothe’s glib assertion that ‘all Protestants were traitors’ and Keavan’s clever retort ‘that his Majesty was a Protestant’ would not have had the same impact if it had been spoken in Irish. This in itself is interesting because Rothe, an Old English merchant from Freshford, and Murphy from Kilkenny would certainly have known Irish, while the surname Keavan suggests a Gaelic background.75

It would seem that those settlers who had acquired a working knowledge of Irish were those who lived closest to, or who transacted business more regularly with, the native population. However, once communal relations collapsed in 1641, or even before that date, individuals won no favour with

75 Deposition of Thomas Greene (TCD, MS 836, fo. 94); deposition of Elizabeth Price (TCD, MS 896, fo. 101); deposition of Alice Poore (TCD, MS 810, fo. 248); deposition of Katherine Dolbier (TCD, MS 824, fo. 6); deposition of John Keavan (TCD, MS 812, fo. 219).
the insurgents for having learnt their language. On the contrary, Joan Constable from County Armagh believed that her sister was selected for particularly harsh punishment by the insurgents of 1641, ‘because she could speak Irish and would discover their acts, wants and words if they suffered her to live’, and it was similarly suggested that a woman stoned to death in Athlone ‘was an Englishwoman who could speak Irish and knew the way to venture and go towards Dublin’. How comprehensively such people had mastered the Irish language is unclear, but one deponent from Clanbrassil in County Armagh explained how her daughter had ‘escaped because she spoke Irish and said she was an Irishwoman’.76

Once conflict commenced in 1641 the settlers also came to realize that they could not assume that their private conversations in English were secure because many of their adversaries could understand English. Grace Smith, who had settled in King’s County with her husband Captain Robert Smith, had, in this respect, an advantage over most other newcomers to Ireland because she had made Welsh the language of her household, which included Irish servants. Thus when it came to surrendering the island castle of Inchloghcore, which she with her husband (who had been killed during the siege) had attempted to hold against the insurgents, she was able, by speaking ‘in the Welsh tongue’ within earshot of the assailants, secretly to instruct ‘Nan Mc Namarrogh’ to cast all the remaining powder, match, bullets, and lead into the lake rather than leave it to the insurgents.77

There are some indications that, from the commencement of hostilities in 1641, some of the insurgents, notably those in County Monaghan, would ‘not willingly suffer any one to speak the English tongue’, thus taking revenge for the privileged position that English had enjoyed during the previous decades.78 While language could thus be deployed as a weapon to assert the ascendancy of one group over the other, there is no evidence that there were political connotations associated with the use of language previous to 1641, other than the desire, already mentioned, of leaders within the Catholic community to keep their subordinates ignorant of English. As far as relations between natives and strangers in Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century went, the surviving evidence indicates rather that the efforts of both Protestant and Catholic spiritual leaders to keep the populations apart met with but limited success. Nor is this surprising since people of different religious, linguistic, and national backgrounds who found themselves thrown together within the same localities quickly came to recognize the advantages of learning each other’s language and co-operating in the interest of their individual profit and of communal solidarity. This point was put succinctly

76 Deposition of Joan Constable (TCD, MS 836, fo. 87); deposition of Thomas Fleetwood (TCD, MS 817, fo. 37); deposition of Katherin Cooke (TCD, MS 836, fo. 92).
77 Deposition of Grace Smith (TCD, MS 814, fos. 163–6).
78 Deposition of John Montgomery (TCD, MS 834, fos. 139–5).
by James Dowdall of Edenderry in the King’s County when he remarked
that, before 1641, ‘both the English and the Irish lived like loving neighbours
and the English mistrusted them not’, and this point was supported by many
deponents in the aftermath of the insurrection of 1641. Nor, when the commu-
nity was torn apart with bitter conflict, were former friendships always
forgotten. Grace Smith and her household may have felt isolated when it
came to surrendering her castle of Inchloghcore, but she took consolation
from the presence among the assailants of ‘one Mr. John Mc Farrell Mc
Rann being the deponents own esteemed friend’, and her trust was well
placed because, at the strategic moment, he ‘whispered in her ear’ how she
might escape, and he then provided her and her family with shelter and
protection until she could get to the security of Birr Castle. The perpetua-
tion of friendships across the denominational divide after the outbreak of
hostilities was not confined to people at the upper social level. Anne Foreside
of Coolock in Dublin was threatened with hanging when the insurgents, who
had robbed her of crops and chattels to the value of £80, could not force
her to reveal the hiding place of her husband, and she believed she would
indeed have been brought to the gallows had not ‘some women her neigh-
bours privately conveyed her away’.79

7.5. Conclusion

Such testimony leads to the same conclusion as James Dowdall that ‘the
outrages’ perpetrated by Catholics upon Protestants in 1641 ‘were committed
suddenly’, and were therefore not the product of some long cogitated plot
on the behalf of resentful Catholics. To say this is not, for a moment, to
suggest that Irish Catholics did not have grounds for resentment against the
government authorities, or against their neighbours, or even against the king.
Local anger had, however, been repeatedly dampened down because those
with most ground for resentment over the loss of land or social position had
been ultimately forced, or persuaded, to become exiles on the Continent,
even if they spent some initial time as woodkerne seeking to exact revenge
upon those who had benefited from their ruin. This means that the ordered
conditions which prevailed in Ireland for most of the first half of the seven-
teenth century were due first to the vigilance of the state which gave repeated
object lessons in the futility of armed opposition to the changes being
promoted, and then to the fact that those who would have been most likely
to break the peace became part of the steady outflow of young men,
amounting to 33,000 in all, who are known to have enlisted in continental
armies during the interval 1603–41. Those who went as soldiers were followed

79 Deposition of James Dowdall (TCD, MS 814, fo. 226); deposition of Grace Smith (TCD, MS
814, fos. 163–6); depositions of Anne Foreside (TCD, MS 809, fo. 285).
by many more—women as well as men—and what became a culture of emigration from certain parts of the country resulted in the creation of discernible Irish communities in exile in many of the garrison towns of Flanders, as well as in those parts of Brittany and Galicia which were close to the ports of disembarkation. The total outflow of people to the Continent combined with Irish economic migrants to England and Wales during these same years may have reached as many as 100,000 people for the first half of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{80} The loss of so many people from a total population base of perhaps less than 1,000,000 people in 1603, and hardly more than 1,500,000 in 1641, would have been a consequential release by any standards. An impression of its importance as a safety-valve is best conveyed when account is taken of the fact that these emigrants included great numbers who had encountered economic blockages as well as many who had most reason to oppose the government.\textsuperscript{81}

Exiles from Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century were not necessarily forgotten by their kin who remained at home, and we have noted both how their grievances were perpetuated in Gaelic verse, and how the construction of a Counter-Reformation Church in Ireland was a product of the link with continental Europe. In one sense, therefore, the essential bond of solidarity shown by the Irish community at home towards their kin who had gone abroad was that they remained loyal to Catholicism at a time when it would have been to their material advantage to conform to the Protestant Church. However the spiritual leaders of this Counter-Reformation Church, and particularly Archbishop Lombard, quickly adapted the political teaching of that Church to meet the requirements of the principal Catholic landowners who had remained in Ireland. Thus, with the full approval of the papacy, the Catholic clergy conceded legitimacy to a Protestant state and a Protestant monarch and, by so presenting it to their congregation, they expected, in return, tolerance of their private profession of Catholicism.

This development was a feature of the years following 1618, after the Catholic community had survived the onslaught that had been launched

\textsuperscript{80} Henry, *The Irish Military Community in Spanish Flanders*; Henry, ‘Ulster Exiles in Europe, 1605–41’; Stradling, *The Spanish Monarchy and Irish Mercenaries*; Cullen, ‘The Irish Diaspora’; I am grateful to Ciarán Ó Scea, a research student at the European University Institute, Florence, for information on the Irish in Galicia.

against it during the early years of the reign of King James VI and I. The
programme of plantation which followed upon the Flight of the Earls of 1607
and the O’Doherty revolt of 1608 would have convinced all in Ireland who
had any grasp of political reality and any property to lose that insurrection,
or conspiracy with foreign powers, was futile, most especially since the peace
that had been negotiated between England and Spain in 1604 was proving
durable. It was in the light of this reality, as much as out of consideration for
the naturally conservative disposition of landowners in Ireland, that Rome,
following the advice of Lombard, decided to alter its political attitude towards
the plight of Catholics and Catholicism in Ireland. Time was to reveal, most
especially after 1625, the benefit of this new approach, both for the endurance
of Catholic practice in Ireland, for the survival of Catholics as landowners
and merchants, and for the recovery of some of the lost political influence of
the Catholic elite. The date 1625 is significant not only because it was the
year when King Charles I, whose consort would be Catholic, ascended the
throne, but because the threatened and the actual hostilities between England
and Spain that occurred between then and 1628 provided the Catholic leaders
in Ireland with the opportunity to demonstrate that they were truly reliable
subjects of a Protestant monarch.

At this juncture, a sharp rift emerged between the aspirations of the leaders
of the Irish community in exile and the leaders of the Catholic community
at home, and this rift was to remain a feature of Irish political life until the
close of the 1640s and even beyond. Despite their differences, the two commu-
nities remained in contact, and some Catholics who remained in Ireland
continued to believe that they could call upon the assistance of their kinsmen
in continental service to advance their objectives if the constitutional strat-
agem failed to achieve an improvement in their condition. While some may
have approached negotiations with the English government with such a
mental reservation there was little occasion to have resort to this alternative
course throughout the 1620s and the 1630s because the constitutional
approach produced dramatic results on several fronts. The first major success
was in stalling the Dublin administration, during the early 1620s, when it
seemed bent upon a fresh plantation programme, and then, under the Graces,
in winning concessions directly from the king, over the head of the Dublin
administration, which appeared finally to remove the threat of continuing
plantations.

If considerable frustration boiled up in Ireland concerning official prevar-
ications over giving statutory form to the royal promise to bring a halt to
plantations, the leaders of the Catholic community remained confident, even
to 1642, that the king would ultimately honour his word. Moreover, despite
the renewal of the threat of further plantation in 1634, the leaders of the
Catholic community could point to a dramatic improvement in the de facto,
if not the de jure, position of Catholics in Ireland. During the years 1628–34
the threat of plantation was shelved, if not yet annulled, and it again became a slumbering issue from 1637 to 1641. During the entire period 1628–41 Catholic lawyers seem to have been permitted to plead before the Irish bar, even if they were not yet admitted to office under the crown, after they had sworn a simple oath of allegiance rather than the oath of supremacy. And during these same years, 1628–41, Catholic priests, and even bishops, were allowed to go about their pastoral duties without fear of legal penalty, even if this fell far short of a full toleration of their religion.

These very real achievements seemed, for a time, to be placed in jeopardy by the attitude of Wentworth towards Catholics and Catholicism, but while some Catholics were outraged over Wentworth resurrecting the spectre of the ‘Western Plantation’ and pressing forward with his scheme without regard for the social consequences, their leaders appear to have restrained the discontented ones from open revolt. They believed it was in their best interest to exercise such restraint because Catholic leaders, who were blissfully ignorant of Wentworth’s ultimate solution for the problem of Catholics and Catholicism in Ireland, remained confident that they would eventually curb his ambitions, as they had done those of his predecessors, by making direct approaches to the king. This line of attack had, as it transpired, been preempted by Wentworth, but ultimately the Catholics in Ireland did not have to rely on such overtures, because in 1637 the breakdown in relations between King Charles and the Scottish Covenanters, and Wentworth’s concern to use Irish resources to assist his monarch in his difficulties, meant that Wentworth lost interest in his planned plantation, as well as in other of his cherished projects. Even more encouraging for Catholics was the willingness of Wentworth to countenance the admission of Catholics both into the regiments raised in Ireland to join the king’s army against the Scots, and into the army which Wentworth himself subsequently decided to raise in Ireland to assist the war effort of the king. These developments came as a boost for Catholics because it meant that young men who previously would have had to seek military employment on the Continent could now aspire to careers as soldiers in the service of their own king. Wentworth’s willingness to permit Catholics as officers, as well as soldiers, in his army also provided members of the Irish Catholic community with a further opportunity to demonstrate that they were no less loyal to the king than Protestants in Ireland or England, and decidedly better subjects than Scottish Protestants whether these were in Ireland or Scotland.82

This reconstruction indicates that the sequence of events of 1637–40 which provoked disunion between the king and many of his subjects in both Scotland and England effected something of a reconciliation between that same king and his Catholic subjects in Ireland. However the issues that brought

82 Kevin Forkan, ‘Strafford’s Irish Army, 1640–1′ (MA thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1999).
Catholics in Ireland closer to their monarch further distanced him from his Protestant subjects in that same kingdom, and Michael Perceval-Maxwell’s close study of events in the Irish parliament of 1640 demonstrates that it was these Protestant subjects who orchestrated the protest which led ultimately to a delegation from the Irish parliament presenting evidence to parliament in England of Wentworth’s alleged misconduct as governor of Ireland. This, as is well known, was the evidence which led ultimately to the impeachment and execution of Wentworth, by then earl of Strafford, and Irish Catholics were party to those procedures to the extent that Catholic members of the Irish parliament participated in the local criticism of their absent governor, and Catholics constituted part of the delegation that presented evidence before the English parliament.

The fact that Catholics did become involved in these events is a measure of their anger over what they perceived as Wentworth’s betrayal of the royal trust when he denied them the security in their estates which had been promised them under the Graces, when it had been in his power to deliver that promise. However, as they reflected upon what they had done, and more especially when the Catholic members of the delegation to the parliament took stock of the anti-Catholicism that was rampant in the House of Commons, they quickly came to appreciate that they had played into the hands of their real enemies in both England and Ireland by calling for the destruction of the king’s principal supporter when he most needed him. John Barry, who happened to be in London at the time, described how the Catholic members of the delegation were parties to their own destruction because, even as they were being sponsored to present evidence against Strafford, ‘the whole body of the Committee suspected Mr. Burke and Mr. Plunkett for having private access to his Majesty by means of my Lord Cottington and some other well wishers (as they conceive of the Catholique party) to the prejudice of the general business’. This, according to Barry, was flatly denied by the two members, but they won little favour by their denial because it was then stated that they would have never become involved if ‘they had obtained of the king the relinquishing of all the plantations of the kingdom and disposed him well to the performing of all the Graces promised by himself and his ancestors’. Barry further considered that the endeavours of the Catholic delegation were wasted because the issues at stake in London had no longer anything to do with Ireland, and that it was ‘almost’ with Strafford as it had been with Christ that ‘somebody must be sacrificed to appease the people’. To this extent Barry concluded that Strafford was an ‘innocent victim, and he predicted, presciently as it happened, that he ‘being alive or dead [would] not settle things’ in England.

84 Captain John Barry to Sir John Perceval, 8 Mar. 1640/1 (BL, Add. MS 47,023, fo. 37).
What was evident to John Barry in March 1641 must have quickly dawned on the Catholic members of the Irish parliamentary delegation to London, as they witnessed the continuing trial of Strafford, the attempt by the king, in early May, to have him released from custody by the army, the eventual attainder and execution of Strafford on 12 May 1641, the efforts of the king, through the summer of 1641, to reach an accommodation with the Scottish Covenanters, and the king’s eventual move to Scotland in August 1641 in the hope of cementing some Scottish support which might assist him in upholding his authority in England. If this were not enough to convince those Irish Catholics who were present in England that the anchors on which they had relied offered them no security at all, they had further evidence of the precariousness of their position from the continuing taunts of all things Catholic from the floor of the English House of Commons. As word of what was happening in Britain reached Ireland, and as speculation over what might happen became rife, an increasing number of people within the Catholic community in Ireland began to make plans for a doomsday situation. The ensuing plots, counter-plots, aborted plots, and imagined plots heightened tensions, until matters eventually came to a head in the Irish insurrection of October 1641. It will now be clear that this outburst in Ireland could not have been predicted even a few short months previously, but it will also be clear, from what has been said in this chapter of the many frustrations and disappointed ambitions endured by the various elements of the Irish Catholic community during the previous half-century, that it was to be expected that many people would take the law into their own hands once the customary political moulds were broken.

CHAPTER EIGHT  

The Irish Insurrection of 1641

8.1. THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

It will be evident from the previous chapter that most people in Ireland, not least members of the government in Dublin, were so preoccupied by political events in England and Scotland, and with the likely consequences of these events for the kingdom of Ireland, that they were taken by surprise by the insurrection of 1641. Much has been written over the past three and a half centuries to explain why some Irish Catholics had resort to arms in 1641, but much less attention has been devoted to identifying who the insurgents were, or what they hoped to achieve. Thus what, by any standards, was one of the critical moments in Irish history, equal in importance with the insurrection of 1798, or the Land War of the nineteenth century, or the Northern Ireland troubles of today, has been denied serious scholarly analysis, and this in itself calls for an explanation.1

The reluctance of academic historians to come to grips with the subject stems primarily from the fact that Protestant apologists appropriated the episode, and the sources that relate to it, within a few short years of the rising. The most effective author was Sir John Temple, an official in the Dublin government when the insurrection happened: his *The Irish Rebellion*, published in an extensive form in 1646, advanced a coherent explanation for the events of only five years previously. According to Temple, the insurrection, and an associated premeditated massacre of the Protestant settlers in Ireland, had been planned by the Catholic leaders in the country long before 1641. He asserted that the Old English politicians of Ireland figured prominently at this planning stage, and that they had been egged on by the Catholic clergy in order to recover Ireland for the Pope’s interest. Events in Ireland therefore formed part of a broader Catholic attack upon Protestantism, and success

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1 This chapter is an expansion upon two previous ventures in print, Nicholas Canny, ‘What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?’, in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland: From Independence to Occupation, 1641–1660* (Cambridge, 1995), 24–42; and Canny, ‘Religion, Politics and the Irish Rising of 1641’, in Judith Devlin and Ronan Fanning (eds.), *Religion and Rebellion: Historical Studies XX. Papers Read Before the 22nd, Irish Conference of Historians, Held at University College, Dublin, 18–22 May 1995* (Dublin, 1997), 40–70; the first of these was in turn a modification upon Canny, ‘In Defence of the Constitution? The Nature of Irish Revolt in the Seventeenth Century’, in Louis Bergeron and L. M. Cullen (eds.), *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1991), 23–40; I am grateful to the editors of all three collections for providing me with the opportunity to try out my views on the insurrection which I revisit here.
in Ireland would have led to an immediate assault against the Protestant populations of England and Scotland with a view to restoring Catholicism as the religion of all three kingdoms. The Gaelic lords of Ulster who were acknowledged by him to have been first and most prominent in the action were, in a sense, excused by Temple as but the pliant dupes of wily priests and treacherous Old English lawyers and landowners whom he identified as the ultimate instigators of the attack, acting on authority from the Pope.²

Temple claimed authority for his version of events first by describing it as a ‘history’, and second, after the manner of Geoffrey Keating or anybody who made claim to being a ‘modern’ scholar, by supporting his propositions with liberal citation from documentary sources. His most graphic evidence was extracts culled from the 3,140 sworn depositions gathered from Protestant survivors of the assault during the months immediately after the insurrection. These were supported by official correspondence from the files of the Dublin government for the months immediately before and immediately after the October insurrection which Temple was able to draw upon because he had then been master of the rolls.³

At the time of Temple’s writing, the Catholics he accused were in no position to counter these barbs in print because they were still in arms and confronted by political regimes in England and Scotland that were increasingly intolerant of Catholics, and even more so of their political arguments. Irish Catholics, or at least their priests, had, from the outset, explained to the papacy that they were justified in taking up arms to defend themselves and their faith, and Catholic authors had glorified their military actions in Gaelic verse from quite an early stage in the proceedings. This was done most memorably in ‘Éirghe mo dhúthiche le Dia’ (Arise my community with God), where the author Pádraigín Haicéad, a Dominican priest of Old English ancestry who had previously lived a comfortable and secure life under the patronage and protection of the Butlers, barons of Dunboyne, dramatically called on his countrymen in all parts of Ireland and of all social ranks to unite under the angel of Christ to restore religion and to rectify the injustices that had been perpetrated in the previous decades.⁴

⁴ For the overtures to the papacy see Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, “Far from Terra Firma”: The Mission of Gian Battista Rinuccini to Ireland, 1641–9 (Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute,
However, when it came to articulating arguments that would carry weight in Britain, the Catholic authors remained silent for two decades. This enabled *The Irish Rebellion* to assume the status of an official interpretation, recommended in 1675 by Edmund Borlase, son of Sir John Borlase who was joint lord justice of Ireland when the rebellion erupted, as ‘a book writ without passion on unquestionable proofs, by an honourable person no ways interested than truth and conscience engaged him’. It also quickly became the standard Protestant interpretation, and its publication record through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century reveals that fresh editions appeared whenever Protestant control of Irish government and society was threatened by Catholic demands for a recovery of some of their lost power.5

Under these circumstances, it was difficult for those in Ireland who both sympathized with the position in which Catholics had found themselves in the 1640s, and wished to retain credibility in Britain, to respond. Instead of formulating a counter-interpretation, those Catholic authors who acknowledged that their community’s interest continued to be imperilled by Temple’s account sought rather to undermine its authority by challenging the impartiality of the author and his sources. They asserted that ‘old Sir John Temple, [had been] a member of the Junto in the State whose zeal for religion and forfeitures provoked the first rising in the North’, and they contended that the only authority behind Temple’s account was ‘fanatique legends . . . of treacheries, murders and massacres committed by the Irish’. However while, in the years following the Restoration of 1660, Catholics did assert that Protestant accounts of the 1641 insurrection were but ‘libellous pamphlets’, their failure to compose counter-texts couched in a political language that might have won sympathy in Britain meant that the Protestant explanations of 1641 remained undisputed as far as a British political nation was concerned.

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Therefore various Protestant accounts, all written in imitation of Temple’s *The Irish Rebellion*, were never seriously challenged other than by the assertions that the leaders of the Irish Catholic community had been steadfast in their loyalty to the crown until they were driven to defend themselves in arms by a government in Dublin that had long conspired to destroy them. The members of the administration, according to this version, then sought ‘to criminate’ them by ‘traitorous calumny’ while ‘razing’ from ‘the registries all orders, instructions, and private acts of the cabal by which [their conspiracy to entrap their opponents] might possibly be traced’.6

This argument and denial continued to be echoed by Protestant and Catholic historians and polemicists until well into the nineteenth century, and even W. E. H. Lecky, who strove valiantly to find some rational middle ground between the sectarian extremes, did little more than allude to the obvious injustices under which the Catholics of Ireland, and especially those of Ulster, had suffered. However, while discarding the principal element of Temple’s argument, that a massacre of all Protestants in Ireland had been premeditated in 1641, Lecky refrained from examining the 1641 depositions which were principally cited to support the Protestant version of what happened in 1641. Rather, Lecky merely offered his opinion, based on his verdict upon printed extracts from the depositions which had been published at various times from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, that the entire body of material was inadmissible as evidence.7 Academic historians of recent generations, possibly in their concern to keep their distance from denominational polemic, have also avoided analysing what happened in 1641, and their principal endeavour has been, like Lecky, to dismiss the theory of a premeditated massacre of Protestants, and, again like Lecky, to point to the implausibility of partial Protestant estimates of the numbers supposedly slaughtered in 1641.8

Rather than study what actually happened in 1641, most academic historians have striven to explain why a major political disruption occurred in Ireland in 1641. In the course of advancing their explanations for a political fissure, these scholars have situated the events leading to the outburst of the rising within the broad context of political developments in England, Scotland, and Ireland. The most persuasive of these high-politics accounts


7 W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, 5 vols. (new edn. London, 1892), i. 1–111, esp. pp. 59–95; also 395–408; his account drew heavily on a work by Henry Jones, the principal compiler of the depositions, Henry Jones, *A Remonstrance of Divers Remarkable Passages* (London, 1642), and on a 19th-century compilation, Mary Hickson (ed.), *The Irish Massacres of 1641–2* (London, 1884); more generally for the 17th-century Lecky was guided by the writings and documentary collections of Thomas Carte, the biographer of Ormond.

The Irish Insurrection of 1641

were formulated by Hugh Kearney and Aidan Clarke during the 1950s and 1960s, and both were sustained by the theory, then favoured by some influential historians, that it is issues of patronage, and exclusion therefrom, that are the precipitants of all major political disturbances. Therefore they could contend, in the case of Ireland during the 1630s and 1640s, (and here they were also following the tradition of Lecky), that it was the refusal of successive governments in Ireland, and especially that of Thomas Wentworth, to live up to the promises of the crown that had driven the leaders of the Catholic community, first in Ulster, and then throughout the country, to seek to have their way by force of arms. Each author has since refined his views, in the light both of further research on Ireland, and of scholarly publications on the causes of conflict in England and Scotland, but their views, which were arrived at independently, have been given canonical status by being integrated into the narrative chapters of A New History of Ireland. This is hardly surprising since Aidan Clarke was the principal author of the chapters devoted to the years 1603–41 in that multi-authored history.

This academic explanation of why the political order in Ireland collapsed in 1641 also won immediate respect from scholars engaged upon the study of the contemporaneous conflict in Britain, and, in recent years, Clarke’s account has been largely integrated into Conrad Russell’s The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–1642. This was an acknowledgement by Russell that the New British History which he champions has been long established in Irish historiography, even if it has not been described as such. However, while incorporating Aidan Clarke’s account of what happened in Ireland into his broader narrative, Russell has expressed concern that events in Ireland appear to dovetail too well with the broader ‘British’ model, and he suspects that the neatness of the fit may be due to the absence of any significant body of material appertaining to the motivations of the Irish Catholic participants in the happenings of 1641.

Conrad Russell’s broad explanation of developments in all three kingdoms, and how these relate to each other, has been further advanced by Michael

9 Hugh Kearney, Strafford in Ireland, 1633–41: A Study in Absolutism (Manchester, 1959); Aidan Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 1625–42 (London, 1966); the opinions of both historians appear to have been influenced by Hugh Trevor Roper, ‘The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century’, Past and Present, 16 (1959); repr. in Trevor Aston (ed.), Crisis in Europe, 1560–1660 (New York, 1967), 63–102; Lecky, History, i. 33 wrote of the ‘perfidy of Wentworth’ in reneging on the Graces.

10 For a restatement of Kearney’s views see his introduction to the reissue of his Strafford in Ireland (Cambridge, 1989), and for restatements and refinements of the Clarke position see Aidan Clarke, ‘Ireland and the General Crisis’, Past and Present, 48 (1970), 79–99; Clarke, ‘The Genesis of the Ulster Rising of 1641’, in Peter Roebuck (ed.), Plantation to Partition (Belfast, 1981), 29–45; Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 233–38; the succeeding chapter ‘The Rising of 1641 and the Catholic Confederacy, 1641–5’, pp. 389–316, was written by Professor Patrick J. Corish; Kearney had been a research student of R. Dudley Edwards at University College, Dublin, and Clarke a student of T. W. Moody at Trinity College, Dublin.

Perceval-Maxwell in *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* which details the Irish aspect of the downfall of the government of King Charles I. While conceding ground to economic and social considerations that were first investigated by Raymond Gillespie, Perceval-Maxwell’s book has carried the high-politics explanation of events in Ireland as far as the evidence will bear, and the only dissenter from this academic consensus is Brendan Bradshaw who adheres to the view favoured by the Catholic clerics of the seventeenth century, and from which Lecky did not dissent, that the causes of the insurrection of 1641 require no investigation because the outburst was a predictable response to the injustices of plantation in Ulster.\(^{12}\)

This summary will make it clear that, with the honourable exception of Brendan Bradshaw, the received academic version of events focuses attention on the difficulties experienced by King Charles and his closest associates in governing three kingdoms, and suggests that disturbances or contention in any one had unforeseen but nonetheless inevitable consequences for the other two. Political dislocation in Ireland was, according to this interpretation, triggered first by disillusionment with the government of King Charles I because of its failure to ratify the Graces, and then by uncertainty resulting from disruptions in the governance of Scotland and England which threatened the authority of the king and seemed to be opening the way to a political regime in one or both of those kingdoms that would be even more hostile towards Catholics in Ireland. At the same time, attention has been devoted to showing how the course of events in Ireland further exacerbated relations between the monarch and powerful sections of the political nation in the king’s other two realms.

This scholarship has won deserved international acclaim, and it has advanced considerably our understanding of the political crisis of the 1640s that beset the government of King Charles I. However the existing state of knowledge is less than satisfactory, first because it deals with likely, rather than proven, causes of alienation, and second because, for most authors, they are explaining an insurrection in the province of Ulster only, and, by their silence, they infer that life in the other three provinces of Ireland remained on its normal course until December 1641. Then, it is suggested, Old English leaders, backed by the Catholic bishops, were already seeking to constitute themselves into the Confederation that was to be adumbrated at a meeting at Kilkenny in May 1642. This Confederation would act as a body, representing the interests of Catholics in all four provinces, to negotiate their

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position with the government of King Charles while uncertainty prevailed in Britain, no less than in Ireland. Thus, while unquestionably identifying several factors that contributed to uncertainty in Ireland in the 1640s, most historians have been unwittingly divining the origins of the Catholic Confederacy rather than the insurrection of 1641. In this respect their procedure might be likened to historians approaching the study of the French Revolution with a fixed determination to make no reference to the Terror. Consequently the insurrection in Ireland, apart from its initial outbreak, is generally passed over in silence—as the Catholic authors of the seventeenth century had wished it would be—and has been accorded but cursory mention even in the most detailed academic narratives. Even where it is discussed, it is implied that what happened in 1641 was a result of a short-term breakdown of authority in the province of Ulster alone that had little relevance to the remainder of the country. This point was also made repeatedly by Lecky who considered the rebellion, and its excesses, to be associated with Ulster, which was ‘still in a condition of highland barbarism’. The remainder of the country, according to Lecky, ‘was not far behind English civilisation’, and he believed that the only disturbances that occurred beyond the confines of Ulster were incidents of an ‘agrarian character’ in Counties Wicklow and Wexford.¹³

This chapter will seek to advance historical understanding, first by constructing a detailed narrative of events in all parts of the country in the months immediately following the outbreak of insurrection in Ulster in October 1641. Then, having identified what did happen, it will analyse the explanations for their actions offered to their victims by a variety of insurgents with a view to constructing a typology of the motivations for insurrection presented by Irish people of various social groupings and from different parts of the country. Finally, this typology will be related to what has been said, in the earlier chapters of this book, of developments in Ireland over the previous half-century, with a view to establishing whether there were long-term causes to the insurrection of 1641, or whether the eruption really was the product of accident as it has been represented in the historical writing currently held in highest regard.

Proceeding with this agenda means, of course, making use of the 1641 depositions which were already condemned as partial and uncorroborated evidence in the seventeenth century, and which, ever since then, have been consistently decried as unfair reportage by Catholic and Irish Nationalist authors most of whom, like Lecky, have never consulted this testimony in the original. While acknowledging the bias of this compilation of documents, and

¹³ Of the academic authors previously cited the only one who gives reasonable attention to what happened in 1641, and in all parts of Ireland, is Perceval-Maxwell, The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion; some of the authors in Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641, notably Hilary Simms, also give attention to what happened during the course of the insurrection but there discussion is, as the title of the volume indicates, confined to Ulster; Lecky, History, i. 45–6, quotation p. 395; on the quick move to the formation of the Confederation see Micheál Ó Siochrú, Confederate Ireland, 1642–9: A Constitutional and Political Analysis (Dublin, 1999), 27–54.
the determination of those who assembled the depositions, during the heat of battle, to represent Irish Catholics in the worst possible light, this material cannot be dismissed as historical evidence any more than any other source of information can be declared to be outside the historian’s brief. On the contrary, the depositions have a unique importance because they constitute the only detailed information we have of what happened in Ireland during and immediately subsequent to October 1641. This data has already facilitated the identification and location of 3,140 of those Protestants who had settled in Ireland before 1641, and it has made it possible to ascertain something of their social and economic activities in Ireland before they were disturbed by the insurrection. Similarly, the depositions seem suited to the reconstruction of the sequence of events in which these same people become embroiled as the conflict unfolded, because all deponents were required to present a narrative of their personal experiences, and to identify those who had attacked them or had taken their goods. During the course of their narratives, many deponents summarized the conversations they had had with their assailants which, in many instances, turned out to be face-to-face verbal exchanges with people with whom they had maintained working relations over a prolonged period, and who were now robbing them and forcing them out of their community.

Besides such personal testimony of what they had seen, heard, and experienced, many deponents also supplied accounts of what had been reported to them by other victims of the attack, frequently from places far removed from where they themselves resided. This hearsay evidence often enters the realm of the fantastic and, in subsequent years, was frequently extracted from the depositions to spic the Protestant printed accounts of the insurrection. Such material cannot be accepted as evidence that these reported events ever occurred, even if the veracity of the narratives went unquestioned by those who came forward to make depositions, as it was by those who assembled the sworn testimony. However, even these gory narrations, detailing supposed brutal murders, and the ripping of babies from the wombs of pregnant women, are of historical value if only because they convey some sense of the terror which gripped the minds of the settlers as word reached them of the breakdown of authority in several parts of the country. This panic is a historical fact in its own right, akin to that which beset French provincial society when news and rumours of the collapse of government in Paris began to filter through in 1789 and subsequent years. Like that panic, the Irish terror of 1641 must be scrutinized, not least because it influenced how Protestants behaved once such rumours reached them.14

Therefore when all factors are taken into account, depositions represent a source that portrays events entirely from the vantage point of those who became victims to the early stages of a revolution but who, in the longer term, became the ultimate victors. In this sense it is analogous to the material on which historical accounts of the German Peasants’ Revolt of 1525, or the Revolt of the Vendée in 1793, are based. Like all such material its partiality and prejudice are so manifest that skilled historians can readily avoid its pitfalls as they proceed about their essential business of disentangling fact from fiction.15

8.2. The Rising in Ulster in 1641

All surviving narratives of the insurrection in Ulster in its early stages show that it was indeed the product of a conspiracy which involved a small group of discontented Catholic landowners, whose intention seems to have been to take the principal fortified positions in the province by surprise, with a view to negotiating a resolution of their grievances from a position of strength. The improvements they had in mind related to the practice of their religion and the ownership of property in Ulster, but otherwise little is known of what the conspirators proposed to do if everything had gone according to plan, much less of what happened once these plans were defeated. Therefore, in an effort to retrieve some information on what happened on the weekend of 22/3 October 1641, it is necessary, for want of a better source, to rely on the sworn testimony of the 3,140 Protestant deponents who have left detailed statements concerning what they then experienced.

The first disturbances happened on the evening of 22 October when several groups of the Ulster Catholic gentry took control of some of the garrison posts in the province through a series of ruses. The episode that is best known is the seizure by Sir Phelim O’Neill of Charlemont fort in County Armagh simply by presenting himself as an uninvited dinner guest to Toby, Lord Caulfield, the governor of the fort and, like Sir Phelim, a leader of the political community in County Armagh. Then, having gained admission to the castle, O’Neill had his servants, who had concealed arms under their mantles, overpower the guard and take over the castle. At the same time, ‘the twenty second day of October 1641, being Friday, at about six of the clock at night, Patrick Madder O’Donnelly with his brother and a priest O’Skeagh and one other in their company of the Donnellys’ arrived before Captain John Perkin

15 On the German Peasants War and on the Revolt of the Vendée, and their respective sources, see Peter Blickle, The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants War from a New Perspective, trans. Thomas A. Brady, Jr., and H. C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore, 1985); Charles Tilley, The Vendée (London, 1964); it should be noted that more recent studies of the German Peasants Revolt pay attention to the writings of the spiritual and political leaders, for example, Michael G. Baylor, The Radical Reformation (Cambridge, 1991), Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Thomas Müntzer: Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary, trans. Jocelyn Jaquier, ed. Peter Matheson (Edinburgh, 1993).
at Dungannon Castle with the request that he, being a justice of the peace, should give them a warrant to search for stolen sheep. Then after Perkin had admitted them, and when he was writing out the warrant they had requested, one of the visiting party opened the castle gate to admit eighteen armed men ‘who rushing violently into his hall with skeans [sceana, knives or daggers] presented to his breast, and arrested him by authority they said from the [Irish] parliament and possessed themselves of all his arms and all the goods of his house’. Later, at midnight on that same evening, Sir Phelim O’Neill visited the castle, ‘and smilingly said, a you old fox I have caught you: I am gladder to have you than my Lord Caulfield who I have left safe enough at Charlemont’.

At the same time Mountjoy fort in County Tyrone was taken by the O’Quinns, and the same process of taking fortified positions, this time by more forceful methods, was continued the following day. Then, for example, Cormack O’Hagan with a group to the number of forty, proceeded on the afternoon of 23 October from Cookstown in County Tyrone, which was already in their possession, to Moneymore where he seized the keys of ‘Drap[er]s Castle’ from James Hartson who had been given custody of them by Sir John Clotworthy, the ‘farmer’ of the Drapers’ proportion of the Londonderry plantation. Thus they entered the castle and took arms and ammunition both from the castle and from the houses of the settlers, ‘many of the householders there not being then at home’. Matters were even easier for the insurgents at Dungiven where the custody of the castle ‘within the Skinners’ Proportion’, with the command of soldiers, arms, and ammunition, had been entrusted by Sir John Vaughan to Manus O’Cahan who then defected to the insurgents. The result of all these endeavours was that by the end of Saturday 23 October 1641 all these fortified positions were in the hands of the insurgents, as was Tandragee which had been taken by the O’Hanlons, and Newry in County Down which was the prize taken by the Magennises and McCartans.16

Then also on the evening of 22 October 1641, as these events were unfolding in Ulster, alarming news was brought to the attention of Lord Justice Sir William Parsons in Dublin by one Owen Connolly (or O’Connolly), a foster brother to Hugh Oge Mac Mahon of Monaghan but a tenant to Sir John Clotworthy in Mainmore on the Londonderry plantation and a convert to Protestantism. This news was to the effect that Mac Mahon and Conor Maguire, Lord Enniskillen, planned to seize Dublin Castle, with its arsenal of arms and ammunition, on the following day. Connolly claimed that he had

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16 Clarke, ‘The Genesis of the Ulster Rising of 1641’; Gillespie, ‘The End of an Era’; Raymond Gillespie, ‘Destabilizing Ulster, 1641–2’, in Mac Cuarta (ed.), Ulster 1641, 107–22; deposition of Captain John Perkin of Dungannon (TCD, MS 839, fos. 40–4); deposition of Ann Smith (TCD, MS 839, fo. 102); deposition of Peter Gates (TCD, MS 839, fo. 107); see also examination of William Fitzgerald, clerk (TCD, MS 836, fo. 82).
been summoned by Mac Mahon to assist in the action, but that he had attempted to divert him from that course and to have him instead ‘to discover it to the state for the saving of his own estate’. However Mac Mahon had proved adamant, and while insisting that the conspirators owed full allegiance to the king ‘and would pay him all his rights’, he claimed that ‘he could not help it . . . but that they did this for the tyrannical government was over them, and to imitate the Scots who got a privilege by that course’. The plot, if it existed, was nipped in the bud and all in Dublin who were suspected of complicity were summarily imprisoned. Of these, only Mac Mahon admitted on 23 October that the story was true, and that the capture of Dublin Castle, which was to have been implemented ‘with swords and skeans’ by Captains Brian O’Neill and Hugh Byrne, was but one element of a plan to seize all fortifications in the country; an action, Mac Mahon claimed, that it was then too late to prevent. All the others who were interrogated at this time denied their involvement, and we would have no concrete evidence, besides the testimony of Connolly and Mac Mahon, that the Ulster conspiracy included a wider dimension were it not for the boast of Sir Phelim O’Neill in Ulster on 23 October, and on subsequent days, that as well as the castles which he and his associates in Ulster had taken, all fortified positions in Ireland, including Dublin Castle, were in the hands of the insurgents.\(^\text{17}\)

These remarks were made by O’Neill during his second involvement with the drama which he aspired to manage while being its principal actor. This action was to ‘summon’ before him the leaders of the settler community who had been disturbed by his initial onslaught, ‘so that [they] might understand the meaning of his proceedings’. He, like Hugh Oge Mac Mahon in Dublin, professed the loyalty of all participants to the crown, but he went further to proclaim that what they did ‘was by authority from His Majesty out of England, and by consent of the prime nobility and gentry of Ireland’ and that the taking of fortified positions in Ulster, in Dublin, and throughout the country was ‘a course resolved upon amongst the lords and gentry of this kingdom for the preservation of His Majesty’s prerogative, their own religion and liberties against the Puritan faction in England, Scotland and Ireland, who intended (as the said Sir Phelim asserted) to enact such laws whereby the inhabitants of Ireland should conform in religion to the church of England or otherwise to be deprived of life, liberty, and estates’. The proof of these claims, he said, would be the issuance of ‘proclamations out of England from His Majesty within ten days’, and the dispatch of an army of 40,000 men out of England and Scotland to enforce their decrees. Therefore, as Sir Phelim O’Neill explained to his peers within the settler community in Ulster, no violence was intended against them or their property, and the Catholic leaders

\(^\text{17}\) Examination of Owen Connolly (TCD, MS 809, fo. 13); examination of Hugh Oge Mac Mahon (TCD, MS 809, fo. 15).
from Ulster and elsewhere in Ireland who had become involved in this pre-
emptive strike had taken the only course that ‘would obtain the security of
their religion and estates in as ample manner as the Scots had obtained theirs
in Scotland’. Consistent with these assertions was the further statement by
his brother Turlough O’Neill, after he had captured the town of Armagh,
that ‘he would surrender the town to the English army if he was requested
to do so in the name of the king but that he would refuse to do so if requested
in the name of parliament’.

This broad three-kingdoms explanation which referred to known recent
political developments, and which played upon the very real fears of Catholic
political leaders in Ireland, must have seemed plausible, if improbable, to his
Protestant auditors, coming as it did from Sir Phelim O’Neill who was not
only a landowner but a trained lawyer, a justice of the peace, and a member
of parliament for County Armagh. In the circumstances, all they could do
was seek to dissuade him from the course on which he had embarked,
reminding him variously, but in vain, of ‘the ill success which likewise
happened to his name, and all others in this kingdom who had formerly run
such courses’, and that he ran the risk of becoming ‘a second O’Dogherty
. . . who lost his head a year after the burning of Derry and killing the
Governor’.18

From this point forward the pace of the action was no longer determined
by Sir Phelim O’Neill because he failed to manage the proceedings he had
unleashed, although he continued to persist in his efforts to provide some
direction and moral purpose to the unfolding drama. The increasing help-
lessness of O’Neill is explained by three factors. First, his authority had never
extended beyond County Armagh, and he had to entrust the leadership of
the movement in areas beyond Armagh to other native proprietors—
Maguires, O’Reillys, Mac Mahons, O’Hagans, and O’Cahans—who were
not as politically sophisticated as himself. Then, once these natural leaders
were seen to be challenging the political and social order in Ulster, their
example was immediately followed by other dissatisfied elements within the
Catholic community of the province whose grounds for grievance were
different from that of the proprietors and were sometimes opposed to their
interests. And thirdly, by failing to take all fortified castles and positions in
Ulster within two days, the leaders of the insurgency provided those Protestant
proprietors who were still in possession of defensible buildings with an oppor-
tunity to mobilize themselves and to resist any further efforts to dislodge them.
The combination of these factors meant that what had begun as an intended

18 Deposition of Captain Thomas Chambon of Lurgan (TCD, MS 896, fo. 37); examination of
William Fitzgerald, clerk (TCD, MS 896, fo. 82); deposition of Captain John Perkin (TCD, MS 899,
fos. 40–4); deposition of Charity Chappell (TCD, MS 896, fo. 44); explanations almost identical to
those cited by Fitzgerald were given by Phelim O’Neill to Thomas Chambers, Esq., of Armagh (TCD,
MS 896, fo. 42).
effort to place Catholic landowners in a position from which better to negotiate with the crown over the heads of the Dublin government, the English parliament, and the Scottish Covenanters ultimately involved them in a bloody conflict that they had never intended.

The speed with which the initial elite challenge became transformed into a popular uprising suggests that Sir Phelim O’Neill and his associates were more oblivious to problems and grievances of their social inferiors within the Catholic community than was the government in Dublin of which they complained so bitterly. Raymond Gillespie has done most to identify the grievances that might explain this popular outburst, and he is entirely correct when he alludes to the already disordered condition of the province even as Sir Phelim O’Neill launched his bid for power. The iron-founder Francis Knight and his family were, for lack of employment, already on their way from County Fermanagh to Dublin as early as 12 October and were then attacked ‘by one Cormack Oge his company who had been out long before, a wood kerne robbing the people’. The social order was so awry in Tyrone and Londonderry that Roger Markham was not at all surprised to learn, on the afternoon of 23 October, that Moneymore had been burnt ‘because then they were gathering soldiers, as report went, to go to Spain’. Neither did Robert Osborn, the rector of Clonkeene in County Louth, think it remarkable when, about six or seven weeks before the insurrection, he encountered a company of soldiers from Ulster to the number of 100 men making their way to Ardee, since ‘it was reported they were to go for Spain’. Those other Ulstermen, and also those from the Gaelic areas of Leinster, who were interrogated in Dublin following Owen Connolly’s revelation explained their presence in the city in terms similar to those used by Art Kavanagh, who contended that his business was ‘to seek for a master, and if he could get no master to enter himself into some company to go beyond seas’. Individuals like Edmund O’Morroghe, who already had masters, could also be rootless because they received such poor recompense for their labours. O’Morroghe was paid ‘no wages but meat and drink when he followed his master, and got clothes with the profits of half an acre of corn which he would ‘buy when it was cheap and sell it again when it was dear’. Under these circumstances it is not at all surprising that service in Spain with Captain Ludlow seemed a more attractive proposition than remaining with his employer.19

Conditions were probably worse in Ulster than those experienced by O’Morroghe in County Louth. The widespread presence of unemployed and underemployed young men in the province was probably due to economic dislocation, but it had been exacerbated because further young men had been brought into the province to serve as soldiers in Strafford’s army. These were

19 Roger Markham, ‘A Note of What Passages Happened in the Counties of Tyrone and Londonderry since 22 October 1641’ (TCD, MS 839, fos. 17–23); examination of Art Kavanagh (TCD, MS 809, fo. 54); examination of Edmond O’Morroghe (TCD, MS 809, fo. 146).
subsequently discharged, on the insistence of the English parliament, but no firm arrangement had been made to provide for their conveyance to their place of origin, and there was but a nebulous understanding that some of the force would be conveyed overseas for service with Spain. Some of those left roaming the countryside still had wages owing to them, and they sometimes remained in possession of their arms after the force had been formally disbanded on 8 May 1641. Two such, who had left the province, were William O’Murhies of Ballilaghna in County Dublin, and Patrick O’Dorogan from County Louth. The former had always lived at Ballilaghna until he went as a soldier to Ulster under the lieutenant colonel to Colonel Butler, whose name he had forgotten. Then, following demobilization, he found employment making hay and reaping corn at Luttlerstown, but then, still bearing a musket and a sword, he sought to enlist in the force of 200 men reportedly being recruited by one Matthew Allen for the Spanish army. O’Dorogan, a native of Kilcock, County Kildare, had been a soldier in Ulster under Captain Herle, had then earned ‘a little money’ in harvesting with Lawrence Bellow in County Louth, and had then travelled, first to Clones, County Monaghan, and latterly to Dublin in search of the captains who reportedly were recruiting for soldiering with Spain. 20

These were all individuals who had left Ulster after they had been disbanded, but there are several references in the depositions to soldiers who had served in Strafford’s army being a menacing presence in almost every Ulster county prior to October 1641, until they had the opportunity to take advantage of the breakdown of authority to engage in all types of depredations. Deponents regularly identified people such as Brian Donnelly, a ‘runnegate trooper to Lord Moore’, and Patrick Mór O’Donnell, who had formerly served as a soldier under Lord Caulfield, among those who launched attacks upon the settler community. It is likely that these individuals were as much beyond the control of Sir Phelim O’Neill as they had been of the leaders of the settler community in the months before the insurrection. 21

There were many besides former soldiers who participated in the popular onslaught against the settlers as word of the revolt spread throughout the province. One deponent from the barony of Dungannon witnessed on 24 October James Duff McCauwell with forty or fifty others ‘robbing and dispoiling all the English thereabouts, beating and abusing all that offered any way to resist’. Among those who suffered from these early assaults were the English tenants settled by Sir Phelim O’Neill on his own estates, and John O’Neill, cousin to Sir Phelim, was alleged to have murdered twenty-two...
‘Protestants his own servants’. This accusation probably means that John O’Neill failed in his duty to provide for the protection of his English tenants rather than that he killed them himself. If this is true, it indicates that the vengeance of the rabble was directed especially against those English settlers who had been invited by native proprietors to take leases on property that previously had been a preserve of Catholic farmers. It would have been especially attractive to those Ulster Catholic landowners, characterized by Dr Robert Maxwell as ‘bankrupt and discontented gentlemen’, who had ‘borrowed what sum of money they possibly could from the British’, and still ‘would not pay any man a penny’, to settle English tenants on their estates, because it would have presented them with the opportunity to collect entry fines which Irish tenants could not afford in exchange for long leases on good-quality farms. Thus when Elizabeth Price mentioned that her husband Captain Price had ‘bought’ lands in County Armagh worth £100 a year from Sir Phelim O’Neill she probably meant either that he had been installed as a tenant-in-chief or that he had accepted a mortgage on the property. The immediate losers from any such transactions would have been those Irish who had previously farmed the lands in question, and it is likely that these dispossessed tenants took advantage of the collapse in the political order to rectify such sources of grievance, even when their actions countered the wishes and the interests of their social betters.22

These are but conjectures about a possible economic motivation for the participants in the popular revolt, but others, from all social levels, were driven by less worthy considerations. Charity Chappell mentioned that one Preston, a son-in-law to Sir Phelim O’Neill, had informed her ‘that the gentry of Ireland on their side did think much that the scum of England should be here to overtop them’. It may have been some of these gentry, jealous of the success of the settlers, who enquired of Jane Grace ‘and other English what they did in this land, for the land of Ireland was theirs and therefore they would have the English goods’. For some of the Ulster Catholics recovery of their property could only have been accomplished by a reversal of the plantation in Ulster, and William Duffeild testified that the rebels who had attacked him claimed authority from England ‘to win their lands again and inhabit them if they could’. Even more specifically, he identified among the leaders one ‘Toole McCann that came of another country and claimed the land of Clancan’, while John Redfern was able to identify rebels who ‘destroyed and stripped’ his family and ‘all others the English and Scottish people’ at Magharefelt, and, on entering their lands, ‘claimed the same to be their own’.23

22 Deposition of Henry Boine (TCD, MS 839, fo. 1); deposition of George Burne of Dungannon (TCD, MS 839, fo. 7); deposition of Dr Robert Maxwell (TCD, MS 809, fos. 5–12); deposition of Elizabeth Price (TCD, MS 836, fo. 101).
23 Deposition of William Duffeild (TCD, MS 836, fo. 48); deposition of John Redfern, Sr. (TCD, MS 839, fo. 100).
Such specific references to remembered losses that derived from the Ulster plantation are rare, and most insurgents seemed anxious only for a resolution of their immediate economic difficulties by seizing the property of any of the settlers. These popular attacks did not usually result in loss of life, nor was it the purpose of the insurgents to kill their victims. However they were always gruesome affairs because they involved face-to-face confrontations between individuals who had long known each other. The typical offensive involved an armed group of Irish descending upon a Protestant settler family and demanding, at knife point, that they forsake their house and farm, and surrender their moveable goods. Killings usually occurred only where the Protestants resisted, but Protestants who refused to divulge where they had hidden their money were frequently tortured, as was testified by Margaret Phillips who had seen the ears of a neighbour being cut off ‘to make him confess money’. The greed for money, as well as a desire to steal the clothes off people’s backs, also explains the frequent stripping of the settlers by the insurgents, and Jane Grace complained that many English were put naked in stocks in frost and snow ‘until they confessed money’. Not satisfied with depriving the settlers of their farms, money, clothes, and possessions, the insurgents also turned their attention to the various legal documents that were kept in the settlers’ houses. The most valued of such records would have been the leases which gave the settlers title to their farms. These were certainly taken or destroyed by the rebels but so also were bonds and specialities that bore testimony to native indebtedness. The determination of the insurgents to find and destroy such evidence indicates how widespread was their worry over the level of their indebtedness, and not only at the upper reaches of society where, as was noted, land would have been mortgaged as a security on loans. On the popular level, concern over debt would have related to the series of small obligations contracted by farmers within their own localities, and usually with their Protestant neighbours. It was evidence of these debts which was systematically sought out and destroyed in the thousands of house raids that occurred from the outset of the revolt in Ulster. Several deponents mentioned that, at this early stage, ‘their chief malice was against churchmen’, and this animosity may be explained as much by the ministers’ heavy involvement with moneylending transactions, which was noted in Chapter 6, as by their religious profession. Debt collectors were similarly isolated for attack, and one who had the misfortune to have his ‘bonds and specialities’ discovered, when his pockets were searched by the rebels, was ‘enforced . . . to give and make acquittances to the parties his debtors’ and ‘to write letters’ of credit in favour of his assailants.

These developments indicate that Sir Phelim O’Neill did not command sufficient authority within the Catholic community in Ulster to enable him

24 Deposition of Margaret Phillips (TCD, MS 836, fo. 66); deposition of Jane Grace (TCD, MS 836, fo. 52).
25 Deposition of Christian Stanhawe (TCD, MS 836, fo. 75).
to maintain control over the movement he had unleashed, and, as Henry Boine had noted, English settlers in all parts of Ulster became the victims of looting, humiliation, and dispossession at the hands of an aggrieved populace almost from the outset. This outcome, and the loss of life which followed as settlers resisted their assailants, quite clearly ran counter to any design that Phelim O’Neill might have had to use his military strength to enhance his negotiating position with the government. In the circumstances, he followed three stratagems to maintain some semblance of order over the movement. First, he personally, and the other leaders of the movement within their areas of command, issued protections or passes to named individuals in the expectation that these would guarantee them safe passage to a place of safety in Ireland or Britain. Second, Sir Phelim decreed that only English settlers should be attacked since it was the wish of the king that they ‘should have nothing to do with any Scottish man but only with the English’. And third, he launched a series of assaults, beginning with the town of Armagh, upon defensible places that remained in the hands of the settlers, while spreading the rumour that there was no point in opposing him because Dublin and other fortified positions throughout Ireland were under his control.

We learn of the first of these stratagems because many survivors of the insurrection detailed how they had received protections only to find that they were subsequently disregarded by the captains who had been delegated to bring them to safety, or that the passes no longer held good once they moved outside their immediate vicinity into territories that were dominated by other rebel leaders. It also appears that settlers with skills that were considered vital by the insurgents were not only protected but were required to remain at their posts, in what they subsequently portrayed as a type of slavery. Thus George Burne, miller at Dungannon, was ‘enforced to stay’, Nehemiah Richardson, tallow-chandler, was ‘forced to work for them’, while Phelim O’Neill was alleged to have sent his groom to Armagh to ensure the safety of ‘Thomas Cleever who was a surveyor’ with the instruction ‘by any means save the surveyor’. The most valued of all, at least at the outset, was ‘one Hodges, commonly called in the country Doctor Hodges, for his practice of physic in the northern parts’, who cultivated the reputation of being an expert in the manufacture of gunpowder. He along with George Wirrall and Richard Pearson was set to that task at Charlemont, but despite Hodges’s boasts he made but ‘two ounces’ of ‘unprofitable stuff’ that ‘neither made the report of powder’ nor expelled projectiles ‘with sufficient force’. Later, when he produced a substance that ‘appeared good salt peter’, and this also failed, the insurgents were not impressed with his plea ‘that the earth would not afford salt peter’, but ‘carried forth’ all three of the artisans to be hanged and they ‘barely escaped’.26

26 Deposition of George Burne (TCD, MS 899, fo. 7); deposition of Nehemiah Richardson (TCD, MS 896, fo. 67); deposition of Thomas Dixon (TCD, MS 896, fo. 119); deposition of Captain Anthony
Sir Phelim O’Neill’s second stratagem concerning the Scots has attracted comment from the moment it was announced, and this has usually led to the conclusion that it was specifically designed by O’Neill to divide his potential opponents in the struggle for the control of Ulster. If this was O’Neill’s primary purpose it proved successful, at least at the outset. Roger Markham attributed the early indecisiveness of the settler community in Tyrone to the rumours, first that ‘all Ireland was up in arms’ with Dublin and Derry in rebel hands, and second to the report that the Irish ‘did not mean to rob and spoil the Scots but only the English’. Under those circumstances, he contended, the ‘150 gentlemen of the country both Scots and English’ who assembled, ‘within two or three hours notice’, on the evening of 23 October at the house of James Stewart at Cookstown were unwilling to be guided by the advice of Markham’s master, Thomas Staples, who wanted them to march towards County Antrim where, ‘if anywhere’, they would find ‘small force of Irish’. Instead it was decided that each proprietor should ‘every one go to his own house’, and at successive meetings, convened symbolically at the inauguration site of the O’Neills at Tullahogue, the Scots argued consistently against confrontation, and favoured continued negotiations with Sir Phelim O’Neill while they sought individually to defend their own property from attack.

On Friday 29 October, when the insurrection was already a week old and when a gathering of settlers, ranging between 400 and 500 people, assembled at Tullahogue, Staples again favoured stern action. On this occasion he wished to march first to his house at Lisson to rescue his wife and children, then to Moneymore, and thence to Coleraine ‘and so along the Scots country’ (as he described Sir Robert McClelland’s settlement) to Derry, gathering force as a ‘snowball’ until they could join up with Sir William Stewart in the Lagan of east Donegal. This proposition was, however, opposed by ‘one William Stewart which married one of the earl of Tyrone’s grandchildren’ whose arguments won a majority of the assembly which, according to Markham’s calculations, was composed ‘5/6 parts of them his countrymen’. Thus it was not until the following week that the settlers were finally able to combine forces with Sir William Stewart, this time by making their way directly to the valley of the Foyle where the combined army, 1,000 to 1,100 strong, repulsed the enemy at Augher. Even then, when the settler force, now increased to 1,500 to 1,600 men, sought to march to Dungannon, ‘all or most of us with a thirsting desire to see the face of our enemy’, they were opposed by Sir William Stewart who wished to return with his forces to his ‘own parts’, and advised that ‘he knew of no other way but that they must go and make their peace with the enemy if they could’. Thus again, a collective effort having

Stratford (TCD, MS 836, fo. 115); deposition of William Fitzgerald, clerk (TCD, MS 836, fo. 82); deposition of George Wirrall (TCD, MS 835, fo. 231).

27 This was still commented on in Lecky, *History*, i. 49.
failed, each group of settlers, according to Markham, was left with no choice but to fend for itself.28 This chronicle of events was endorsed by the Reverend Henry Boine who was in the house of Andrew Stewart on 24 October when news of the taking of Mountjoy fort was brought to them by a Scotsman. This messenger had been present when the fort was taken, but had been allowed to leave ‘for they had nothing to do with any Scottish man but only with the English’. Then on 25 October Boine, like Markham, was at Tullahogue where ‘about 300 Scots had assembled in arms’. When Boine appealed to them to join forces with their English neighbours to recover their goods that had been stolen, the Scots responded they ‘had no warrant for it’, and were unmoved by Boine’s assertion that he ‘had rather fall into the hands of a merciful prince.

28 Markham ‘A Note of What Passages’ (TCD, MS 839, fos. 17–23).
than into the hands of unmerciful tyrants’. Instead of following his advice, the Scots preferred to parley with Sir Phelim O’Neill. Worse still, when Boine sought to negotiate with Robert Stewart, brother to Lord Castletewart, for safe keeping for some goods that his wife had brought to Castletewart, the only satisfaction he received from Robert Stewart, who had been ‘drinking at Mountjoy with the rebels’, was to be told that he had a ‘warrant’ from the rebels ‘to apprehend any of the Irish that should be found pillering and stealing thereabouts’. Otherwise, Stewart wished to clear the castle of all English people and their goods lest the rebels burn it down ‘for harbouring the English in it’. Thus, with no assurance that he could rely on his lord and patron for protection, and fearing for his life, Boine abandoned his wife and children, and ‘was forced to change his garments and fled away disguised [presumably as a Scotsman] accompanied with his brother, and a school-master that taught his children’, making their way to Scotland, and thence ‘into Yorkshire to their friends’. 29

The case against the Scots for cowardice, or complicity, that hindered the presentation of a common British front against the enemy would be complete were it not for two awkward considerations. First, landowners who proved reluctant to oppose the rebels were not invariably Scots. Robert Waring was especially proud of how he and his neighbours at Magherafelt had defended themselves against the initial assault, with but sixteen weapons ‘muskets, fowling pieces, and bird pieces’. However, he complained bitterly of the reluctance of his countryman Henry Conway, Esq., to then admit them to his castle at Vintnerstown where, in the opinion of Waring, they would have been able to withstand a siege. Instead, Conway, having ‘a grand Papist to his older brother’, surrendered his castle to the enemy and left the helpless settlers to make their way to Carrickfergus. In this, Conway compared poorly with Captains Rowley and Canning, also English proprietors in the Londonderry plantation, who favoured making a stand against the enemy, but it was the pusillanimity of Conway which prevailed and so the opportunity was lost whereby the rebels could have ‘been repressed and subdued and the greatest part of the north of Ireland saved’. 30

Relatively few such cases of indecisiveness on the part of the English were reported, but other inconvenient testimony which makes it difficult to generalize about the failure of the settlers to take common action is the repeated assertions that many of the Scots, in different parts of Ulster, not only refrained from protecting the English from attack but actually assisted the Irish in attacking them. Some English deponents believed that this complicity extended to the highest level, and that Sir Phelim O’Neill would never have ‘undertaken the province of Ulster’ were it not that he had previous assur-

29 Deposition of Henry Boine, clerk (TCD, MS 839, fo. 1).
30 Deposition of Robert Waring (TCD, MS 839, fos. 108–11).
ance that Randal Mac Donnell, the earl of Antrim, would join him. Those who were of this opinion convinced themselves that the only reason why Antrim had refrained from showing his true colours was because ‘the business was already spoiled, especially in Ulster, by bloodshed and robbery’. They believed they had good reason to distrust Antrim not only because he was Catholic and a grandson of the earl of Tyrone, but also because his half-sister, ‘a most bloody woman and natural daughter of the late earl of Antrim’, was married to Sir Phelim’s brother, Turlough O’Neill. This woman was alleged to have boasted that both Antrim and Alexander Mac Donnell, her other half-brother, had been involved in conspiracies to take Dublin and Carrickfergus castles.31

While the English could thus speculate about the loyalty of individual leaders within the Scottish settler community, they had plenty of reason to doubt the ordinary Scottish settlers. As Henry Maxwell, chancellor of St Saviour’s in County Antrim, identified those he had seen in arms against the English he included James McConnell, Bt., James Mac Donnell, Esq., John Stewart of Glanarme, gent., and Alexander Roe Stewart ‘all from County Antrim’. Similarly in County Donegal, Christopher Parmenter was told ‘by Scots as well as Irish’ that ‘they would not hurt or intermeddle with any of the Scots, therefore the Scots did not partake with nor assist the English, but suffered them to be robbed, stripped, and slain in their presence’. Worse still, Parmenter reported of ‘a young Scotsman by name John that had formerly been servant to Mr James Stewart’ who had ‘confessed’ to him that ‘he himself for one helped and joined with the Irish rebels in robbing the English, and got some silver plate and several other things from the English that the Irish afterwards took from him again’.

When Edward Denman of Belturbet in County Cavan enquired of the rebels why ‘they did not meddle with the Scots’ he was told that ‘the Scots did join with them’, and his worst fears would have been borne out by the testimony of Christopher Means from Butlersbridge in the same county that his servant Archie Elliott, a Scotsman, had become a rebel. Generally in County Cavan, as one deponent testified, the Scots ‘sat still and suffered the English to be robbed, spoiled, and some murdered, and none of them did side or partake with them’, and this same deponent contended that in County Fermanagh the Scots ‘hated’ the English so much that they surrendered English refugees to the rebels’. From County Fermanagh itself, one English deponent was able to identify Ambrose Carlton ‘a Protestant and Scotsman’ who had joined the rebels, while Elizabeth Coates was able to testify more specifically that on 25 October, as the English settlers in the vicinity of Newtown Butler were sheltering in the church of the town, she had seen

31 Deposition of Dr Robert Maxwell [TCD, MS 809, fos. 5–12]; on Antrim generally see Jane Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The Career of Randal Mac Donnell, Marquis of Antrim, 1609–83 (Cambridge, 1993).
‘Lieutenant William Graham of Lisnamellett, Ambrose Carlton, a kinsman of Graham, Archibald Johnson, son-in-law to Graham, Arthur Graham, brother to Graham, and two of his sons Edmund and Francis’ all in the company of Rory Maguire, ‘neither aiding nor advising’ the settlers but passing ‘to and fro in the company of rebels without any malefaction or harm’. Even more disconcerting for Coates was the sight, or perhaps the sound, of ‘David Little of Balle Balfour, piper, who played upon his pipes before the said Irish rebels when they took the church at Newtown from the English Protestants’. Finally as Anthony Stephens, who had served under Sir John Borlase at Coleraine both before and after the rebellion, bewailed the loss of life he had witnessed in that area, he attributed it not only to ‘the subtle persuasion’ of the Irish in convincing the Scots that no harm would come to them but also to the way in which this ‘complied and agreed’ with ‘the covetousness of the Scots [who] therefore suffered the Irish to spoil and destroy the English wholly and neither preserved nor any way rescued them from any thing the deponent could perceive’.

When all such statements, which could be multiplied, are considered together it seems inescapable that what the English deponents were admitting was that the two settler populations in Ulster had never merged to form one British Protestant community, and that some of the Scots found, at the moment of crisis, that they had more in common with their Irish than their English neighbours in Ulster, especially when they were encouraged to think so by the leaders of the insurrection. This would have been especially true of Scots who were still Catholic, or of those who had not been fully integrated into Protestant spirituality at the point of their migration. However, a more important consideration may have been that Scots, whether highlanders or lowlanders, Catholic or Protestant, were accustomed to functioning within a lineage culture similar to that which was gasping to survive on the estates in Ulster that remained in native ownership. It was such a society, as was emphasized in Chapter 4, that Scottish proprietors had been attempting to translate from Scotland into Ulster, and the agricultural and trading practices of the Scots in Ulster may also have been more akin to those traditionally pursued by the Gaelic population of Ulster than those being promoted by the English settlers. The cultivation of a more intensive Protestantism among the Scottish population in Ulster that was pursued by Calvinist missionaries from Scotland may have done something to halt the possible mingling of the Scottish and Irish populations, but this brought only exceptional English planters such as Sir John Clotworthy closer to the Scots. In any event, such

32 Deposition of Henry Maxwell (TCD, MS 836, fo. 118); deposition of Christopher Parmenter (TCD, MS 839, fo. 136); deposition of Edward Denman (TCD, MS 832, fo. 222); deposition of Christopher Means (TCD, MS 833, fo. 176); deposition of Richard Parsons (TCD, MS 833, fo. 275); deposition of James Tetherington (TCD, MS 835, fo. 177); deposition of Elizabeth Coates (TCD, MS 835, fo. 91); deposition of Anthony Stephens (TCD, MS 834, fo. 41).
work of consolidation would have been undone because those Scots, and especially their clergy, who had been to the fore in this work of evangelization had been expelled from Ulster, at Wentworth’s insistence, in the years immediately preceding the insurrection.

There were, of course, at the moment of conflict, individual Scottish planters, notably Sir William Stewart of Newtownstewart, knight and baronet and member of the Privy Council of Ireland, to the fore in attempting to maintain order and in exposing as ‘forged and counterfeit’ the supposed royal commission for the action. Most Scots in Ulster, including Scottish planters, must, however, have derived some grim satisfaction from witnessing the humiliation of the English who had, for half a century, treated them as, at best, secondary participants in a supposedly common plantation effort. Perhaps the ultimate proof of the haughty disdain with which the English continued to regard the Scots was that those English clergy in Dublin who compiled the depositions concerning the revolt described Scottish and Irish (and on a few occasions even Welsh) Protestants by their nationality, and reserved the generic description British, which was to have been the hallmark of the plantation sponsored by King James, for those deponents who were of English birth. All of these factors suggest that Sir Phelim O’Neill had reasonable grounds on which to expect support from the Scots in Ulster provided he could assure them of their security, and there was probably more behind his attempt to distinguish between the two settler populations than, as one deponent put it, the application of that ‘Machiavellian proverb divida et regna’.

The possibility of actually winning support from the Scots was defeated by the third stratagem Sir Phelim deployed to uphold his authority. This was his effort to extend the scope of the insurrection by force. Military encounters such as the siege of Armagh which he was able to take without difficulty, and the siege of Drogheda which proved beyond his capacity, were certain to involve loss of life and calls for revenge on both sides. Worse still were reverses in the open field, and as information seeped out that the lords in Ulster had risen alone and that Dublin Castle was securely in government hands this quickly eroded the expectation that the world would be theirs without a blow being struck. The consequence of this was dramatic. John Kerdiff testified that after the reverse at Augher, in which, as was noted, Scots settlers joined with the English, the insurgents became ‘like so many bears robbed of their whelps’, and thereafter showed no restraint against either Scots or English. At this point Sir Phelim himself was said to have become directly involved in plundering the countryside about Dungannon ‘and styled

33 Deposition of Sir William Stewart (TCD, MS 839, fo. 45); Francis Sacheverell in his deposition (TCD, MS 836, fo. 107) suggested that the rebels drew a distinction between ‘English, Scottish and Welsh’.

34 Deposition of Richard Parsons (TCD, MS 833, fo. 275).
himself Phelim Totan [Féilim na dóiteáin] which being interpreted burning or smoking Phelim’, and his campaign of destruction was later extended by him to ‘Strabane and all the Londoners plantations’.35

Even as he destroyed the plantations, Sir Phelim O’Neill constructed ever more elaborate justifications for his actions. In a last-ditch effort to bring the Scots back into line he proclaimed that he had a commission for his actions ‘not only from most of the chief of the nobility of this kingdom but also from his Majesty . . . [and] also letters to that purpose from the earl of Argyll. And that these instructions were only for the liberty of their religion and for the recovery of those lands which should appear by the law of the land to be unjustly held from them, and for the king’s prerogative.’ Then also, in a desperate attempt to reinforce their claim to be acting within the constitution, ‘there were certain reports spread among them that the king was beheaded in Scotland’.36

These attempts by Sir Phelim O’Neill to divide the settlers were futile because, as they took cognizance of the fact that Dublin remained in government hands and that their position was therefore retrievable, they began to mobilize themselves more effectively, and to present stout resistance to the insurgents, even within Ulster. Then, as insurgent reverses mounted, so did the authority of Sir Phelim O’Neill decline even further to the point where he could do nothing to prevent the revenge killings of defenceless civilians which were to become the most enduring memory of 1641 on the Protestant side. While not seeking to minimize these actions, it must be recorded that they were not as numerous, or on as large a scale, as was implied in the propaganda literature that became the principal source of historical ‘memory’ on the Protestant side. Therefore, what is being attempted here is to distinguish myth from reality.

In central Ulster, where the insurrection had begun, the most gruesome atrocities that can be reconstituted from the depositions are two in number—the deliberate drowning of a group of Protestants at the bridge over the river Bann at Portadown, and the calculated burning of Protestant refugees in a thatched cottage in the parish of Kilmore. These were recognized by Protestants to have been in revenge for the first Protestant victory in this area, at Lisnegarvy (now part of Lisburn) where the settlers succeeded not only in defending themselves, but, as one participant reported with justifiable exaggeration, in killing 700 of their Irish assailants. The bloody-mindedness of the settlers in thus taking revenge when they gained the upper hand in battle seems to have made such a deep impression on the insurgents that, as one deponent put it, ‘the slaughter of the English’ could be dated from that encounter.37

35 Deposition of John Kerdiff (TCD, MS 839, fo. 2); deposition of Captain John Perkin (TCD, MS 839, fos. 40–4); the word dóiteáin means literally conflagration.
36 Deposition of John Kerdiff (TCD, MS 839, fo. 2).
37 Deposition of Thomas Tuckes (TCD, MS 836, fo. 16); my conclusion, first published in 1991,
According to William Clarke, whose account of the episode at Portadown is the most credible, about 100 Protestants (including women and children) from the nearby parish of Loughgall who were already prisoners then suffered repeated tortures, such as ‘strangling and half hanging’. Afterwards they were ‘driven like hogs’ 6 miles to the river Bann, with the rebels ‘pecking them to go fast with swords and pikes thrusting them into their sides’. Three, including William Fallerto, the minister of Loughgall parish, had already been murdered by the time they reached the river at Portadown where the remainder were stripped naked and were forced with pikes and swords onto the bridge ‘which was cut down in the midst’. Thus they were thrust headlong into the water, and those who sought to save themselves by swimming were shot in the water by the rebels. All, according to Clarke, were killed except for himself who promised to show them where he had hidden £15, ‘for which money’s sake they had promised [him] many kindnesses’ that they subsequently failed to fulfil, and it was only ‘by the providence of God’ that he escaped and remained as the sole living witness to the atrocity.38

The incident in Kilmore parish, ‘about Candlemas’ 1642, also involved prisoners, some from the locality and ‘the rest were such strangers of English and Scots as the rebels had driven and brought into the town that night and the day before’. This group had been detained in a thatched cottage which was set alight by ‘the means and instigation’ of Jane Hampson, the wife of the settler Henry Hampson of Legacory, and herself ‘formerly a Protestant’, but, as one deponent put it, she was ‘really a mere Irish woman and lately turned to Mass’, who by her actions proved herself ‘a bloody virago’ and the ‘most forward and cruellest rebel’. When requested on bended knees by ten of her victims, that they should be ‘knocked on the head rather than be burned’, Hampson remained ‘resolute . . . that . . . she would be a blacksmith among them’. Thus all were burned in the conflagration except Margaret Clarke and Ann Smith who, having escaped through a hole in the wall, were struck on the head and left for dead by the rebels but ‘God Almighty gave them opportunity and so much ability as to fly and escape away’.39

Other atrocities of this kind, notably the drowning of a group of Protestants, estimated in numbers ranging from thirty to fifty, in the river Blackwater at Belturbet, County Cavan, and the drowning of an estimated fifty people in Henry Spottsood’s lake in County Monaghan, were reported in the depositions. While accepting that some such atrocities did occur in various parts of Ulster, there exists no first-hand reportage of them equal to the testimony of William Clarke and Margaret Clarke. It appears that the principal loss of

38 Deposition of William Clarke (TCD, MS 896, fos. 2–3).
39 Examination of Margaret Clarke (TCD, MS 896, fo. 35); deposition of Joan Constable (TCD, MS 896, fo. 87).
life that happened at this stage was due to open military conflict or to mortality associated with prolonged sieges, with the burial in a pit of those who died from disease at Coleraine being likened to the ‘making or the packing up of herrings’.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore the principal significance of the atrocities at the time was that they further demonstrated how the authority of Sir Phelim O’Neill had been totally eclipsed, and what was designed to be a stage-managed movement lapsed into bloody chaos, with even Phelim O’Neill’s own brother Turlough reported to have disobeyed orders when he engaged with Manus O’Cahan in the revenge ‘murders’ of Protestant settlers who were being herded northwards from central Ulster towards Coleraine after the insurgents had failed to take Drogheda by siege.\textsuperscript{41}

At this juncture, as the insurrection was serving no purpose beyond providing licence for wholesale freebooting and the settling of local scores, the actions of the insurgents were frequently accompanied by tortures that bore no relation to any possible gain. Anne Underwood of Cavan town made the mistake of hiding ‘some money in the hair of her head’ and the rebels searching for it ‘pulled almost all the hair off her head’, while they tied Jane Dowkes by the hair of her ‘head to a table frame’ which they then drew until she revealed the whereabouts of her husband’s money. The strictures against attacking Scots no longer carried any weight and the depositions from County Monaghan not only make frequent mention of the killing of several Scotsmen, but at Glasslough the wives of all the Scotsmen of the town were stripped by the rebels in their search for money. The political rationalizations for the rising that Sir Phelim O’Neill had so carefully crafted were also now recast by his leaderless followers to the point where they became a parody of the original. Art Mac Mahon proclaimed in Monaghan that all who spoke English should pay a fine of 10 shillings to the king, but when he was asked which king had issued this decree he pronounced, ‘what other king but the earl of Tyrone’, and others pronounced that the ‘king was dead, and that the young king went to Mass, and that they were the Queen’s soldiers, and no more traitors’. Another insurgent professed that ‘the king writ himself King of Misrule, and had given them commission to do what they did’, while Jane Constable reported of those who professed ‘that they cared not a fart for the king and his laws’. In the light of such statements it surprised nobody to see some rebels thrust pikes into the royal arms in the church at Belturbet and tread them into the ground.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} The incident at Monaghan was mentioned in the deposition of Henry Bradley (TCD, MS 834, fo. 173); that at Belturbet was mentioned in several depositions, for example, those of Marmaduke Bateman (TCD, MS 833, fo. 213), Audrey Carrington (TCD, MS 833, fo. 282), and Joan Woods (TCD, MS 832, fo. 166b); on spectacular loss of life resulting from siege warfare at Coleraine see deposition of John Martin (TCD, MS 839, fo. 100); deposition of Anthony Stephens (TCD, MS 831, fo. 41).

\textsuperscript{41} Deposition of Captain John Perkin (TCD, MS 839, fos. 40–4).

\textsuperscript{42} Deposition of Jane Taylor (TCD, MS 833, fo. 67); deposition of Jane Dowkes (TCD, MS 832, fo. 134b); deposition of Robert Browne (TCD, MS 834, fo. 109); deposition of John Perkin (TCD,
Even as they mocked the king, and by their actions ridiculed Sir Phelim O’Neill’s profession that he had risen in support of the monarch against his British and Irish adversaries, some insurgents still made much of the possibility of bringing the rebellion to England and joining up with Catholics there in support of King Charles. As they did so they, unlike Sir Phelim O’Neill, displayed a profound ignorance of England with one insurgent enquiring ‘what manner of country England was, whether it was a plain champion country, or a mountainous hilly country and whether it was better than Ireland or noe’. Also while assuming that considerable support would be forthcoming from their co-religionists in England the rebels began to display ambivalence towards their fellow Catholics in Ireland, and especially after the siege of Drogheda, when support from the Old English was not as fulsome as they had expected. Then the insurgents began to revile the population of the Pale as ‘you churles with great breeches . . . you all are of the one race with the other English though we make use of you for the moment’, and they could justify pillaging within the Pale on the grounds that ‘it were better that they (meaning the meere northern Irish) should have it than any stinking English churles with great breeches’.

Such outbursts reveal the strident anti-Englishness that was made manifest at this stage of the insurrection not only with exception being taken to the speaking of the English language, but a resolution being made that they ‘would destroy all records and monuments of English rule’ and would even change the names of places, with Virginia in County Cavan reverting to its original Aghanure. Reservation was also expressed over the wearing of English attire, with many insurgents professing that they ‘so much hated the English and their fashions in clothes that they resolved, after the Irish had gotten the victory, all the women in Ireland should, as formerly, go only in smocks, mantles and brogues, as well ladies as others and the English fashions quite abandoned’. This antipathy did not, however, prevent the insurgents from making use of English attire to symbolize the inversion of the world which they were promoting. Thus the Scotsman Major William Burley had learnt from his servants, who had remained behind, that as his residence in County Down was being occupied, the wife of the rebel captain had looted the chamber, had seized on his own wife’s wardrobe, had ‘attired and dressed herself in the best of that apparel, and [then had gone] down into the parlour, called for strong beer . . . and drank a confusion to the English dogs, and being set at the upper end of the table in a chair asked the people that her apparel and place did not become her as well as Mrs Burley’. 43

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43 Deposition of Francis Sacheverell (TCD, MS 836, fo. 107); deposition of Ambrose Bedell (TCD, MS 833, fo. 105); deposition of Richard Parsons (TCD, MS 833, fo. 275); deposition of George Creichton (TCD, MS 833, fo. 227–42); deposition of Elizabeth Pierce (TCD, MS 837, fo. 11); deposition of Major William Burley (TCD, MS 837, fo. 29).
Turning the world upside down, had, of course, never been the objective of Sir Phelim O’Neill or the other Catholic landowners in Ulster who supported him. Neither had this been the objective of the Catholic clergy of the province who had played such an active and visible role in the insurrection from the outset that some deponents were given to attributing every evil that befell them to priestly, if not papal, influence. The involvement of the clergy in the revolt is in itself proof that they were unhappy with the nature of the religious toleration for Catholics that had been permitted in Ireland by the government of King Charles I, and they may also have been less than content with the position for the Catholic Church in Ireland that Catholic lay leaders in Ireland had been negotiating with the crown to the very eve of the 1641 insurrection. Many of the priests and all of their bishops had, after all, been exposed to the doctrines, and the expectations, of post-Tridentine Catholicism in the seminaries they had attended on the Continent and in their subsequent pastoral work there they would have seen the splendour of Catholicism when it was supported by state power. No convinced Catholic with such experiences could have been happy with the clandestine Catholicism which was all that had been permitted in Ireland during the reign of King Charles I, and which is that for which the various delegations, representing Catholic landed and commercial interests, had been seeking formal acceptance from the government during their negotiations of the two previous decades. This, if they had looked logically at Charles’s position as Protestant monarch, was the most that he could have conceded, if he wished to retain the allegiance of his Protestant subjects in all his jurisdictions. Logic, however, would have been considered a poor guide by the priests in Ulster who, if they had been consulted previous to the first show of force, would probably have insisted upon Sir Phelim O’Neill and his associates winning toleration for Catholicism as a publicly professed religion enjoying equal rights with official Protestantism.44

While any insistence on this level of religious toleration would have placed the clergy in the position of revolutionaries, this does not mean that they supported the collapse of order that had occurred during the course of the insurrection. On the contrary, despite occasional mention in the depositions of individual priests egging on the insurgents to ever more dastardly acts, the more reflective deponents noted that priests played a generally directive and moderating role in the insurrection. Joan Constable, for example, mentioned that while many of the rebels had exulted in the atrocity perpetrated by Jane

44 There is no evidence that O’Neill consulted with the Catholic clergy before he took action but many Protestant deponents, and subsequent propagandists, believed that the clergy had given prior consent at a synod in Multyfarnham, County Westmeath, in October 1641. Lecky accepted that such an assembly took place and he believed that priests were undoubtedly ‘connected’ with the fomenting of the insurrection and ‘were sometimes associated with its worst crimes’, but, presumably as a rationalist, he expressed surprise at ‘the small amount of real religious fanaticism displayed by the Irish in the contest’; Lecky, *History*, i. 95–6.
Hampson, in her ‘hearing’ one O’Corr, a ‘dignitary priest’, upbraided them for their cruelty and pronounced that ‘without doubt, God cried out for vengeance against them, and that neither corn nor grass would ever grow nor anything prosper where they did any of these bloody acts’. Several deponents also attributed their survival to the intervention of particular priests who had saved them from undisciplined captains, or to priests who had provided them with sustenance after they had escaped from danger, even if at the price of having their Bibles and prayer books destroyed as heretical works, and being told it was not fitting that people should know the Bible by rote.45

Such references are in themselves valuable because they identify the Catholic clergy as wishing to rid their community of Protestant religious worship, which they regarded as a malign presence, rather than of Protestant people who might be persuaded to convert to Catholicism. This would explain their concern to protect British people from murder and robbery until they had first been given the opportunity to ‘turn to Mass’, and where they refused to convert they would have had them escape with their lives and some dignity. This also explains the energies of priests in directing the venom of the insurgents against the symbols of Protestantism rather than against Protestant persons. This role of priests as directors of the insurgency both by word and deed became more conspicuous as the influence of the initial protagonists waned. Those who assumed this leadership role adopted a universalist view which mingled theological with constitutional arguments, but which could quickly descend from lofty generalities to the particularities of Ulster, to the dismay of the settlers they were purporting to protect. In County Monaghan one priest ‘very furiously inveighed against Henry the VIII, and Calvin and Luther and said their damned heresies . . . with the Puritan faction of the Parliament of England had set all Christendom on fire, but that the Pope, the Emperor, the French King, the King of Spain and other Catholic princes would join and root out all the Protestants in Europe’, and he predicted that in England ‘Protestants’ would ‘join with the Papists against the Puritans’. Like the secular leaders, the clergy claimed that theirs was a pre-emptive strike to save them from the persecution of Catholicism already decided upon by the English parliament, and priests were also greatly taken by the precedent set by the Scottish Covenanters, saying ‘why may not we as well and better fight for religion which is of substance than the Scots did for ceremonies (which are but shadows)’.46

Such endorsements of the original justification for revolt did not offer any solace to the settlers, and while on one level priestly intervention could save

45 Deposition of Joan Constable (TCD, MS 836, fo. 87); deposition of John Wisdom (TCD, MS 836, fo. 14); deposition of John Kerdiff (TCD, MS 839, fo. 2); deposition of Roger Holland (TCD, MS 834, fos. 117–19).

46 Deposition of Arthur Culme (TCD, MS 833, fo. 127); deposition of Dr Robert Maxwell (TCD, MS 809, fos. 5–12).
the lives of individual settlers it could also compound their sorrows and provide fresh justifications for their actions to those who were already out of control. Thus, in County Cavan, it must have caused grave offence to an already shattered people when the clergy would not permit the burial ‘in the church or churchyard’ of the bodies of some Scotsmen who had been killed in the vicinity; it would have proven hurtful to see the pulpits and furnishings of their churches destroyed; and it would have outraged any Protestant to see bibles and prayer books desecrated, and to have pages of their bibles which had been soaked in dirty water ‘duffed’ in their faces ‘saying come I know you love a good lesson . . . and come tomorrow and you shall have as good a sermon as this’.47

The fine distinctions that were drawn by the clergy between an assault upon Protestant objects and that upon Protestant persons were frequently lost on their victims, who interpreted these symbolic attacks to mean that the revolt had been religiously inspired. This impression was further consolidated in their minds because as the insurrection lost its purpose only religious legitimizations seemed to make any sense for the insurgents, who emphasized the Catholic dimension to the point where they represented every action, however cruel, as part of a greater purpose to eradicate Protestants as well as Protestantism from Ireland. One deponent reported that it had been put to him by his assailants that ‘all that we do is for religion; we rise for our religion.’

Presumably, the clergy and the initial leaders of the revolt abhorred the profanity of using religious arguments to justify base purposes, but this provided scant consolation to Protestant settlers. They were confronted by such pronouncements as that ‘it was no more pity to kill English than to kill dogs, calling the English heretics and saying they were God’s enemies . . . [and] saying further what right have the English in Ireland to do anything here? They have been here long enough and that the king was no king for the Parliament would not suffer him to do anything—no more than one of them could do.’ Those insurgents who adopted such an extreme position were further convinced that none but ‘were christened at Mass were Christians’, and that those English who died in the conflict would go to hell, but any of themselves who were killed in action ‘their souls would go to God’. Pursuant on this belief the rebels took to burying their English victims face downwards so ‘they might have a prospect and sight of Hell only, and therefore when they killed any of [them] they used always these words Ainm a Dwell [d’anam don Diabhal], which is thy soul to the Devil’. From there it was but a short step to pronouncing that the sequence of events had been foreordained, and some clergy were said to have made reference to the prophecies

47 Deposition of William Mardoghe (TCD, MS 833, fo. 175); deposition of Adam Glover (TCD, MS 833, fo. 1).
of popular Irish saints to present assurance that victory would be theirs, and one priest, who was credited with providing sustenance to Ulster refugees once they had arrived in the Pale, was said to have had a copy of ‘Hanmer’s Chronicle out of which they animated the rebels with the story of the Danes discomfiture by the Irish (though the most part unarmed) and paralleled the history with these times’. 48

While it seemed to the deponents that the clergy in Ulster came forward as leaders of the insurrection once Sir Phelim O’Neill and his associates had failed at that task, it is probable that the clergy would have seen any ascendancy which they attained as but transitional until the return from the Continent of those exiles who had captained the Irish regiments in the Spanish army. It is not possible to determine when precisely it was agreed in Ulster to call upon these trained fighting men to come to their aid, but many of the deponents believed that the decision had been taken in advance, and that the clergy who moved with regularity between Ireland and the Continent were the vital conduits of information and encouragement. This retrieval of what happened conforms with the evidence that has been gleaned from continental sources. It should also be borne in mind that the parallel with the Scottish Covenanter would not have made sense unless it had involved recalling fighting men from continental service. What is surprising is that those deponents, most of them prisoners, who were still in Ulster when Owen Roe O’Neill reached the province in July 1642 welcomed him if not as deliverer, at least as somebody who commanded respect ‘from the meanest to the greatest’. Captain John Perkin, aged 73 years and a veteran of the previous war, knew Owen Roe by his lineage, referring to him gratefully as ‘Owen Mac Art Mac a Barane O’Neill’ who, on his arrival in Ireland, had intervened to save Perkin from hanging. However the high standing that Owen Roe O’Neill enjoyed among the deponents was explained principally because he was considered equal with ‘General Lesley and Major Monroe they being both brave soldiers of his acquaintance’, and because he, unlike Sir Phelim O’Neill, was able to establish order and discipline over the rabble that had been involved in the insurrection up to the time of his return to Ulster. Several deponents reported with some satisfaction that they had seen Owen Roe reprimand Sir Phelim O’Neill for the maltreatment of the settlers that had been permitted while he had ostensibly been in charge, and their reportage coincides with the opinions of Owen Roe himself on the condition of the insurgents in Ulster at the moment of his return from the Continent. 49

48 Deposition of Faithfull Teate (TCD, MS 823, fo. 64); deposition of Margaret Bromley (TCD, MS 836, fo. 40); deposition of Bridget Drewrie (TCD, MS 836, fo. 46); deposition of Richard Bourke (TCD, MS 835, fo. 298); deposition of Dr Robert Maxwell (TCD, MS 899, fos. 5–12); deposition of John Kerdiff (TCD, MS 899, fo. 2).

49 Deposition of Captain John Perkin (TCD, MS 839, fo. 40–43); deposition of Francis Sacheverall (TCD, MS 836, fo. 107); examination of William Fitzgerald (TCD, MS 836, fo. 82); Jerrold I. Casway, Owen Roe O’Neill and the Struggle for Catholic Ireland (Philadelphia, 1984), 55–83, esp. pp. 64–6..
O'Neill as somebody who would enforce the rules of war, in so far as these had been defined in the seventeenth century. By doing so they were, in effect, admitting that the rising in Ulster had run its course and that the recovery of the Protestant position could be achieved only through formal warfare against the army commanded by Owen Roe O'Neill.

8.3. THE RISING IN CONNACHT AND CLARE IN 1641

If the characteristic of the insurrection, as it unfolded in Ulster, is its uniformity, the uprising west of the river Shannon was characterized by diversity. The first disturbance occurred in County Leitrim and the justifications for this uprising conformed so closely to those articulated in Ulster that it seems reasonable to suppose that the various members of the O’Rourke and Reynolds (or McGranald) families who emerged as leaders had been party to the plot that had been instigated by the dissatisfied Ulster lords. This suggestion is further supported by the fact that the first target of attack in Leitrim was the ironworks of Sir Charles Coote that straddled the border area of Counties Leitrim and Cavan; Colonel Owen O'Rourke and Con O'Rourke, ‘by direction of Captain Rory Maguire’, robbed about eighty English at the ironworks who then fled to Jamestown fort in County Cavan. Then various members of the Mac Gowran sept from the vicinity of Belturbet in County Cavan participated with the O'Rourkes in mobilizing the rebel force, estimated variously by the deponents as 100 to 200 strong. This force quickly took control of County Leitrim except the areas closest to forts, notably Newtownhamilton, which was defended aggressively by Sir Frederick Hamilton. In Leitrim also, Kilmore House, occupied by Mrs King, widow to the previous bishop of Elphin, was, after the manner of Ulster, captured by a trick.50

Although imitative of the Ulster revolt, the insurrection in County Leitrim was not a carbon copy of it, since it becomes clear from the surviving depositions that the settlers were summarily cast off their lands by the rebel companies which swept through the county between 23 October and 2 November 1641 even when the leaders of these bands claimed to be acting on the king’s behalf. Moreover, the commission which they purported to hold from the king was ‘to rob all the English but not the Scots or the Irish’, or, more specifically, ‘to take all the English men’s goods, but not to take away any man’s life nor meddle with any Scotchman’. This authority had been given to them, they said, because ‘they had rebelled in England and crowned a new king and intended to take the king prisoner’. During the first days, and certainly until 25 October, Charles O’Rourke, like his counterparts in

50 Deposition of Andrew Adaire (TCD, MS 831, fos. 174–8); deposition of John Winder (TCD, MS 831, fo. 17); deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48); deposition of Nicholas Ward (TCD, MS 831, fo. 18).
Ulster, was boasting that Dublin Castle was taken, and he also, in a statement that was echoed by several insurgents, claimed authority under the king’s broad seal ‘to take all the English men’s goods and send them away, and that within eight days the said English were to depart for England or lose their lives’. When challenged to provide proof of his authority, he, unlike the several leaders in Ulster, produced no parchment bearing a seal, but stated rather that he would show authority ‘but to his betters’. Other deponents were told by other captains of rebel bands that ‘it was not a time . . . to question authority now’, and when Elizabeth Vawse, widow of the vicar of Carrigallen, challenged the rebels to show proof of their authority they inquired of her who had sent her there, and when she replied ‘God and the King’, she was advised, ‘let your king fetch you out again.’ Some of the insurgents seemed to imply that what they sought was the restoration of a natural order that had been upset by the plantations. Therefore they directed the English Protestants to ‘hast into England else they should all be slain, saying further that all the English must into England, the Scots into Scotland, and the Irish must be in Ireland’.51

The other striking feature of the insurrection in Leitrim is that it appears to have enjoyed support from all the Catholic ruling elite and from a broad spread of the native population. Leonard Morton, having been clerk of the peace for the county for twenty years, testified that he knew ‘the Irish gentry, freeholders and the most of the men of value’, and that all were papists and rebels. Others made specific mention of individuals who had been captains under the lord president of Connacht but who now turned their arms against the state to become leaders in the insurrection.52

The Catholic landowners of Leitrim thus reflected the popular mood in their county, more than did their counterparts in the Ulster counties, when they led an onslaught against the settler community from the outset. Heleanor Adshed mentioned that all the natives of Carrigallen were participants in the uprising, while James Stevenson was of the opinion that all the natives of the county ‘except such as lived in the garrisons of Jamestown, Drumruske, Manorhamilton and Newtown[hamilton]’ were actively engaged in the insurrection. Then there are also references to some English, and Scots, as well as the Welshman Owen Rolland ap Robert, who betrayed their religion and joined forces with the rebels.53

Catholics in County Leitrim seem to have been agreed on what purpose the insurrection should serve because the outstanding grievance of plantation, as

51 Deposition of John Browne (TCD, MS 831, fo. 25); deposition of Thomas Lewes (TCD, MS 831, fo. 20); deposition of Elizabeth Vawse (TCD, MS 831, fo. 19); deposition of Mary Carr (TCD, MS 831, fo. 98).
52 Deposition of Leonard Morton (TCD, MS 831, fo. 46); deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48).
53 Deposition of Heleanor Adshed (TCD, MS 831, fo. 33); deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48); deposition of Ann Read (TCD, MS 831, fo. 40).
well as the wrongs which the O’Rourke family had suffered at the hands of the state, was still fresh in people’s minds. This is suggested by the garbled political message conveyed to Thomas Lewes by Tirlah Mac Phelim O’Rourke on 18 October—five days before the commencement of the insurrection—‘that the king had given unto our O’Rourke, a prisoner beyond the seas, the whole county of Leitrim, and if they could not get the county they would try hard for the barony’. While bitterness over past wrongs ran deep, it appears that some strong-arm tactics were used to ensure full communal support. James Stevenson contended that the insurgents had established rebel juries and appointed justices of the peace at the beginning of the insurrection, and ‘if they went to church or (being Irish) joined with us it was a cause and matter sufficient for death’. The same witness identified Thomas McGranald as one such who was hanged ‘notwithstanding he was of their own nation, but he went to Protestant church, and had lived amongst the English’. Some of those who would have remained loyal were also compelled to join the insur- gency, and here specific reference was made to Philip Mulmore O’Reilly, admittedly from neighbouring County Cavan, who had been ‘kind to the robbed and spoiled English and relieved them very much’ but for his pains was called ‘an English churl according to the Irish (bodogh Sasonogh [bodach Sasanach])’ and was ultimately intimidated into maintaining rebel troops.54

A few deponents listed those from the Leitrim settler community whom they had seen hanged, or believed to have been hanged, by the rebels, and there are a few references to Leitrim settlers having been included in the alleged drowning of Protestants at Belturbet. Many deponents mentioned that they themselves had been ‘stripped’ sometimes ‘stark naked’, but they sometimes acknowledged that these stranglings had been perpetrated by people unknown to them, or after they were already on the road to Dublin or some other place of refuge, rather than at the moment when they were expelled from their houses. Much of what has been quoted will indicate that there was a religious dimension to the uprising in County Leitrim, and several of the deponents identified Catholic priests, and even one Mac Sweeney ‘titulary bishop of Kilmore’, among those who attacked them, while several deponents mentioned that they were forced to choose between retaining their property, or even their lives, and going to mass. When due allowance is made for all such references, however, it does not disturb the general conclusion that the resentment which provoked a disturbance in County Leitrim concerned the recent plantation, and while local leaders may have conspired with the Ulster lords to plot a revolt, their concern, and that of the wider Catholic community, was to bundle the settler population out of the county as expeditiously as possible.55

54 Deposition of Thomas Lewes (TCD, MS 831, fo. 20); deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48); deposition of Ann Read (TCD, MS 831, fo. 40).
55 Deposition of George Gomie (TCD, MS 831, fo. 34).
In this respect what happened in Leitrim was in sharp contrast to developments in the other counties of Connacht, and in County Clare, all of which, except Roscommon, had but a thin spread of British settlement, and where plantation was a threat rather than an actuality. These counties, of course, were not fully insulated from what was happening elsewhere, and some insurgents from County Roscommon took part with those who were in arms in Leitrim and ‘molested and tyrannized over the Protestants at Jamestown and Drumrusky’, while there were some ‘loose’ men in every county of Connacht, as in all other provinces, who took advantage of the collapse in public order to rob the Protestant settlers in their midst. Some native proprietors in each county worked in close co-operation with settler landowners and agents of the president of Connacht to maintain order within their own localities, and some, notably Myles Bourke, Viscount Mayo, and Sir Luke Dillon in County Mayo, the earl of Clanricard in County Galway, and the earl of Thomond in County Clare, protected settlers and their goods in their castles. A few deponents complained of the skimpy rations provided to them; for example, ‘divers English and Scottish Protestants who were his tenants’ and who remained with Charles O’Connor of Ballinafad in County Roscommon claimed that, as the insurrection progressed, they ‘were miserably used and reviled and called ethnick’ and were forced to attend mass. Protection behind walls did not mean that individual settler families were not attacked and robbed during the early stages of the revolt, as bands of ‘loose and idle rogues’ assembled everywhere. These might, as in Roscommon, claim justification for their actions either on the grounds that they had a warrant from the king ‘but not any from the Scots’ or that Charles O’Connor Don of Ballintubber ‘was made king of Connacht’. However, the general course of events in these counties during the early stages was for the settlers to find security behind the walls of the castles of the landowners who had invited them to the county, regardless of whether these were natives or newcomers. These places of refuge included Castle Coote which had been constructed by Sir Charles Coote in Roscommon, Athlone Castle, which was held by Vicount Ranelagh as president of Connacht, and Templehouse, the castle of William Crofton in County Sligo.

This pattern, which obtained everywhere in the western counties from October 1641 until January 1642, was first broken in Sligo and then in County Mayo with drastic consequences for the settlers. The course of events in Sligo, and its deviation from this pattern, has been reconstructed by Mary O’Dowd,

56 Deposition of James Stevenson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 48).
57 Deposition of Elizabeth Holliwell (TCD, MS 830, fo. 33); deposition of Richard Chapman (TCD, MS 831, fo. 198); deposition of Thomas Cooke (TCD, MS 831, fo. 199); the deponents’ objection to being called ethnics is understandable given the 17th-century definition of the word as ‘heathenish, ungodly, irreligious: And may be used substantively for a heathen or gentile’; cited in Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge, 1999), 34.
and it only remains here to provide some corroborating evidence to her conclusions. Sligo was somewhat different from the other western counties in that, as was noted in Chapter 6, it contained a substantial Protestant business community in the town and individual members of that community had diversified from trade to become extensive landowners not only in County Sligo but also in north Mayo and in County Roscommon. Native landowners in County Sligo as in all the western counties were anxious over the threatened plantation but its consequences had already been visited on Sligo in 1635 when Sir Philip Perceval, acting on behalf of Wentworth and Sir George Radcliffe, had purchased the entire estate of the recently deceased Donough O’Connor Sligo at a bargain price, purportedly because he had let it be known that the estate would otherwise be declared confiscate to the crown in the upcoming plantation. This development explains why two brothers of O’Connor Sligo, as well as native proprietors who had a mortgage interest in the property, emerged as leaders of the discontented elements in the county.58

Sligo was also more disturbed than other western counties because Theobald Taaffe, son and heir to Viscount Taaffe, a Palesman who had built up a substantial estate in the county, had been appointed by the government to supervise the disbandment, and the discharge overseas to Spain, of many of the Connacht soldiers who had been recruited into Strafford’s Irish army, which had been officially disbanded after 8 May 1641. The actual embarkation for Spain was intended to be from Galway, but the troops were to be mobilized in Sligo as they returned from Ulster in the summer of 1641, with the result that County Sligo became a conduit for soldiers travelling from Ulster to Galway, and thence to Spain. Many, as we also witnessed happening in Ulster, took leave from their companions and joined the ranks of the discontented, but collectively the soldiers placed a financial burden on the county and added to its unruliness. Thus William Browne, registrar of the diocese of Killala and Achonry, suffered the loss of 100 sheep at the hands of ‘Captain Tirlagh McCaffrey McDonell and some of his soldiers who was one of the captains raised under the command of Colonel Taaffe . . . a little before the beginning of this late rebellion for that expedition for Spain’.59

These factors which were peculiar to Sligo compounded grievances which were general throughout the western counties. The principal issues that caused concern were the threat of plantation, the poverty that resulted from the financial impositions of the provincial presidency, and the inadequate provision for the practice of Catholicism. In most instances the landowners, both Protestant and Catholic, attempted to maintain order, but there is evidence that the Catholic clergy made their task more difficult by exploiting

59 O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land, 112–17; deposition of William Browne (TCD, MS 831, fo. 62).
general grievances to consolidate their claims for an improvement in the position of Catholicism in the province. William Browne was surprised to find that, following the commencement of the rebellion, the guardian of a Franciscan friary in County Leitrim had taken to preaching on his lands in Sligo, and after he had confronted him they engaged in ‘many discourses’. After Browne had reminded the friar of ‘the bad success the Irish had in that rebellion of [15]88 and in those rebellions of Tyrone, O’Dogherty and McGuire’ he retorted that ‘it would not be so . . . as it was in those days, for then the Irish of the kingdom were divided . . . and . . . now . . . there should not be scarce an Irish man in all of Ireland that was a Catholique that should take part with the Protestants’. Among explanations offered by the friar for this new-found unity was a local one ‘that the blood that the Bingham had formerly spilt in the Province of Connacht, and . . . the moneys and fines that had been levied and taken up from the peasants in those counties, for their conscience cause would be now remembered’.60

John Goldsmith, parson of Burrishoole in County Mayo, was similarly reminded in November 1641 ‘how you English have served us, how you have cut our noses and scarred our faces’, but, while attributing this hostility to the persuasions of Catholic priests, he mentioned that he owed his life to the intervention of a friar. Similarly, Elizabeth Buchanan, widow of the dean of Killala, ‘often heard the rebels say that they meant to root out the English and the Scottish because they had gotten all from them by their courts and assizes’, and she mentioned specifically ‘that the rebels confessed that their friars and priests were the causers of this insurrections and stirs . . . and that what they did was for the good of the king’. While a sequence of deponents attributed the hostility they encountered to such priestly harangues, they also accepted that the reason why the local community had turned against them was not purely theological. Goldsmith believed that the ‘hatred’ the Irish of Connacht bore ‘the English nation’ was not ‘out of zeal in point of religion but national and personal’, and he cited one Captain Crean, ‘tenant to the lord of Mayo and a commander of rebels’, as saying that ‘we must never be subject again to the English nation’. Others cited the wanton slaughter of livestock of English breed as further proof of this animosity against all things English, while Thomas Johnson testified that the rebels of County Mayo in an effort to symbolize their animosity towards English laws ‘did ordinarily and commonly proffer or seem to proffer bills of indictment and bring the English breed of cattle to be tried upon . . . and having on their fashion arraigned those cattle . . . their scornful judge then sitting amongst them would say they looks as if they could speak English, give them the book and see if they can read, pronouncing the words legit amnon [does it read, or not?] to the jury. And then, because they stood mute and could not read, would

60 Deposition of William Browne (TCD, MS 831, fo. 62).
and did pronounce judgement and sentence of death against them and so they were committed and put to slaughter.’ Such animosity led to ‘the full resolution of all the said rebels that they would root out all the English and Scots out of Ireland and there have all their own judges, justices, and great officers to be of the mere Irish and to be governed by their own laws first saying why should not they have it so in Ireland as well as the Scots had it in Scotland’.61

It is not surprising to learn that, under these circumstances, the Protestant settlers in Connacht began to flee the province, or to seek refuge in one of the defensible buildings that remained in loyal hands, while the lands outside these fortified positions fell increasingly under the control of the insurgents. The result in County Sligo was sieges on the town of Sligo and Templehouse, although the Protestants, to the number of about forty, who remained in the town enjoyed freedom of movement within the town walls until the arrival there in January 1642 of ‘some of the northern men called Owltags [Ultaigh, Ulstermen] banished and driven out of the north of Ireland by the British forces there’. This resulted in the murder of two Scotsmen, and those in the town who favoured the continued protection for the Protestants put them into Sligo gaol on 13 January 1642 for their safety. That, however, only increased the temptation which the Protestant presence presented to two brothers of O’Connor Sligo, and others of the native elite from county and town, who wished to put a quick end to Protestants and Protestantism in Sligo. One report says that Colonel Owen O’Rourke, who reached the town on the evening of 13 January, advised them on ‘how it should be done’. The outcome of the discussion was that a group went to the gaol at midnight 13 January 1642, ‘having lights in their hands’ and armed with ‘swords, skeins, and smiths sledges’, where they murdered an estimated thirty-eight people. Only two of the inmates, John Gate and Robert Gambe, made their escape; the latter, a ‘Welsh gentleman of good account’ and provost of the town, by the ignoble means of sheltering under a fat corpse while pretending to be dead. With this slaughter, Sligo was effectively rid of its Protestant population, and while reports were circulated about the subsequent violation of the corpses, they were ultimately buried by Roebuck O’Crean, a merchant of the town who had supplied winding sheets for some of them.62

This example was not lost on those who, at this point, were up in arms in County Mayo, and it seemed especially pertinent because some of the refugees

61 Deposition of John Goldsmith (TCD, MS 831, fo. 192); deposition of Elizabeth Buchanan (TCD, MS 831, fo. 189); deposition of Andrew Adaire (TCD, MS 831, fos. 17–18); deposition of Thomas Johnson (TCD, MS 831, fo. 190); see also examination of Walter Bourke (TCD, MS 831, fo. 169); Raymond Gillespie, ‘Mayo and the Rising of 1641’, Cathair na Mart: Journal of the Westport Historical Society, 5 (1985), 38–44.

62 O’Dowd, Power, Politics and Land, 117–20; deposition of Henry Brinhurst (TCD, MS 831, fo. 187); deposition of William Walshe (TCD, MS 831, fo. 63); deposition of Henry Langford (TCD, MS 830, fo. 36).
from Templehouse made their way southwards to their acquaintances in north Mayo rather than northwards to Ulster. This movement intensified the pressure on the Protestants who were, at this point, refugees at various points in Mayo, while the clergy and the insurgents intensified the pressure on those native proprietors who were providing them with protection. The first to have his authority undermined was Sir Luke Dillon in the barony of Costello Gallen in the east of the county, while the guardian of the Augustinian Abbey of Ballyhaunis was said to have ‘infected’ the soldiers of Viscount Mayo ‘with treason and rebellion’ and persuaded them to desert him. This left only the English troops, under the command of Sir Henry Bingham at Castlebar, to guarantee the safety of the Protestants remaining in the county, but even that base was uncertain once Bingham defected to Catholicism. Under these circumstances, Viscount Mayo negotiated with the Catholic archbishop of Tuam for safe passage for those Protestants under his protection southwards out of the county to Galway, where they hoped to receive protection from the earl of Clanricard. The assurance seems to have been given, and a cortège, which included the family of Lord Mayo and that of his heir Sir Theobald Bourke, arrived safely at the bridge at Shrule, bordering upon County Galway, on 12 February 1642, where they awaited an escorting force from Galway. At this point, a dispute arose between the ‘gentlemen of the barony of Kilmaine and Lord Mayo’ over the cost of maintaining the viscount’s soldiers. To resolve the problem Lord Mayo dismissed all but one company, which was that of Captain William Bourke who lived within a mile of Shrule, while the viscount and his family went to stay at the house of Andrew Lynch close to Cong. In the absence of Lord Mayo, Edmund Bourke, ensign to William Bourke, ‘having with his wicked company been at Mass’, on Sunday, 13 February 1642 murdered fifty-three men and two women of the refugees. When word of the massacre was brought to Lord Mayo in Cong he ‘wept bitterly pulling off his hair’, and feared for his own safety and that of his son ‘being then a Protestant and some English then about him’. However he resolved his personal predicament after three days by visiting the house of the ‘titulary Archbishop’ where he went to mass and thereafter was ‘under the command of the Romish clergy’, although his son retained his Protestant allegiance.63

Those who survived the Shrule atrocity did make their way to the relative safety of Clanricard’s territory in County Galway. However they did not reach there a moment too soon, because there also the authority of that lord, although a Catholic, was diminishing, and the town of Galway fell from under his control.64 Therefore the atrocities at Sligo and Shrule mark the end of

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63 Henry Bringhurst, ‘Discourse of Rebellion in Connacht’ (TCD, MS 831, fos. 201–8); deposition of Henry Bringhurst (TCD, MS 831, fo. 187); deposition of John Goldsmith (TCD, MS 831, fo. 187); deposition of Elizabeth Buchanan (TCD, MS 831, fo. 183).

64 On the timing of events in Galway see examination of Oliver Smyth (TCD, MS 831, fo. 158).
the insurrection in the province of Connacht. Essentially after a brave stand by those loyal to the government in all the western counties, except Leitrim, their authority was undermined by the endeavours of subordinates who enjoyed the support of the Catholic clergy, who were able to play upon a genuine popular grievance over how the county had been governed during the previous half-century. Thus gradually everything fell to the insurgents, leaving only a few castles, and one monastic steeple in north Mayo, under Protestant or loyal control. The prolonged sieges of these positions, ranging from that of the St George family in Leitrim to Ballyalia Castle in County Clare, belongs to the history of the Confederate War rather than to the insurrection of 1641, which by the spring of 1642 had run its course also in the province of Connacht.65

It emerges from this analysis of what happened west of the river Shannon during the autumn and winter of 1641–2 that most of the surviving native landowners in Leitrim were early in the field, seemingly after some prior consultation with the Ulster leaders of the revolt, but they successfully telescoped the early phases of revolutionary action to engage upon an immediate onslaught against the settler population who had come into their locality as a result of the recent plantation in the county. In the remaining western counties, stretching from Sligo to Clare, most proprietors, whether native or settler, Protestant or Catholic, strove to maintain a distance from what was happening in Ulster and in County Leitrim. They were soon to learn, however, that their authority within their localities, and over the troops which they commanded, was being undermined by elements within the native community who were either sympathetic to the religious objectives that had come to the fore during the course of the rising in Ulster or who alluded to past wrongs or present fears associated with British rule in the province. Thus, ultimately, they had to choose between making common cause with the insurgents or remaining loyal to the crown, in the knowledge that if they opted for the popular course, which would boost their immediate standing and reputation within their localities, they ran the risk of certain loss of property and status in the event of the government in England subsequently recovering its authority in Ireland. It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, many landowners strove to remain aloof from the conflict, but divisions were such that neutrals were considered potential enemies by Catholics and Protestants alike and so most were reluctantly compelled to take sides.

65 The most detailed, and best-known, description of one of these sieges is that of Ballyalia Castle in County Clare originally given as a deposition, subsequently published as a pamphlet, and printed in T. Crofton Croker (ed.), Narratives Illustrative of the Contests in Ireland in 1641 and 1658 (London, 1841), which is analysed in Ciarán D. Ó Murchadha, ‘Land and Society in Seventeenth-Century Clare’ (Ph.D. thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1982).
8.4. THE RISING OF 1641 IN LEINSTER AND IN WATERFORD

This diversity of revolutionary experience in Connacht was, in many respects, replicated in the more extensive, and more prosperous, province of Leinster, but before proceeding to an analysis of what happened there it is necessary to demonstrate that a disturbance did occur in that province during the winter of 1641/2. This exercise is necessary for two reasons. First, the received wisdom, reflected in the most respected scholarly literature, treats Leinster as the bastion of the Old English and Catholic interest in Ireland, and, in doing so, it does not take sufficient account of the considerable Protestant settlement that (as was demonstrated in Chapter 6) had been gradually established there over the course of the early seventeenth century. It follows logically from this oversight that the disturbances which did occur in Leinster between October and December 1641 have also received scant attention because scholarship proceeds from the assumption that, outside the limited areas of Leinster which had been planted, there was no significant foreign presence there that might have become the target of attack. The second reason why the Leinster unrest is scarcely mentioned in the literature is that the popular disturbances, which occurred on an extensive scale, fit uneasily with the orthodoxy which holds that the rising of 1641 was essentially an Ulster phenomenon, orchestrated by a small group of discontented landowners. This development is said to have impacted seriously upon the more prosperous Old English-dominated eastern part of the country only in the weeks after the government army, sent to restore order to Ulster, had been defeated by the rebels at the battle of Julianstown in County Meath on 29 November 1641. It was only then, it has been repeatedly suggested, that the lords of the Pale, under threat of invasion from Ulster, entered into a compact with the leaders of the northern revolt following negotiations at the hills of Tara and Crofty. Previous to then, according to this version of events, the east of Ireland remained tranquil, and there is a suggestion that the Old English Catholic leaders were as much embarrassed as compromised by the alleged plot of some of the Ulster lords to seize Dublin Castle on 23 October 1641.

Allowance is made in this interpretation—which derives essentially from Lecky—for some disturbance in County Wicklow, led by disgruntled Gaelic elements who had been deprived of their ancestral lands through recent plantations. Otherwise, it is implied that the Catholic proprietors and townsmen of the prosperous east remained loyal to the crown and to its government in Dublin until their hands were forced in December 1641 by the joint threat of invasion from Ulster, and by a refusal by the Dublin government to place trust in any Catholic. Even then, it is suggested that the Leinster lords were unenthusiastic rebels and gladly joined with the Catholic bishops in early summer 1642 to check the undisciplined aspects of the uprising, and to establish at Kilkenny a conservative Catholic Confederation, under joint clerical
and gentry control. This body was intended to serve as a provisional government to maintain order in that part of the country which remained in Catholic hands, while it negotiated with the king, over the head of the hostile government in Dublin, to procure greater religious and civil freedom for Catholics once the authority of the monarch had prevailed over both the parliament in England and the Covenanters in Scotland.66

What has been said in the previous sections on the development of the uprising in Ulster and Connacht will have exposed some inadequacies in this interpretation by citing evidence that the disturbances of 1641 took the form of a popular peasant uprising which followed upon, or ran parallel to, an attempted coup d’état by a group of disgruntled Catholic landowners, and that priests in both provinces sought to curb the wanton violence which was inevitably associated with a peasant disturbance and to channel popular discontent towards the attainment of godly ends. This section will argue that different social elements and different interest groups in the province of Leinster and the city of Waterford (the area that would soon become the heartland of the Catholic Confederacy) also strove to exploit the defiance of government authority to serve their own ends. The evidence cited will also prove that the authority of the Old English elite had been so undermined by less temperate people, well before the battle of Julianstown, that they had little choice but to make common cause with the Ulster insurgents at the negotiations at Crofty Hill and Tara.

The testimony given in the depositions for Leinster shows that people there were almost immediately aware both of the insurrection that had burst forth in Ulster on 22 October 1641, and of the alleged plot to seize Dublin Castle on the following day. Word of the insurrection in Ulster had already reached Dublin city by 23 October, and we learn from Chidley Coote that the ‘first intelligence’ of what had happened in Ulster had reached Birr in the King’s County by 24 October and that they learned of the further rising in Wicklow on 9 December 1641. News of the Ulster disturbance had spread southwards to Carlow by 28 October because Thomas Poole of Craniscah decided then to abandon his living rather than run the risk of assault. John Bishop, a Protestant settled at Glandomgell, County Kilkenny, took a similar precaution on 1 November, and not a moment too soon since William Weldon of New Ross in County Wexford was attacked in his place of residence on the following day.67

66 Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 171–219; Clarke, in Moody, Martin, and Byrne (eds.), A New History of Ireland, iii. 288–335; Perceval-Maxwell, The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion, 223–33, makes allowance for an early outburst in Leinster and Ó Siochrú, Confederate Ireland, 27–54, allows for a slightly delayed one.

67 Examination of William Apesley (TCD, MS 809, fo. 127); deposition of Chidley Coote (TCD, MS 814, fos. 204–16); deposition of Thomas Poole (TCD, MS 812, fo. 6); deposition of John Bishop (TCD, MS 812, fo. 211); deposition of William Weldon (TCD, MS 818, fo. 46).
These few references make it clear that word of what had happened in Ulster had reached even the southern extremity of Leinster within a week of the initial outburst, and probably within a matter of days. Those counties of Leinster which lay closest to the boundary with Ulster were more immediately aware of what had happened because their communities became involved in the insurrection, either because the military action in Ulster spilled over into their counties or because some Catholic landowners and priests made common cause with the Ulster insurgents. County Longford, like Leitrim in Connacht, had experienced a recent plantation; several members of the O’Farrell landowning family resorted to arms as early as 24 October, and the O’Farrells and their associates had, within five days, come to control the entire county except for a few fortified positions. Their initial actions were taken on the pretext of defending their region and its residents from attack by rebels who, they alleged, had entered the county from Cavan and Leitrim, and they invited the Protestant settlers in the county to surrender their property and followers to those who could better provide for their protection. This was the experience of Nathaniel Hollington, the minister of Clogh, who on 27 October surrendered his land, possessions, and children to some of the O’Farrells for safe keeping and fled himself to the garrison town of Athlone. Samuel Price, a settler at Keenagh in the parish of Killacomoge, was ‘standing upon his guard’ on 29 October and was not prepared to give ground, until he was approached by Irrell Farrell, high sheriff of the county, and other members of the O’Farrell sept. The sheriff then warned him that the county had been invaded from the north, and he offered to take custody of the goods of Englishmen ‘that desired to be protected’. Far more ominous for Price was the sheriff’s reference to a ‘proclamation from his Majesty that all Englishmen’s goods should be seized to his Majesty’s use, and how that the common people taking knowledge thereof had used cruelty even to barbarism towards the English’. It was fear of such a popular onslaught which convinced Price that he should surrender his cattle for protection to the sheriff, but he had no sooner done so than his house was approached by a company of seventy men ‘armed with pikes and guns and many others armed with hedgestakes and pitchforks’, and his appeal to the sheriff for help then went unanswered.68

What happened in County Longford, within days of the insurrection in Ulster, was therefore analogous to what was occurring simultaneously in County Leitrim but with the disgruntled O’Farrells, like the O’Rourke in Leitrim, using the disturbances there to recover the status and property they had lost through the plantation and the ensuing changes. At first the O’Farrells were concerned to present their actions within the context of loyalty to the crown, but, as in Leitrim, this supposed sanction was for robbing

68 Deposition of Nathaniel Hollington (TCD, MS 817, fo. 148); deposition of Samuel Price (TCD, MS 817, fo. 156).
Note: This map pinpoints the principal places mentioned in the narrative, and seeks to convey an impression of the succession of events in the province of Leinster.

Map 8.2. The rising in Leinster in 1641
the settlers, and not merely for taking over fortified positions. Even this veneer of legitimacy was quickly cast aside, or so it appeared to John Edgeworth, whose goods were seized by the O’Farrells ‘upon pretence of distresses for arrears of rent for their land as they say due ever since the plantation of that county’. Thus the O’Farrells were denying legitimacy to the plantation that had taken place and were treating the settlers as trespassers on property which was really theirs.59

Counties Meath and Louth which, like Longford, abutted the province of Ulster were also immediately disturbed by the insurrection but not in the same manner as Longford. Each of these counties had escaped extensive plantation, and most property remained in the possession of Old English landowners who were traditionally loyal to the crown. These proprietors stood to gain little from the rebellion and might have wished to stand aloof but did not have the option to do so because of invasion from Ulster. Already, on 26 October 1641, the goods of Amy Briscoe of Ardee, County Louth, had been stolen by Collo Mc Bryan McMahon, and those of William Vesey of Dundalk were stolen on 31 October by Turlough O’Neill, son to Henry O’Neill of County Monaghan. More general robbery occurred in subsequent days, and some deponents described how their goods had been stolen and ‘carried northwards by rebels sent into County Louth by Phelim O’Neill’. Not all thieves in Louth were from Ulster, however, and Thurstan Mawdesley of Carlingford complained that he had been robbed and stripped on 26 October 1641 by John White of Margetojes Grange, ‘an ancient rebel and a notable thief’.70

The landowners of County Meath seem to have been in a position to defend their county from raiding parties from Ulster until mid- or late November, and what attacks on Protestants occurred before that date were perpetrated by residents of the county, several of whom were described as younger sons of landowners or tenants within the county. Even as late as 24 November those in Meath who had taken to arms could be depicted as ‘the poorer sort of parish dwellers and others’, and insurrection in County Meath up to that point seems to have been a rural phenomenon. However, although limited in scale, disturbances were widespread throughout the county and those who ventured into action at this early stage appear to have enjoyed popular support within the Catholic community. This was certainly the opinion of Roger Puttock, minister at Navan, who reported how ‘the very first night after this rebellion was known, generally all papists houses near Navan were set upon a merry pin; dancing, singing and drinking as if hell

69 Deposition of John Edgeworth (TCD, MS 817, fo. 144).
70 Deposition of Amy Briscoe (TCD, MS 834, fo. 3); deposition of William Vesey (TCD, MS 834, fo. 9); deposition of William Ussher (TCD, MS 834, fo. 10); deposition of Christopher Hampton (TCD, MS 834, fo. 14); deposition of Thurstan Mawdesley (TCD, MS 834, fo. 15).
had been broken open among them’. Then, as riotous behaviour became more frequent, Puttock could not persuade the portrieve and burgesses of Navan to keep a watch at the gates ‘though the country people were up robbing to the very walls of Navan’. Moreover, as another deponent testified, the town fathers were kept fully informed of the progress of disturbances further afield by John Manning of Navan, ‘a common intelligencer betwixt the rebels at Drogheda and the town of Navan’. Finally, when a band of rebels from County Cavan did make their way to the town of Navan on 19 November 1641 they were preceded by a priest who so enthused the population of the town that there was ‘great joy and welcoming’ for the rebel cause, and the portrieve of the town, the baron of Navan, and in ‘general all the burgesses of Navan in great state and with much joy went out of Navan near half a mile to meet the rebels’. 71

By this point, rather than at the meeting at Crofty Hill some three weeks later, the loyalty of the Catholic population in County Meath had shifted openly towards the Ulster rebels, and it would seem that the Catholic landowners of the county had little choice in December but to follow the example set by their subordinates. The efforts of landowners to hold the line and to maintain their authority emerges more clearly in the case of County Kildare. There, on first hearing of the rising in the north, the staunchly Protestant George, earl of Kildare, convened a meeting of the gentry and commons of the county at Naas and they appointed the earl as governor and three gentlemen as captains to provide for the defence of the county. Their endeavours were to little avail however and attacks on Protestants became frequent throughout the county from 1 November 1641 onwards. More significantly, Piers Fitzgerald of Ballysonan, Esq., one of the captains chosen to maintain order, had become openly involved with the rising by 7 December 1641. In Kildare, as in Meath, the impetus for action came from below and Elizabeth Bradley observed ‘from the first noise of this insurrection in the north . . . not only their own Irish servants but generally all their Irish to begin to insult over them and their Protestant neighbours and to be mightily encouraged and incensed against them insomuch as great threats were made and several forces used by them the Irish’. Once order had broken down, the insurgents formed themselves into armed bands led either by dissident Fitzgeralds or Dempseys, and these, it was alleged, were frequently given moral encouragement by priests to rid that county of Protestants. Disturbances in Kildare, as in Meath, were initially a rural phenomenon but they soon spread to the towns. Thomasine Martin of Athy reported how a fortnight before Christmas she was ‘robbed by her neighbours Irish Papists of the said town’ who came to her house

71 Deposition of John Wilson (TCD, MS 816, fo. 145); deposition of Roger Puttock (TCD, MS 816, fo. 132); deposition of Charles Crafford (TCD, MS 816, fo. 97); deposition of Katherin Grant (TCD, MS 816, fo. 106).
'threw her down and trod upon her, and cast clothes over her, that she should not see them'. Despite their efforts, Thomasine was able to identify three of her assailants, two widows and one brogue-maker, 'all of Athy her neighbours'.

In Kildare, therefore, the gentry—Catholic and Protestant together—proved themselves unable to maintain order and uphold their authority, and this experience was replicated in the more southerly counties of Carlow, Wexford, and Kilkenny. The situation in these counties was complicated by a rising led by some of those landowners in Wicklow who believed that they had been deprived unjustly of much of their land on several occasions during the previous decades. Some kin of these insurgents—Byrnes, O'Toole, and Kavanaghs—held property also in the neighbouring counties of Dublin, Carlow, and Wexford, so disturbance in Wicklow triggered further disturbances in parts of these neighbouring counties. Thus George Morres of Clonemore, County Carlow, was attacked on 11 November 1641 by one Turlough Byrne of Killalongford, County Carlow, gent., together with a group of rebels ‘his fosterers, accomplices and soldiers’. Similarly in County Dublin, John Wolverston who was among the first to take up arms on 1 December 1641 was described as a retainer of the ‘Grand Rebel O'Toole near Powerscourt’. Another who took early action in County Dublin was William Wolverston of Stillorgan, Esq., who was joined by ‘Mary Wolverston alias Cavenagh his daughter-in-law’. There were some disturbances in County Wexford as early as 2 November 1641, but that county was brought into the mainstream of revolt on 14 November when Luke Byrne of County Wicklow, ‘the first known and notorious rebel of that county’, entered Wexford from the north with an army of men, estimated as between 500 and 600, and laid siege to the settlement established by Sir Walsingham Cooke on the manor of Parsonstown in the parish of Killenoghe.

In all of these instances the first evidence that authority was being defied was when attacks were launched against Protestant settlers in a given area. The fact that there were few such settlers in County Kilkenny, and that most who were there had been placed on the property of the earl of Ormond, would explain why the semblance of order was upheld for a longer time in that county. When the breakdown in order did occur, on 26 November 1641, it was in the vicinity of Castlecomer, where, as was noted in Chapter 6, a substantial community of English settlers had been established by Sir

72 Deposition of John Walshe (TCD, MS 813, fo. 306); deposition of Elizabeth Bradley (TCD, MS 813, fo. 309); deposition of Thomasine Martin (TCD, MS 813, fo. 380).
73 Deposition of George Morres (TCD, MS 812, fo. 21); deposition of Thomas Mason (TCD, MS 809, fo. 294); deposition of Joseph Smithson (TCD, MS 809, fo. 333); deposition of William Wolidon (TCD, MS 818, fo. 46); deposition of George Charlton (TCD, MS 818, fo. 57).
Christopher Wandesforde. These were attacked by a large group of insurgents made up of dispossessed Brennans and Butlers from the vicinity of Castlecomer and some of the septs of Byrnes and Kavanaghs from Counties Carlow and Wicklow. The insurgents, supposedly to the number of 500 men, were armed with guns, pikes, pitchforks, swords, darts, and skeans, and the English settlers had no choice but to take flight for the town of Kilkenny. The same group of insurgents also turned its attention to those settlers associated with the ironworks close at hand at Ballinakill in Queen’s County, and they then marched to Abbeyleix, where they robbed and spoiled the English tenants who would have held property in that vicinity from Sir Charles Coote. These incursions into Queen’s County merely exacerbated disturbances which had been evident in that county since early to mid-November, and similar disturbances made headway in the neighbouring King’s County from that time forward despite the best efforts of the Protestant landowners there to maintain order.74

When all this evidence is pieced together it becomes clear that public order had broken down in most areas of Leinster by the middle of November 1641, and in some instances well before that date. The leaders were usually people from elite backgrounds either with grievances over recent developments or with little to lose, but it is clear that their show of force enjoyed initial popular support in the countryside but that rejection of existing authority soon manifested itself also in the towns. Mention has been already made of disturbance at Navan in County Meath, and what occurred there was replicated in the other towns of the province, as can be illustrated in the instance of County Kilkenny.

One settler in Kilkenny, John Jessop of Cloynmoore, had taken flight to Dublin as early as 5 November because of his conviction that all papists in that county and in neighbouring County Wexford were ‘actors, abettors or at least secret well wishers unto this rebellion’. His suspicion was borne out by the onslaught on Castlecomer and the flight of the settlers there towards the town of Kilkenny. Their movement provoked a popular assault against Protestant settlers everywhere in the county. John Moore, a prebend of St Canice’s Cathedral, described how settlers in the county were robbed and stripped of their clothes over a process of ten days, and he bewailed how the rebels had ‘not so much respects unto their promises as Othnicks [Ethnics] or Turcks would’. Then he described how on 17 and 18 December the insurgents turned their attention to the town of Kilkenny, which now included Protestant refugees from as far afield as Castlecomer as well as those Protestants previously resident in the town, and how the rural insurgents were ‘welcomed by

74 Deposition of Peter Pinchon (TCD, MS 812, fo. 200); deposition of William Parkinson (TCD, MS 812, fo. 190); deposition of Captain Richard Steele (TCD, MS 815, fo. 358); deposition of William Hill (TCD, MS 815, fo. 210); deposition of Richard Burrowes (TCD, MS 815, fo. 142); deposition of William Alburrough (TCD, MS 815, fo. 159).
the citizens being for the most part all papists’ who both opened the gates to them and joined them in robbing all Protestants within the town. Moore was able to name some of the more prominent citizens who joined the ‘discontented gentlemen as they termed the rebels’ but he asserted that the ‘implacable fury’ which these displayed against the Protestants was shared by the urban population at large. More immediately, one William Lucas, a Protestant tailor in the town, complained how one Peirce McPatrick, a Catholic merchant, ‘brought a lantern in the night and an axe and guided the other rebels to the house of this deponent and to other houses and assisted them in the robberies’. Moreover, Lucas was able to identify Patrick O’Fillon, brogue-maker, Richard Laughlin, butcher, William McShane, butcher, Patrick Roe, grey merchant, and Perse White, brogue-maker, among his assailants.75

Such a popular onslaught would have been in defiance of the wishes of Ormond and Elizabeth his wife (also of Butler ancestry), who were Protestant and she resident in Kilkenny Castle. Ormond, however, could do no more than negotiate with his grand-uncle Lord Mountgarrett (who would have been sympathetic towards the action that had taken place since he had lost heavily when Castlecomer had passed to Wandesforde) to escort the Protestants in the town to the port city of Waterford.76 Even then the refugees were not permitted to enter the confines of Waterford until they had paid further protection money to William Butler, Toby Butler, and Mr Sweetman. The departure of Protestants from Kilkenny did not bring an end to their humiliation because a small number decided to remain in the town. James Benn, a resident of Kilkenny, then witnessed the stripping of Mr Smith, a Protestant minister of Ballinakill, and Mr Lemon, a Scottish schoolmaster, in St Canice’s Cathedral, and he saw in the houses and shops of Andrew Murphy, James Archdeacon, Piers Archer, and other merchants of the town ‘the Protestant bibles and prayer books and other good English and Protestant books . . . torn in pieces and employed as waste paper to wrap in soap, starch, candles and wares that they sold’.77

Even more traumatic for the Protestant settlers in both Kilkenny and Queen’s County, if we are to judge from the frequency of its telling, was the treatment accorded the heads severed from the corpses of those killed at the siege of Ballinakill. The band of marauders who went to take over the earl of Londonderry’s iron-smelting operation there were resisted by Lieutenant Gilbert and Captain Richard Steele. After a prolonged siege, Ballinakill was taken and the settlement dispersed, and the assailants then beheaded the minister Thomas Bingham and six other Protestants of the town. Then, these

75 Deposition of John Jessop (TCD, MS 812, fo. 188); deposition of John Moore (TCD, MS 812, fos. 197–9); deposition of William Lucas (TCD, MS 812, fo. 220).
77 Deposition of John Moore (TCD, MS 812, fos. 197–9); deposition of James Benn (TCD, MS 812, fo. 213).
heads were carried by the insurgents in triumph from Ballinakill to the town of Kilkenny where they arrived with their ‘pipes for joy playing before them on horseback on a market day’. The populace of the town then became so aroused that ‘the rebels, but especially the women there’, subjected the heads to ritual humiliation. Prominent among ‘those lewd viragoes’ was ‘Alice Butler a reputed mother of bastards yet the daughter of the said Lord Mountgarret’ who ‘stabbed, cut and slashed those heads’ and ‘drawing her skeine slashed at the face’ of William Ahfrey, one of the victims, ‘and hit him on the nose’. The example of Alice Butler apparently provided a lead to the other women of the town to the point where ‘those that could but get a blow or stab at those heads seemed to account themselves happy’. Humiliation became desecration in the treatment accorded the head of the Reverend Bingham because the insurgents put a gag in his mouth ‘and laying the leaf of a bible before him bade him preach, saying his mouth was open wide enough’. The verdict of the rebels was that the heads were ‘the heads of heritics’ and having denied them Christian burial they interred them in a hole at a crossroads which gave rise to an oath ‘frequently used’ by the ‘roguish boys’ of the town ‘by the cross of the seven devils’ heads buried on St. James’s Green’.

What occurred in the town of Kilkenny was similar to, and connected with, what later happened in Waterford. That town, like Kilkenny, had remained under the control of Old English merchants, and those Protestants who lived there, either as artisans, clergymen, officials, or merchants, had to accept that their position was a minority one even when they enjoyed the exclusive right to public worship. Unlike Kilkenny, they lacked a local protector of the stature of the marquess of Ormond, but they did enjoy the local presence of crown officials associated with the collection of customs, and their ultimate security was the crown garrison at Duncannon fort, downriver at the mouth of Waterford harbour, under the command of Lord Esmond. Another factor that Waterford had in common with Kilkenny was that most land in its immediate vicinity remained in Catholic possession, and Waterford was also closely connected, both by water and land, with Kilkenny for which it served as an outport. In this sense, it had more in common with the rich heartlands of Leinster than with the western parts of County Waterford which had been included within the Munster plantation and had been densely settled with Protestants by the earl of Cork and his associates.

It was logical, therefore, that the Protestant refugees from Kilkenny should have been directed towards Waterford, and there was every reason to expect that they would be secure once they got within the walls of the city, because the mayor, Francis Briver, as well as the aldermen and ‘the best of the city’, were determined to provide for their protection until they could gain passage.

78 Deposition of Captain Richard Steele (TCD, MS 815, fo. 358); deposition of Anne Bingham (TCD, MS 815, fo. 305); deposition of Joseph Wheeler (TCD, MS 812, fo. 202).
for England. The arrival in December 1641 of further refugees from Tipperary and the planted lands in west Waterford must have placed a strain on the resources of the city, but we learn from several deponents that the presence of Protestants, whether local or refugees, had become an issue of controversy before then. Thomasine Osbalderstone testified that, when the ‘Lady Marquis of Ormond’ and her entourage were passing through Waterford on their way to the security of England, ‘she heard some of the town and other rebels in Waterford say and wish in Irish that they had the stripping of all that brave company’. Such mutterings persisted but the corporation continued for three months to protect the Protestants ‘not only from the common people of the city from being spoiled but from others’. Several deponents testified that these ‘others’ included one Francis Wise, gent., of Newtown in Waterford, apparently a member of the corporation, and we learn that the mayor ‘was not only threatened but several times in danger to be killed for taking of the Protestants’ part’ both by the inhabitants and ‘some others of the country’. The task of the corporation became both more difficult and hazardous after 1 December when rebels from County Wexford ‘with boats came over into those parts’. The countryside around the city of Waterford was immediately brought under the control of the insurgents, and land outside the walls belonging to Waterford Protestants was seized. Within the walls, Francis Wise ‘was a chief instrument in stirring up the city’, and he ‘with one John Ilaed of Waterford set open the city gates to the rebels’. These came from County Tipperary as well as Counties Waterford and Wexford, and it was Sir Nicholas Walshe who insisted that all Protestants be imprisoned for their security (as happened in Sligo) and that their property be placed in a common storehouse. There are several depositions from Protestants detailing the privations they then suffered, but there is only one report of a Protestant being killed within the city. In the meantime, the incarceration of the Protestants was taken by some Catholics to mean that their property within the city might be seized with impunity. It was also alleged that, after Candlemas 1642, such acts of pillage came to enjoy some official sanction, and that the ‘merchants’ and William Woodlocke, sheriff, began ‘to strip and rob all the Protestants there under colour of searching for arms and ammunition’. Then, at Shrovetide 1642, the ‘citizens of Waterford did appoint constables in every parish in the said city to fetch and bring with them out of their houses all the English Protestants (men women and children in the said city)’. It is suggested that 350, or as many as 500, of these unfortunates were conveyed to Passage where they endured further privations, injuries, and even death at the hands of one Captain Strong, until they were evacuated to safety in a ship provided by the earl of Cork.  

79 Deposition of Benedict Claybrook (TCD, MS 820, fo. 15); deposition of Thomasine Osbalderstone (TCD, MS 820, fo. 8); deposition of Lawrence Hooper (TCD, MS 820, fos. 29–31);
It seems appropriate at this juncture to ask what rationale for their actions was supplied by the perpetrators of these disturbances of 1641 in the heartland of the Old English areas of Ireland. The participants in the insurrection, whether scions of landowning and farming families or townsfolk, did not have the compelling reasons of their counterparts in the intensively planted areas of Ireland to attack those English who had settled in their midst. When they justified their action, as they did to the Irish Protestant clergyman John Kearny, they were able to cite no more than general politico-religious legitimations. One informant told Kearny that the Irish ‘had good reasons’ to take up arms ‘in so much as the Catholiques (as he termed themselves) never attained to any height of dignity or office worth speaking of in this kingdom when as every peddler or other (as he termed them) that came out of England’ were ‘masters’ and were entrusted ‘to bear a great sway in this kingdom and curbed the natives’. Such a sense of exclusion on religious grounds was undoubtedly a prime motivation for action, once the authority of the government could be seen to have been weakened.

Others who joined in the onslaught against the Protestants might be considered to have been merely taking advantage of the developing breakdown in public order to rob, humiliate, and even murder those who were but recently settled in their community, and whose customary props had collapsed. There certainly was an opportunistic aspect to these disturbances, but social collapse in the Old English areas was not complete and the conflict in the towns was clearly sectarian in that only Protestants were attacked. This denominational selectivity was mentioned specifically by John Jessop who noted that while his tenants and followers had been robbed and stripped by the rebels they had ‘used one John Manselle, gent, with all favour and courtesy for that he was a papist although he came but lately out of England and no acquaintance were between them’. Many English, besides Jessop, recognized that it was their religion rather than their national origin which made them vulnerable, and some, as had also happened in both Ulster and Leitrim, tried to escape their fate by going to mass or even taking part with the insurgents against their own countrymen. The Protestant deponents who ruefully noted these defections admitted no sincerity in such conversions and the attitude of John Lowther, a shoemaker of Waterford, as it was reported by Judith Phillips, might be considered typical. When he was challenged about what would happen to him when the expected military aid would come from England he ‘answered and said (with a great oath) do you expect (quoth he) aid out of England and they being up there one against another, the king having lost his crown . . . by losing Ireland? For if you live saieth he . . . a hundred years you shall see Ireland never recovered again by the English.’ The deponents took some consolation from the fact that defectors like deposition of Joan Flavan (TCD, MS 820, fo. 46); deposition of Richard Aston (TCD, MS 820, fos. 1–3); depositions of Judith Phillips (TCD, MS 820, fos. 219 and 232).
Lowther or ‘old Nicholas the miller without St. Patrick’s gate in Waterford and his wife’ were base mechanics. A far more serious blow to their morale would have been the loss to the other side of ‘Mr. Williams of the Cathedral church of Waterford, organist’, and the Protestants of Waterford must have been truly perplexed when they were stopped and interrogated at St John’s gate, as they left the city for Passage, by a man bearing a halberd whom they recognized as one Cary ‘formerly a Protestant and free schoolmaster of the diocese of Waterford but then turned Papist’.  

While such changes of side make it clear that the defectors believed the lines of division to have been strictly sectarian, the fact that a public switch of religious allegiance sometimes proved sufficient to guarantee security of life and property suggests that a higher moral authority still held sway in these Old English areas than had been the case in Ulster. The wielders of this moral force were the Catholic clergy who attempted everywhere to stem the violence of the revolt and to direct its energies towards religious purposes. Their efforts to do so in Ulster clearly failed but, as was noted, they strove even there to prevent Protestants being murdered and to have the settlers given the choice of ‘turning to Mass’ or leaving the community. Their efforts in the Old English areas appear to have been more successful than in Ulster, and we get a particularly good insight, in the deposition of Robert Wadding, into the efforts of one priest in County Carlow to take control of the situation. This priest insisted that Protestants be given the opportunity to convert to Catholicism but before being given the protection of the Church they had to abjure before himself. Wadding found the priest ‘so busied in giving absolutions’ to those Protestants who had been brought to him ‘by some rebel captains’ that it took some time to obtain an audience. When Wadding was eventually brought before the priest, he was told that his ‘only course was to go to Mass and to hold with them’, and that he would then be restored immediately to his property. Before being ‘reconciled (as they termed it)’ that particular priest tendered an oath to the Protestants ‘that they should continue true and faithful subjects to the king of England and should honour and obey him in all matters temporal; that they should acknowledge the Holy Church of Rome to be the true church and the Pope of Rome to be supreme head over the church of Ireland and should honour and obey him in all causes spiritual whatsoever’.  

Besides their efforts to promote what are recognizable Old English politico-religious ambitions through the tendering of oaths, the Catholic clergy also sought to direct the leaders of the insurgency to employ their energies to achieve the restoration of the Catholic Church to its previous glory. The

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80 Deposition of John Kearny (TCD, MS 812, fo. 237); deposition of John Jessop (TCD, MS 812, fo. 188); deposition of Judith Phillips (TCD, MS 820, fo. 219); deposition of Roger Boyle (TCD, MS 820, fo. 246).

81 Deposition of Robert Wadding (TCD, MS 812, fo. 27).
clergy of Kildare led the way in reclaiming the traditional revenues of the Church from Protestant control. One deponent mentioned that Ross McGeoghegan, ‘titulary bishop of Kildare’, took away the ‘chapter chest’ of the diocese, and that the Catholic clergy began immediately to claim the tithe that had previously been paid to the Protestant clergy. Another reported that he had heard Dominic Dempsey, guardian of the Franciscan friars in Kildare, remark ‘that the king had long usurped the tithes and rights belonging to the Catholic church but now God was pleased to bring it to them to whom it did belong, and that the world was now towards the end, and it was God’s will that true religion should be established and therefore we must all go to Mass which was the true religion’. The clergy of the Old English towns were especially active in recovering their traditional places of worship and their traditional burial places from Protestant control. Lay participants in the insurrection were certainly impressed by the effort of the Catholic clergy to lay claim to tithes because this would have relieved them of the obligation to pay voluntary subscriptions to their own clergy as well as official payments to the Protestant ministry. In Longford, John Stubbs reported how the rebel leaders had exulted that they would never ‘be more troubled with the bishops’ courts and paying of tithes’ while John Stirling, a minister in County Meath, complained how his proctor, who had demanded duties and fees at a funeral service, had been taken by the beard and thrown into the grave by one James Cusack with the expressed hope ‘that Mr. John Sterling should never be minister there any more but that the priests and friars should be in his stead’. The seizure and desecration of Protestant bibles and prayer books seems also to have been encouraged by the clergy, and this was frequently conducted by rebel captains or lay participants in the revolt without a clerical presence.82

When civilians acted independently of the clergy, it is likely that their actions enjoyed general clerical approval. There were, however, several instances where the leads given by the clergy were carried to extremes that would probably not have been endorsed by the priests who had identified the religious objectives they believed the insurrection should serve. For example, priests in Leinster, as had been the case in County Monaghan, wished to deny burial to the corpses of Protestants in ground that had been consecrated for Catholic use. This was a more frequent issue in Leinster than had been the case in Ulster, because new Protestant churches had been constructed in Ulster as part of the plantation programme, but in Leinster the existing churches and churchyards, which had been used from time immemorial for Catholic worship and burial, had been converted into Protestant use. Therefore, as state authority collapsed in 1641, the Catholic clergy moved quickly to recover their traditional churches and burial places,

82 Deposition of Rebecca Collys (TCD, MS 813, fo. 385v); deposition of John Huetson (TCD, MS 813, fo. 261); deposition of John Stubbs (TCD, MS 817, fo. 209); deposition of John Stirling (TCD, MS 816, fo. 139); deposition of Elizabeth Hoop (TCD, MS 820, fo. 50).
and in doing so reconsecrated them for Catholic use. This involved them in ridding them of all residues of Protestants and Protestantism, which extended to the exhumation of the bodies of Protestants who had been buried in these holy places during the previous decades. This agenda was pursued systematically in County Kildare under the direction of Bishop Ross McGeoghegan and James Dempsey, ‘the popish vicar-general there’, saying that they could not sanctify ground which included ‘heretics bones’. The removal of such bodies, under clerical supervision, always caused grave offence to Protestant witnesses, and even more so the undignified dumping in ditches of the remains of their relatives. The more extreme humiliations accorded to such corpses were manifestations of a cultural detestation of an English presence in the community that probably did not enjoy the approval of the Catholic clergy even when these outbursts were given a religious overtone. For example, the practical bent of the sectarianism of the Kilkenny merchant community, which we have already noted in the use to which they put the torn pages of bibles and prayer books, almost certainly did not have clerical endorsement when it extended to the exhumation of Protestant corpses from ‘the tombs and graves in the churches in Kilkenny under colour of getting up moulds whereof to make gunpowder’. Indeed, the suggestion that Protestant corpses were so degraded would be unbelievable were it not that a detailed description from Waterford of two people engaged in the manufacture of saltpetre from the rotting remains of Protestants conforms so closely to what was then best scientific practice as to render it plausible.

The trouble in Waterford began when a Protestant clergyman, Thomas Haylin, and his wife were buried in the grounds of the cathedral against the wishes of ‘a Mass priest’. Then, after Whit 1642, when the living Protestants had been sent packing to England, the insurgents ‘caused to be digged to make gunpowder’ the grave of Haylin and his wife and four other Protestants. The ‘corpses [which] had some bones and flesh on them’ were then taken over by Richard Neyler of the city, apothecary, and one Wars ‘formerly a Protestant but now turned Papist, an Engineer and Master of their Ordnance’ and ‘these they boiled in a great furnace till they came to salt petre and made them gunpowder’. Such improvisation, our narrator tells us, was persisted with until gunpowder for the Confederate army was imported from the Continent through the port of Dungarvan.83

83 Deposition of Thomas Hewetson (TCD, MS 813, fo. 260); deposition of Joseph Wheeler (TCD, MS 812, fo. 202); deposition of Lawrence Hooper (TCD, MS 820, fos. 29–31); Dr Joan Thirsk guided me to Drs Glenys and Alan Crocker, authorities on the manufacture of gunpowder in earlier times. I am especially grateful to Dr Glenys Crocker for the information that the boiling of rotting remains (either vegetable or animal) in a sophisticated cauldron was an essential element in the process of making saltpetre, and for telling me that the Swedish army used clay from cemeteries for this purpose. Dr Crocker also guided me to the following pertinent literature: A. R. Williams, ‘The Production of Saltpetre in the Middle Ages’, Ambix, 20 (1973), 125–33; O. Guttman, The Manufacture of Explosives, 2 vols. (London, 1895).
There is no evidence of any Catholic clerical presence at, or approval of, these gruesome obscenities, and while the Confederates were certainly desperately short of gunpowder (something that was noted when we considered the work to which Dr Hodges had been assigned in Dungannon) it could only have been an intense animosity towards all English and Protestant presence in their midst that drove them so to degrade the memory and remains of former residents within their community. In this sense, the use made of Protestant corpses as a source of saltpetre has something in common with the practice of ritualized cannibalism which social anthropologists have interpreted as a group expression of extreme emotion towards other people rather than the use of human flesh as a source of protein.\footnote{I am grateful to Anthony Pagden for conversation on the matter of cannibalism on which see Pagden, ‘Cannibalismo e contagio’, Quaderni storici, 50 (1982), 147–64.}

Catholic priests would probably have wished to restrain their followers from such excesses, and there are several instances among the depositions for Leinster where Protestants acknowledged their escape from humiliation, or even death, as due to the intervention of priests. William Pillsworth, a Protestant clergyman in County Kildare, believed he owed his life to God’s deliverance, but he then acknowledged that a Catholic priest had been instrumental in procuring his release from the hands of the rebels even as they placed him on the gallows and had mockingly commanded him to preach from there. This priest, whom Pillsworth had never before seen, ‘made a long speech’ on his behalf, saying that Pillsworth’s father, who had ‘lived for long amongst them, did not deserve his child should be so miserably used’, and the priest warned that the ‘bloody inhuman act’ that they then contemplated would bring God’s vengeance upon them.\footnote{Deposition of William Pillsworth (TCD, MS 813, fo. 1).}

While priests could thus be associated by Protestants with exerting a restraining influence over the course of events in Leinster they were also identified, as they were in Ulster, with encouraging a pre-emptive strike against a further erosion of the already precarious position of Catholicism in Ireland. The belief that such an erosion was in prospect derived partly from the reports that Irish Catholic parliamentarians and their associates brought back with them from England, and partly from stories of what was happening (or what was believed to be happening) in England, Scotland, and continental Europe that were circulated throughout Ireland by Catholic priests. It is likely that each area of Leinster had its own source of information, and this would explain why the rumours circulating in the different counties were not precisely the same. That clear lines of communication with Britain existed is evident from the rumours themselves as also from the testimony of deponents such as that of Job Ward that ‘one Nicholas Barnwell who married the Countess of Tirconnell gives the best and truest intelligence out of England and is very intimately acquainted with some that are near the queen’. Such
connections with those who were closely associated with the court of Queen Henrietta Maria would explain why so many rumours in circulation related to the sufferings endured by the queen at the hands of English Protestants. Stories concerning priests in the queen’s household won favour in most counties. In County Longford, for example, it was alleged that ‘the parliament of England had adjudged Father Philip her highness’ confessor to be executed and quartered in the queen’s presence’, while a more gruesome version held ‘that the English had cut off the head of the queen’s priest, and cut off his privy members and threw them in his face, and had quartered him before the queen’.86

To these gross exaggerations of the indignities that the queen actually did suffer were added narrations (analogous to those in circulation in Ulster) of hardships imposed on Catholics in England which presaged what would happen to Catholics in Ireland. Donatus, or Donogh, Connor, a Protestant clergyman in Wexford who had once been a Catholic priest but who had ‘by the light of God’s truth’ become a Protestant, explained that the ‘rebels from time to time divulged that the cause of their insurrection was for that ten thousand at least of Protestants in England and Ireland had put their hands to a note to hang all the papists at their own doors unless they came to their church with them’. Connor also had knowledge of Catholic fears that this intended assault was but part of a universal Protestant offensive because priests had spread rumours of atrocities committed by Protestants in France against the Catholic population there.87

Religion was never treated as a discrete matter and allegations relating to the humiliation of the queen and the proposed assault upon Catholicism quickly gave way to reports of challenges to the royal prerogative by the English parliament which mingled what had happened with what might ensue. It was alleged by some Catholics that the parliament had used the king so ‘harshly’ that he had ‘departed into Scotland and from thence he would come into Ireland and destroy all the English there’. It was only a short step from there to suggest that the king had been dethroned by the parliament ‘and would not return into England for the English had a king, the Palsgrave, and had banished the queen to France’. Others had contended that the queen had found refuge in Ireland and ‘that this kingdom of Ireland was the queen’s jointure’, and that she would take up residence there ‘and clear this kingdom of all Protestants even as the parliament goeth about to clear England of all Papists’. Some went further to claim that the king also was on their side and

86 Deposition of Job Ward (TCD, MS 810, fo. 98); deposition of John Kennedy (TCD, MS 817, fo. 154); deposition of John Willmot (TCD, MS 815, fo. 295); deposition of Margaret Conygrave (TCD, MS 817, fo. 140); for the propaganda onslaught against the queen, her mother, Fr. Robert Philip (who was impeached), and Fr. William Thomson (who was arrested) see Caroline M. Hibbard, Charles I and the Popish Plot (Chapel Hill, NC, 1983), 197–210.
87 Deposition of Donatus Connor (TCD, MS 818, fo. 110).
'that the English were proclaimed traitors, and that the king was in Scotland and would be in Ireland within nine days and would banish all the English'. Most dramatic was the assertion of one Welsh, an innkeeper of Kilcullen, County Kildare, 'that the king was in the north of Ireland and ridd disguised and had glassen eyes because he would not be known and that the king was as much against the Protestants as he himself and the rebels were, for that the Puritans in the parliament of England threw libels in disparagement of the king’s majesty making a question whether a king or no king'.

All of these rumours, allegations, half-truths, and suggestions show that those in Leinster who became involved in an insurrection, which they sincerely believed was designed to frustrate an anticipated blow against Catholicism in Ireland, experienced little difficulty in convincing themselves that their actions were also intended to support the king and queen. This lent credibility to the frequently made claim that the insurrection had been previously approved by the king, and all these rumours and claims were widely believed by Catholics because they contained sufficient elements of truth to make them plausible. What the relative roles of priests and laity were in devising these justifications for revolt, and in guiding the insurrection, is unclear, but everything suggests that the Catholic clergy in Leinster exerted more influence over the course of events than in the other provinces. Indeed some believed the priests were so influential there that they had, as in Connacht, undermined the authority of the Catholic landowners by stirring up the populace over religious issues. Those Protestant deponents who made this assertion alluded to meetings convened by the Catholic clergy previous to the insurrection, especially that supposedly held at Multyfarnham, County Westmeath, on 3 and 4 October 1641. The clear implication was that plans were there laid for the revolt without any reference to the Catholic laity, and Randall Adams, a minister at Rathcouragh in the same county, reported on a conversation he had overheard on 1 November 1641 between some of the ‘chief gentlemen’ of the county and a group of friars. The gentlemen, mostly members of the Tuite family, laid a charge against the friars ‘that they and their fellows were the cause of this great and mischievous rebellion’. They further asserted that the friars had had no cause of grievance that would justify such extreme measures because of ‘the great freedom they had in religion without control, and that they generally had the best horses, clothes, meats, drinks and all other sort of provision delightful or useful . . . and they had these and many other privileges beyond any of their own function either regular or secular through the Christian world, and therefore most bitterly them to their teeth said that they hoped God would bring that vengeance

88 Deposition of John Sewell (TCD, MS 813, fo. 236); deposition of Margaret Conygrave (TCD, MS 817, fo. 140); deposition of Robert Wadding (TCD, MS 812, fo. 27); deposition of John Steele (TCD, MS 817, fo. 161); deposition of Henry Palmer (TCD, MS 818, fo. 88).
home to them that they by their cursed plots laboured so wickedly to bring upon others'.

This discourse, if it can be taken at face value, alludes to a tension that had been developing between the Catholic gentry and continentally trained priests in Ireland ever since the 1620s, and that was to become even more acute after 1642 when the clergy began to play an active role in Irish politics. Previous to then, as far as the Catholic landed interest was concerned, it was they, through their parliamentary representatives and delegations to court, who had negotiated toleration for Catholicism, and they obviously wanted religious freedom to be on the terms they sought after. This involved Catholicism and the Catholic clergy functioning under the protection of their patrons but within a state system that was officially Protestant. The Catholic clergy, for their part, were becoming impatient with this arrangement, first because it facilitated Catholic lay interference in church affairs, and second because it denied them the right, or indeed the opportunity, to practise Catholicism openly as was the norm in the continental societies of which they had experience. It would seem therefore that the clergy, led by some of their seminary-trained bishops, welcomed the opportunity to make a bid for the full public recognition of Catholicism which would have involved a recovery of cathedrals and churches that had been lost to the state religion, as well as the lands, tithes, and other duties that had traditionally belonged to the Catholic Church. It has long been accepted, and has recently been detailed by Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin who has worked from Catholic ecclesiastical sources, that these ambitions were in the minds of some senior Catholic clergy before 1641 and were expressed openly by them from the moment the Confederacy was established, and most especially from the time that it received official recognition from the papacy.

Therefore it is not at all unlikely that the Catholic clergy, who were more firmly established in Leinster than in any other province in Ireland, took advantage of the collapse of government authority in most parts of Leinster, beyond Dublin and a few fortified outposts, to articulate deeply held ambitions which their lay patrons had always refused to countenance and which they now believed would provide a moral underpinning to the insurrection that was already under way. Thus what Donatus Connor had to report from County Wexford seems entirely credible: he had, he said, ‘frequently heard the rebels say they would never give up (even if pardoned) unless that all the church land of Ireland were restored to the churchmen of the Romish religion and that they might enjoy that religion freely and the Protestant religion might be quite rooted out of this kingdom and that the church of Rome might be restored

89 Deposition of John Edgworth (TCD, MS 817, fo. 144); deposition of Randall Adams (TCD, MS 817, fo. 42); Perceval-Maxwell, The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion, 224–5.
90 Ó hAnnracháin, “Far from Terra Firma”, esp. pp. 106–33.
to its ancient jurisdiction, power and privilege within the said kingdom of Ireland’.  

Those landowners, like the Tuites of County Westmeath, who were secure in their property would have had no time for such an agenda, first because they were themselves likely to have been owners of former church lands which they would have acquired after the dissolution of the monasteries, but also because they would have recognized that the agenda could only have been achieved through revolutionary action which would have placed their lands and positions in jeopardy. This would explain why the Catholic clergy in Leinster had to speak over the heads of such conservative landowners, and in so doing unleashed a peasant fury which they were able to control only somewhat more effectively than their counterparts in Ulster and Connacht.

The inability of the Catholic clergy to keep the uprising on a strictly religious course even in the areas dominated by the Old English is explained by a variety of factors. First, as in the case of County Wicklow, some landowners were acutely dissatisfied with the government, and those who fostered a sense of grievance over what they had lost in the various plantations believed they had an opportunity to recover their losses at one fell swoop. Besides the Byrnes, O’Tooles, and Kavanaghs of Wicklow, there were some landowners in Counties Wexford and Longford as well as King’s and Queen’s counties who were ready to take advantage of the breakdown in authority to meet these purely material ends. These were willing to echo the religious message of the clergy or to express concern over the plight of the queen and the royal prerogative but their ultimate concern was that their lands had been assigned to English and Scots who now ‘liveth bravely and richly’ while ‘they and the rest of the Irish were poor gents’. Their objective therefore was to cancel all the plantations that had been established in Ireland after the principle, articulated also in the other provinces, that as ‘the English held their own lands in England, and so did the Scots in Scotland and so should the Irish in Ireland’. The fulfilment of this principle required that since ‘both the English and Scottish which were in Ireland were all beggars when they came into Ireland so should they be turned thence’. But besides clearing the settlers from their former possessions these landowners were, as we saw, interested also in spreading the insurrection outwards from their own counties. They were concerned to do so because they recognized that their gamble could succeed only if they could gain political control everywhere in Ireland, and create a situation whereby ‘they would never have any more chief governors, judges, justices or officers of the English or Scots but would name and appoint such themselves’.  

While the effort of the higher Catholic clergy to dictate the course of events was thus complicated by the articulation of a parallel set of objectives by

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91 Deposition of Donatus Connor (TCD, MS 818, fo. 110).
92 Deposition of John Reade (TCD, MS 817, fo. 194).
discontented Catholic gentlemen, it was also made difficult because their subordinates among the ranks of the clergy frequently derived their own crude interpretations from the justifications for action being outlined by the continentally trained priests. Thus, for example, Thomas Fleetwood, a minister in the parish of Kilbeggan in County Westmeath, learned from one Brian O’Grieve, a local farmer, that a friar had exhorted them ‘to fall to this course of rebellion or commotion’ and swore them to take action, ‘assuring them that though the English did discharge muskets and that some of them should be killed yet they should not fear for such as so died should be saints. And they should rush on with a multitude and kill all the Protestants and so receive arms from them’.93

If priests of limited education did indeed direct Catholics towards rash action that would not have been contemplated by senior ecclesiastics, we cannot establish what motivated the poorer element of the Irish population to follow their advice. Tenant farmers, merchants, artisans, and even servants who had a reasonably fixed position in a hierarchical order might be expected to have followed the guidance of their spiritual or social betters, but every locality in Leinster, like all provinces in Ireland, also contained a sizeable number of masterless men and women whose actions could not be predicted once a challenge to the authority of the government was launched. Prominent among these in Leinster, as elsewhere, would have been soldiers recently discharged from Wentworth’s army. The insurrection also attracted the early involvement of people such as Lawrence McArt in County Wexford, described as ‘an ancient rebel’, by which was meant somebody associated with Tyrone’s rebellion half a century earlier. Regular reference was also made by deponents in Leinster, as in the other provinces, to the presence of women and even children in the groups that attacked them, sometimes to the effect that ‘the women rebels . . . were very forward actors in the rebellion’. And, as in all provinces, reference was made to individuals who took advantage of the breakdown in public order cynically to seize hold of the goods of Protestants who, from being the most secure, had dramatically become the most vulnerable people in the community. Among these was Henry Fitzgerald who ‘took up all that he could get of the English Protestants for the earl of Kildare’s rents’, alleging that he had been appointed by the earl to this task. Such fraud led to the transformation of the economic position of some who previously lived on the margins of society. These included Morris Bawne, ‘who lived about Bourghall Moore near Hacketstown’, who was ‘formerly a cowherd but then turned by his robbery and pillaging to be a famous and rich rebel and a commander of rebels’.94

93 Deposition of Thomas Fleetwood (TCD, MS 817, fo. 37).
94 Deposition of William Amicon (TCD, MS 818, fo. 97); deposition of Ralph Turner (TCD, MS 817, fo. 37); deposition of William Dynes (TCD, MS 813, fo. 360); deposition of William Bailie (TCD, MS 812, fo. 45).
Social upheavals of this kind were hardly unexpected in the circumstances, and Protestant victims were most distressed by the cancellation of social and commercial bonds which they had taken to be permanent. William Bailie, a merchant of Hacketstown in County Carlow, was particularly perturbed when he was robbed and mocked by Mr Samuel East, a justice of the peace for Wicklow and formerly a Protestant, and ‘one that owed him some money and was (as he remembered) his special friend’. Deponents were also bewildered when they witnessed their former tenants and servants among their assailants, and those Protestants who had been tenants to Catholic landowners also expressed horror at the cancellation of agreements they had previously assumed to be sacrosanct. When rebellion broke out in County Meath, George Boothe fled for safety leaving behind his cattle, ‘thinking Thomas Geoghegan (who is this deponent’s landlord) to be a loyal subject and upon his the said Thomas his faithful promise to be true and just to this deponent’. Some, when challenged, could justify even such unscrupulous behaviour on religious grounds, as for example one Long in County Kildare who, when accused of having broken the commandment against taking his neighbour’s goods, ‘said that the Protestants were not neighbours of theirs but they were heretics and therefore no breach of conscience to take away their goods’.95

Not all insurgents were as unscrupulous as this, and deponents noted how some of their former friends among the Irish had remained steadfast even in the face of adversity. Thus Robert Wadding of Kelltown in County Carlow acknowledged that he had been rescued by Owen Byrne at the point when the rebels had taken ‘his coat and hat and were unbuttoning his doublet’. The rebels, he said, ‘were aggrieved’ at this interruption of their work ‘but durst not oppose him being powerful amongst them yet swore they would inform against him that he was a protector of Protestants’. This particular episode implies that the expulsions were justified on grounds of religion but the assault, when it gained force, was more sweeping than that. William Collis of Kildare town reported how one Lawrence White remarked that he thought ‘the worse of himself the day he saw any of the seed of the English walk along the streets’. The experience of Ralph Walmsly, an English Catholic who had settled near Birr, was similar. When the uprising began, several of his former acquaintances among the Irish helped and assisted him in getting to the house of the Catholic, but loyal, earl of Clanricard, in Portumna. However he found that others of the rebels refused to be guided by the principles that were laid down by priests and proved themselves so antagonistic towards the English that they would spare none, ‘not so much as any of the old Roman Catholics if they were of the English kind or race’. Moreover, as the Boate brothers

95 Deposition of William Bailie (TCD, MS 812, fo. 45); deposition of George Boothe (TCD, MS 816, fo. 108); deposition of Oliver Daverin (TCD, MS 813, fo. 287).
also were to report, in Ireland’s Naturall History, the antagonism was not confined to people, and the symbolism of revolt extended from the destruction of all things Protestant to all things reminiscent of the English presence. This was put most graphically by Marmaduke Clapham of Synrone, also in King’s County, in words that may well have proved inspirational to the Boates, when he described how the insurgents ‘made such havoc of our cattle and sheep, killing the lean and young breed . . . in such multitudes that for want of salt much were corrupted and stank, and the very dogs that were English breed they killed so transported they were . . . with an inveterate malice to extirpate the very memory of our nation’. Clapham made no reference to the animals being put on trial, as seems to have happened in Connacht, but, he did allege, as had a deponent from County Down in Ulster (in statements reminiscent of the symbolism of Irish revolt in the sixteenth century), that the Irishwomen who ‘formerly used the English habit as bands, ruffs, hats, cloaks, gowns . . . now wear kerchefs, mantles, trousses and all Irish habit’.

Such descriptions would suggest that the struggle that happened in Leinster was essentially a struggle between cultures, and that the ambition of those who led the revolt was to return to the Gaelic order that had been forcefully brought to an end a half-century before. On closer inspection, it seems that the rebels, or those of them who articulated their objectives, had no such vision. Some could think of change only in terms of Catholicism taking the place of Protestantism as the official religion of the country, others looked forward to Irish Catholics resuming their rightful positions in government, and yet others believed that the queen and king were on their side and were even present in Ireland to supervise such a change. However still others, and possibly a majority, could think no further than the immediate future and publicly said that ‘now the day was their own, and that they had been slaves to the English a long time but now they would be revenged to the full and would not leave (before Christmas day) an English Protestant rogue living’.

Pronouncements of this kind cannot be taken as statements of policy because they would never have been made openly if government authority had held firm. Furthermore what would happen after Christmas Day was no more a concern of these individuals than it was of those involved in any European peasant revolt during the seventeenth century. Nonetheless, it does seem that the prime factor which drove the peasants to take up arms was a sense of grievance over the loss of property and status. To this must be added

96 Deposition of Robert Wadding (TCD, MS 812, fo. 27); deposition of William Collis (TCD, MS 813, fo. 285); deposition of Ralph Walsmy (TCD, MS 814, fo. 264); deposition of Marmaduke Clapham (TCD, MS 814, fo. 162); Gerard Boate, Ireland’s Naturall History (1652), in A Collection of Tracts and Treatises Illustrative of the Natural History, Antiquities . . . of Ireland (Dublin, 1860), i. i–148, p. 77; on 16th-century precedents see Nicholas Canny, The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established, 1565–76 (Hassocks, 1976), 136–53, esp. pp. 142–3; see also David Edwards, ‘The Butler Revolt’, Irish Historical Studies, 38 (1993), 228–55.

97 Deposition of Francis Barber (TCD, MS 815, fo. 313).
related annoyance over questions of religion. This was possibly felt deeply by lay people, and particularly by those who had been exposed to the doctrines of the Counter-Reformation, but it was best articulated by a clergy who had a keener sense of outrage over this matter than their lay patrons. Priests were, after all, the principal losers because they enjoyed no certain income due to the clandestine character of Catholicism. They also, from their continental experience, would have been keenly conscious of the scandalously shabby appearance which Catholic worship in Ireland presented as compared with the public manifestations of religious fervour evident in all Catholic countries of Europe.

Priests, therefore, had every reason to be advocates of change, and their sense of grievance must have contributed to the general sense of dissatisfaction that made it so easy for the different elements of Catholic society in Leinster to cast aside their political allegiance once the authority of the state had been challenged. It appears, from the evidence cited, that resentments associated with religion were, in many instances, engulfed in an outpouring of hatred against all things English. This was to be short lived, however, because the more politically astute recognized that this course would only lead to anarchy and would prove disastrous for everybody who enjoyed property and status. Faced with this prospect, these Catholic leaders had no choice but to look to the clergy to save them from impending disaster. By doing so they effectively became prisoners of their priests as they joined with them in putting procedures in place for the assembly of a Confederation at Kilkenny. However they had no choice but to go along with this scheme, because otherwise there was a real possibility that they would become the victims rather than the leaders of a political movement. With the move towards the creation of a Catholic Confederation in May 1642 it can be said for Leinster, as for the other provinces in Ireland, that the insurrection of 1641 had run its course. This Confederation was to have more meaning for Leinster insurgents than for others because its headquarters was to be located at Kilkenny where it was to enjoy the patronage of Lord Mountgarrett, but not the marquess of Ormond who had abandoned Kilkenny to join the government side. Kilkenny’s suitability as a venue was, however, largely due to the exertions of the Catholic clergy in Leinster during the months October 1641–May 1642 which prevented the disturbances in that province from lapsing into the chaos and mayhem that beset both Ulster and Connacht.

8.5. THE RISING IN MUNSTER IN 1641

Investigation of what happened in Munster in the aftermath of the Ulster rising and the alleged plot to seize Dublin Castle of 22 and 23 October 1641 can be brief because there were, in effect, no consequential disturbances in the province of Munster previous to December 1641 or the early months of
Furthermore when the normal life of the province, modulated by the systematic collection of rent, came to be disrupted by conflict this was because some Catholic landowners, initially in Tipperary and then in the other counties of the province, had mobilized an army to confront the Protestant interest being upheld by Sir William St Leger, lord president of the province. There is, therefore, no equivalent in Munster to the Leinster peasant uprising which forced the hand of the Catholic landed elite into taking action against the state. In so far as the surviving evidence dictates any modification to that generalization it is because a small number of settlers reported attacks on them in the weeks and months before the province was beset by war, and the associated disorder. Thus Ann Eaton, a settler in Limerick city, contended that she was robbed of her goods on 4 December 1641 by Nicholas O’Helahen, described by her as a justice of the peace and freeholder, who ‘told her’ the previous day that ‘he had order from the Pope and from the Queen of England to rob the English and to strip them naked, but if she should go to Mass she should enjoy all’.

When such isolated instances are left to one side it emerges that the fount of the disturbances in Munster was in County Tipperary. Individual Protestant settlers in that county were deprived of their goods from as early as 1 November 1641, and Juan Staple, whose husband John Staple held a thirty-one-year lease of Tourine, ‘heard’ their assailants state that they had ‘the Queen’s warrant to take all [their] goods, but because we were their neighbours they would not kill us’. Such attacks on individual families were reported with greater frequency from different parts of the county towards the end of November and the very first days of December 1641, and Samuel Pullein, dean of Clonfert but resident in Tipperary, testified that on ‘13 December 1641 the Irish rebels did wholly rise in the county of Tipperary against his Majesty and the English and other Protestants’.

By this Pullein must have meant a formal declaration of war by the army which had then been mobilized in the county by the Catholic gentry, ‘all men of great estates’, under the command of Tibbot or Theobald Butler, Viscount Ikerrin, and James Butler, lord of Dunboyne. The timing of the assault against the Protestant settlers in the county would suggest that the commencement of formal hostilities in Tipperary followed upon the combination between the Palesmen and the Ulster insurgents which had been announced on the previous day. However the disturbance in Tipperary must also be regarded as the culmination of attacks upon Protestant settlers in the county, led by Purcells and Butlers, that had been becoming more numerous during the preceding days, and the outcome also of ongoing discussions,
during the previous weeks, among the Catholic gentry of Tipperary and their counterparts in neighbouring counties. Thus, Thomas Fuller was able to read fresh meaning into a conversation of ‘the end of November 1641’ where he had heard the Scottish, but Catholic, Alexander Hamilton of Enagh in Tipperary say ‘that this Irish rebellion and the intention of taking of his Majesty’s castle of Dublin was known in Scotland before, as appeared by a letter from the earl of Abercorne to his brother’. As he reflected upon these remarks Fuller suspected that Hamilton himself had prior knowledge of what was in store for Protestant settlers in Tipperary, and he was convinced of this by Hamilton’s subsequent mocking remarks, after Fuller had been deprived of his property by the insurgents, that ‘the Irish [had] used [him] well that they did not take away [his] life as well as [his] goods’, and ‘that the Scots . . . were greater rebels than the Irish coming out of their own country into England’.100

Further evidence of previous complicity among the gentry is that the insurrection in the county remained firmly under their control, and the justification for their action and the scope of their intention, which several leaders outlined to their victims, remained remarkably consistent. While the insurgents were acting in defiance of the wishes of the marquess of Ormond, whose lordship extended over Tipperary as well as Kilkenny and whose tenants they were dislodging, they were able to claim support from Richard Butler of Kilcash, brother to the marquess, and they ultimately chose as general of their army the man described by Samuel Pullein as ‘the ould rebel the Lord Mountgarret’ who was grand-uncle to Ormond, and the senior Catholic member of the Butler family. All leaders of the rising, whether Butlers, Purcells, or O’Dwyers, claimed a warrant for their actions from the king, and they outlined their ambitions in universal, if highly fanciful, terms. Thus they all claimed ‘that the parliament in England was the only cause’ why they were in arms, and they asserted that they had authority from the queen, ‘and the king’s toleration’, to banish ‘all the English and Scots out of Ireland’, and then to ‘go for England with a great army’ and join with the army of ‘the Papists [who] were now [in] arms above thirty thousand strong in England and the king with them in the field’. They spoke also of another force of 30,000 that would be landed from France ‘before May day next in England’ and an army ‘no less from Spain’, which would enable them to ‘cut off all the Puritans and have all this kingdom to be of their religion’. Some also claimed to be acting defensively against the forces of Sir William St Leger, the Munster president, who had taken pre-emptive action to preserve order in Tipperary, and one rebel leader was reported to have said that ‘the English might thank the Lord President of Munster for that case they were in; in regard his lordship killed so many honest men of the country (meaning the rebels) for nothing’;

100 Deposition of Archibald Campbell (TCD, MS 821, fo. 12); deposition of Thomas Fuller (TCD, MS 821, fo. 28–9).
St Leger thus came to be demonized in Tipperary (and also in County Waterford) in much the same terms as Sir Charles Coote had been by the insurgents in both Leinster and Connacht.101

The Catholic leaders of the urban communities in County Tipperary were also said to have been in league with the gentry who had led the insurrection. Thus, although the rebels had to force their way into Thurles ‘which was planted with English Protestants’, and were also excluded from the episcopal centre of Cashel when they first presented themselves before the gates on 14 December 1641, they gained access to Cashel on 31 December because Alexander Boyton, an alderman, ‘gave a saw to the rebels’, and advised them how they might take the town by surprise once they had cut through the gates. When the rebels turned their attention to nearby Fethard on the following day it transpired that the mayor and burgesses ‘were Papists and rather did assent unto than oppose their coming into the town’, and they similarly took Clonmel. Therefore, soon after Christmas 1641, they held ‘all the considerable towns of the County of Tipperary as Cashel, Clonmel, and Fethard’, and had robbed the Protestant settlers in these communities of their goods, ‘murdered’ some of them, stripped the survivors of their clothes, and set the majority on the road to Waterford to get a passage to England. While the fate of Protestant settlers in Tipperary was thus no different from that of settlers in Leinster the manner of their removal was distinctive in that it was effected by ‘the noblemen, gents and other their assistants’. This is not to suggest that there were not other forces at work in Tipperary to augment, or pervert, the efforts of the leaders of the insurgency there. The ‘followers’ of Sir Richard Butler of Kilcash were not as guarded as their leader who insisted that his actions were designed to uphold the authority of the crown. Instead, they asserted ‘that the king of England was turned Papist and would come over to Ireland before very long’, and then threatened ‘that if his Majesty did not continue in going to Mass they would pull his crown from his head’. Priests in Tipperary, as elsewhere, emphasized the religious justification for the war, stating that ‘there must be but one religion in this kingdom’. More ominously still, ‘Father Thomas Gregory O’Donine’, presumably from his knowledge of continental affairs, recommended that all Protestants in the kingdom should be slaughtered following the ‘example in France in the like, for until the great massacre there they could never be free of the heretics’. And in Tipperary, as elsewhere, there were individuals, such as James White, who took advantage of the collapse in authority for their own immediate gain; he consoled his victim with the rhetorical query: ‘is it not as good for you that I should have your goods as the Lord Mountgarret?’. However, while making due allowance for all these deviations, and even for

101 Deposition of Samuel Pullein (TCD, MS 821, fos. 30–1); deposition of Edward Banks (TCD, MS 821, fos. 7–8); deposition of Phillip Hill (TCD, MS 820, fo. 69); on Mountgarrett and his more particular cause for grievance against the government see Edwards, ‘The Ormond Lordship’, 310–23.
one notable atrocity in that county which will be considered later, the over-
whelming impression conveyed by the depositions for County Tipperary is
that the insurrection was directed from the top and remained under gentry
control.\textsuperscript{102}

The actions of the County Tipperary gentry meant, of course, that they
were usurping the authority of the marquess of Ormond as well as that of
the representatives of central and provincial government, and in order to
make good their challenge they set to establishing an army that would enlist
support from all Catholic landowners in the province of Munster and beyond.
The gentry in Limerick, north County Cork, and Waterford had little choice
but to become associated with this army because from Christmas 1641
onwards various battalions of Mountgarrett’s force entered these areas,
demanded support from the Catholic gentry, and laid siege to the principal
castles in Protestant possession that lay within reach of the invading force.
These included Lough Gur and Newcastle[west] in County Limerick, Mallow
and Mitchelstown in County Cork, and Dromana in County Waterford.
While, in some instances, the support of the Catholic gentry was enforced
by the rebel army, in most cases it seems to have been readily forthcoming
as part of a pre-arranged strategy. This was certainly the opinion of Pierce
Lacy of Limerick city, an Irish Protestant gentleman who remained loyal to
the government, as he reflected on the advice, that he should not ‘take a
wrong course in hand’, which had been proffered him by Lord Viscount
Roche. This happened on 1 December 1641 when Roche had encountered
him marching with his men to support the president of Munster in main-
taining order in the province.\textsuperscript{103}

Whether pre-arranged or not, various members of the Catholic gentry
whose estates lay close to the border with Tipperary emerged as leaders of
the insurgent forces in their respective areas. These included Lord Castle-
connell and Eddy Lacy of Bruree in County Limerick; Lord Viscount Roche,
and several of the Barrys, O’Callaghans, and Condons in north County Cork;
and Captain Edmund Fennell in County Waterford. Their action was soon
followed by Catholic landowners of Gaelic as well as Old English ancestry
whose property lay close to the south and west coasts of the province including
Lord Muskerry, Mac Carthy Reagh, Owen O’Sullivan the O’Sullivan Mór,
O’Sullivan Beare, Edmund Hussey, Florence MacCarthy, and Piaras
Feiritéir. In all instances, these latter also organized their followers into regi-
ments as, for example, in County Kerry where the ‘gents and freeholders of

\textsuperscript{102} Deposition of Samuel Pullein (TCD, MS 821, fos. 30–1); deposition of Edward Banks (TCD,
MS 821, fos. 7–8); deposition of Robert Hamilton (TCD, MS 821, fos. 18–24); deposition of Randolph
Shaftoe (TCD, MS 821, fo. 26); deposition of Elizabeth Nelson (TCD, MS 821, fo. 153); deposition of
Edmund Francis (TCD, MS 821, fo. 56); that Fr. O’Donine’s interpretation of the Massacre of St
Bartholomew conformed with that of the apologists on the Catholic side in France, see Denis Crouzet,

\textsuperscript{103} Deposition of Pierce Lacy (TCD, MS 829, fo. 170).
the said county in a rebellious and martial manner [arrived] with colours flying' to lay siege to Tralee Castle. This mobilization of the Catholic gentry in Munster also included women, with ‘Ellen Barry, widow, alias de Lacy, and her tenants and followers’ assaulting the farm of William Holyday in the barony of Orrery.104

The Catholic elite of most counties in Munster was composed of landowners because the oligarchy of the towns—where there was always a substantial Protestant population—usually remained loyal to the government, or strove, at least, to maintain order within the town and to prevent attacks upon Protestants. The glaring exception to this, besides Tipperary which was previously noted, was County Limerick, where the mayor of Limerick city, Dominic Fanning, provided hospitality to the Catholic gentry of County Limerick and north County Cork who sat ‘at the said Fanning’s table cheerfully drinking King Charles his health with confusion to his enemies’. Fanning also echoed the justifications advanced by gentry for their actions, stating that ‘what they did was for and in behalf of his Majesty, alleging further that the English and Protestant were rebels and they themselves the true subjects’. To further prove this proposition Fanning explained that the Scottish Covenanters had ‘mightily abused his Majesty’ but those who had now risen in arms in Ireland ‘would see him righted, adding further that as they, meaning the Scots, took up arms for the maintenance of their religion or rather profanation (quoth he) so we have done for the maintenance of ours which is the true religion’. Catholic professionals, who would also have been urban residents, were also forthright in their support for the insurgents, with Daniel Higgins, doctor of physic, being especially active with the insurgents in Limerick and north Cork, and John Field, doctor of physic, becoming ‘a most pestilent and poisonous enemy of the English nation’ in County Kerry.105

As the native elites in the various areas of Munster assumed control over rebel armies they usually went against the settler landowners in the province who had come into possession of the choice land and had dominated political life in the province over the previous half-century. However the lines of division in the different regions and counties were not invariably so clear-cut because some individuals of planter ancestry, notably Oliver Stephenson in County Limerick and Valentine Browne in Kerry, fought on the side of the insurgents, while Lord Barrymore, who was married to a daughter of the earl of Cork, remained loyal to the Protestant interest even when this involved fighting against his own kinsmen. Divisions among the gentry did break more cleanly along religious lines, and pressures were brought to bear on those

104 Deposition of Arthur Blennerhasset (TCD, MS 828, fo. 199); deposition of William Holyday (TCD, MS 823, fo. 28).
105 Deposition of Peter Mainsell (TCD, MS 829, fos. 302–5); on Higgins see deposition of John Harte (TCD, MS 829, fo. 152), and numerous depositions for Limerick and Cork, and on Field deposition of Stephen Love (TCD, MS 828, fos. 124–7).
who had crossed religious boundaries in the recent past, through either inter-marriage or conviction, to reconsider their allegiance, with the result that even close family members sometimes found themselves on opposing sides. Faith Grady, originally a Standish from Bruff Castle in County Limerick but married to Dary Grady, an ensign in the king’s army, was told bluntly by John Fox, the mayor of Kilmallock and a family acquaintance, ‘that he owed her husband’s wife no respect or courtesy because he was a traitor to the king and country, meaning thereby... because he was a Protestant and took part with the English’. She further reported how the rebels, who had stolen the title documents to her husband’s estate, had offered to sell these to her father-in-law Donagh Grady of Kilballyowen who had remained a Catholic. She also detailed with some bitterness how her husband’s kinsman Teig O’Grady, chancellor of the diocese of Emly and a justice of the peace, had not only ‘turned Papist’ but had assisted the rebel army in the siege of Lough Gur where she had taken refuge with her infant sons, Thomas and Standish Grady, after they had been expelled from their own house and property.¹⁰⁶

Faith Grady and her husband may have found themselves opposed to others of the Grady or O’Grady family, but they were at least sure of their allegiance. To this extent they were better off than individuals, such as Sir William Power of Kilbolane in north County Cork, who, although Catholic, sought to maintain a neutral position. When Power’s castle ultimately fell into rebel hands, he was accused, even by his own gate porter, of having conspired with the enemy, and he thus came to be categorized as a rebel as if he had been involved in the insurgency from the outset. Gerald FitzGerald of Dromana, himself a convinced Protestant, and his wife Mabel also sought to remain aloof from the conflict behind the walls of their castle in order to avoid coming into conflict with their kin. However, they also quickly found that this was an impossible position because the insurgents would not respect their neutrality, their castle being situated at a strategic crossing over the river Blackwater, while they were accused by Protestant deponents of complicity with the rebels because of the timid resistance they presented to the assailants of the castle. This episode also reveals how very different conflict in Ireland was from that which beset England only some months later with the outbreak of a civil war there. In that conflict, as John Morrill has established, many gentry families maintained a neutral position, but the clarity and the intensity of the divisions in Ireland made it more like Scotland had been during the initial mobilization of the National Covenant; those who aspired to stand aloof were immediately identified as enemies.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Deposition of Faith Standish, alias Grady (TCD, MS 829, fo. 209).
The efforts that were made on both sides to win, or retain, the allegiance of landowners resulted in the struggle in Munster becoming a conflict between these two rival groups for control of territory with its inhabitants. Where the Protestant gentry could stand their ground the settler population remained reasonably secure, and their native tenants remained obedient to the point where one deponent in the vicinity of Lismore could speak of ‘divers Irish natives, impoverished Papists living amongst the English and not in rebellion’. However in those areas where Protestant landowners were overcome by hostile forces, a determined effort was made by the resurgent Catholics to assure the political and the religious allegiance of all native inhabitants, and especially those who were known to have gone to church. When John Mc Edmond of Carrigroghane was sent as a messenger to Lord Viscount Muskerry he was taken aside and threatened with arrest by ‘Owen Mac Awley, Masspriest . . . for that he was an Irishman and went to church and did eat flesh in Lent’. Daniel O’Creery, a husbandman in the barony of Decies of County Waterford, knew that he would be in no position to resist such pressures, so he took the precaution of telling ‘his wife a Protestant to shift for herself, for if it were known he were in her company he should be cut to pieces’. Pressures were also exerted on Protestant settlers to change their religion, in the areas that came under Catholic influence. The lists compiled by deponents of individuals who had ‘since this rebellion turned Papist’—including ironically one Walter Spenser—indicates that these efforts at conversion at knife point were not entirely futile.108

Generally, however, as the Catholic forces took over control of an area, the Protestant settlers there were either attacked and expelled by the rebel army or, anticipating an attack, fled for security to the nearest town or castle. Once they became refugees they were exposed to robbery and stripping but most seem to have gained access to places where they would be sure of protection unless these, in turn, succumbed to a siege by the Catholic army. Most narrations of the deponents who survived the insurrection in Munster therefore provide little more than the names of the rebel captains in charge of the troops who expelled them from their lands and houses, accounts of the sieges in which they had been involved subsequent to their loss, and of the further losses, and humiliations, they endured either when they were on their way from their homes to a place of refuge, or after the castles in which they were hiding were duly taken by the enemy. The Munster experience therefore provides much less evidence of the face-to-face conflicts between social equals of previous acquaintance that characterized the insurgency in both Ulster and Leinster, and surviving accounts of conversations between insurgents and their victims again bring the elite dimension of the Munster insurrection to

108 Deposition of Henry Tiegian (TCD, MS 820, fo. 42); deposition of John Mc Edmond (TCD, MS 823, fo. 159); deposition of Barnard Pabe (TCD, MS 820, fo. 128); deposition of Henry Bennit (TCD, MS 823, fo. 119).
the fore with the gentry always striving, but not always succeeding, to direct the action. Thus when Jane Merritt of Newcastle[west] in County Limerick requested Pierce Purcell, after that town had been surrendered to his forces, ‘if she might have liberty of conscience and her goods to abide in the said town’, he advised her to ‘sojourn with some friend thereabouts till this storm be passed’ rather than to remain in the town where he feared ‘the unruly soldiers would neither regard [her] nor regard [his] hand’. Lord Viscount Muskerry also ‘seemed very zealous for the English party in his country’, and threatened to hang any who robbed or murdered them. Therefore when he alluded to ‘His Majesty’s Commission to take arms to maintain their religion and his prerogative’, he took the precaution of adding that ‘what other outrages were committed by the vulgar sort [were] without their consent’.109

All this evidence points to the insurrection in Munster having been essentially different from that in all other provinces in Ireland because it was initiated by the surviving Catholic elite, whose moral authority within the Catholic community was enhanced once they took up arms. Their careful watch over the behaviour of their subordinates, which may be explained by their awareness of what had happened in the other provinces during the previous months, may go some way to explaining why the disturbance in Munster did not lapse into becoming a peasant uprising, as had happened in Ulster. It is equally important to note that it did not begin as a peasant disturbance as was the case in Leinster, nor did it result in the undermining of the moral authority of the Catholic landowners of the province as happened in Connacht.

The fact that Munster remained in relatively good order until the landowners themselves took to the field may be explained, in part, by the fact that Munster was well policed by vigilant Protestant landowners, backed by the forces of a provincial president who had always been alert to unorthodox behaviour. The good order of the province may also be attributed to the fact that the native population of the province had come to accept the changes that had been enforced there as permanent, and that some had come to recognize that their material conditions had been enhanced by the social alteration that had been promoted by the planters, backed by the authority of the state. In saying this we must not ignore the fact that robnings, stripplings, murders, the desecration of holy objects and places, and the ritualized humiliation of corpses also occurred in Munster as elsewhere in Ireland. For instance, Hugh Wellington, a felt-maker of Enniskean, complained that his assailants had stripped him ‘stark naked in a most inhumane manner, [had] tied him to a horse’s tail, pricked him forward with their pikes, and did drive him like a dog after the said horse a matter of nine miles forward.

109 Deposition of Jane Merritt (TCD, MS 829, fo. 182); ‘Good Acts of Some Ill Men that are Rebels’ (TCD, MS 820, fo. 209); deposition of Walter Baldwin (TCD, MS 823, fos. 165–8).
and backward’ until the flesh was torn from his feet, while Mary Smith was
distraught not only by the Condons’ ‘cruel murder’ of her husband Hugh
Smith of Castelyons, but also ‘that they cut off his tongue and secret members
. . . after he was dead’. Richard Belshire of Lismore and Agnis Tucker of
Bantry each charged their assailants with mutilating and desecrating their
bibles, while Mary Boulte of Dungarvan reported that the insurgents had
gone into the church ‘and there burned the Communion table, the Pulpit,
all the seats in the foresaid church and made it a stable for their horses, and
a prison for the stripped Protestants’.110

However, as was stated at the outset of this section, these depredations
were regarded in Munster as aberrations, and were usually perpetrated by
undisciplined soldiers or by people who were strangers to the victims.
Consequently when deponents in Munster identified particular people as
being responsible for their hardships it was Irish landowners, usually their
own landlords, who, as the deponents saw it, had failed in their social oblig-
ation to protect their tenants. These complaints against Irish landowners
ranged from simple charges by deponents that they had entrusted their goods
to landlords whose ‘loyalty’ they had trusted, only to find that they subse-
quently became insurgents, to accusations that their landlords had disarmed
them or distrained their goods as an assurance of future rents, or that they
physically prevented them from breaching their contractual obligations by
fleeing from their farms when they feared for their lives.111

It is also significant that the one major atrocity reported from Munster also
concerned a member of the social elite who, as the deponents saw it, was
again in glaring breach of his moral obligations. The person in question
was John Kennedy, himself a landowner, who offered to protect twenty-three
of his tenants who also worked in the silver mines of north Tipperary. Because
Kennedy had ‘assured them of their safety’, the workers were not at all
alarmed when Kennedy’s two brothers, with their armed followers, arrived
in the refiner’s house, where the workers had been given shelter, and
‘supposing they came in a friendly manner sent for burnt tobacco to welcome
them’. They therefore came to realize that the Kennedys and their followers
were intent on murder only as they set about their task of stabbing, leaving
only one, ‘Thomas Ladell a Scottish man’, to escape with his life and tell the
tale. John Kennedy, as the person who offered to be their protector, was
the one held responsible for this atrocity, but it appears from the two surviving
accounts that this incident too was a question of insubordination because it

110 Deposition of Hugh Wellington (TCD, MS 823, fo. 148); deposition of Mary Smith (TCD, MS
823, fo. 17); deposition of Richard Belshire (TCD, MS 820, fo. 20); deposition of Agnis Tucker (TCD,
MS 824, fo. 149); deposition of Mary Boulte (TCD, MS 820, fo. 44).
111 Deposition of Nicholas Blight (TCD, MS 822, fo. 123); deposition of John Thomas (TCD, MS
822, fo. 126); deposition of William Howell (TCD, MS 823, fo. 32); deposition of Jane Burrows (TCD,
MS 820, fo. 76).
was the brothers of John Kennedy, and their armed men, rather than John Kennedy himself who did the killing, and the deponents mentioned that Hugh Kennedy, who was identified as the prime perpetrator, suffered remorse for the bloody deed to the point of going mad and drowning himself in a river close to the silver mines. In that sense this one atrocity from Munster is the exception which proves the rule that what happened there was carefully guided by the Catholic gentry of the province.\textsuperscript{112}

The final proof of gentry monitoring of the insurrection in Munster is that the leaders of the insurgents strove, from an early stage, to give a semblance of legitimacy to their actions by having their victims tried before courts which they constituted in the various localities as these came under their control. Thus, John Skinner complained that his son Roger, who had attempted to retrieve some cattle taken by the insurgents, was condemned to be hanged by ‘jurors’, and that this verdict was duly carried out at the door of William Tirry who had presided over the jury. Henry Tiergian thought it reprehensible that, after the siege of Cappoquin in County Waterford, the insurgents should ‘hold their court in his house of Athmeane’. The fact that they did so is proof of the concern of the Catholic gentry and churchmen to achieve an easy transition from Protestant to Catholic government without permitting a breakdown of authority at the local level such as occurred in each of the other provinces. It was to achieve this purpose that the Catholic Confederacy was created, and it is significant that the leaders of the insurrection in Munster were more consistent than their counterparts in the other province of Ireland in citing the Scottish Covenant, and what Allan Macinnes has called ‘the oligarchic centralism’ which both produced the Covenant and was consolidated by it, as the precedent to be followed in their own dealings with the government of King Charles I.\textsuperscript{113}

\section*{8.6. Conclusion}

This account of what happened in all four provinces of Ireland during the weeks and months following upon the first outbreak of the rising on 22/3 October 1641 has revealed a considerable range of experiences, and it is safe to assume that even more diversity would come to light if the happenings in each county or region in the four provinces were examined microscopically. The fact that provincial, and even regional, diversity can be explained by such variables as the inroads made by plantations in different parts of the country; or the extent to which native proprietors had disregarded customary practices in favour of maximizing their rents; or the varying influence of

\textsuperscript{112} Deposition of Ann Sherring (TCD, MS 821, fo. 181); deposition of William Tynes (TCD, MS 821, fo. 35).

\textsuperscript{113} Deposition of John Skinner (TCD, MS 823, fo. 164); deposition of Henry Tiergian (TCD, MS 820, fo. 42); Macinnes, \textit{Charles I}, 155-213.
Counter-Reformation clergy over the Catholic population, or the relative levels of unemployment in the four provinces, means that it is both useful and necessary, in the first instance, to consider the 1641 rising within an Irish context. Once account is taken of the way in which the country had been consistently governed in the interests of a particular group, once attention is given to the way in which the government used plantation as an instrument to undermine the position of native proprietors, and once note is taken of the disenchantment of these same Catholic landowners when their king failed to live up to promises for which they had paid him liberally, it becomes apparent how essentially different the historical experience of Ireland, during the first four decades of the seventeenth century, was from that of England and Scotland. In both of those kingdoms King Charles always acquiesced in governing the wider society in co-operation with the principal landowners rather than in opposition to their wishes. The outrage among the Catholic leaders in Ireland that resulted from their many disappointments meant that some Catholic landowners were at the brink of rebellion at any given time, and the principal consideration that held them back was the conviction of the more politically astute among them that insurrection would inevitably fail once it was confronted by government forces. Insurrection, as they saw it, would thus merely provide their Protestant adversaries with the opportunity to accelerate their programme of plantation, thereby enriching themselves at the expense of those who had remained Catholic. A consideration of the 1641 rising in Ireland in isolation is also beneficial because it shows how very different in character the Irish disturbance was from anything that had happened in Scotland during the previous years, and from the disturbances that would occur in England and Wales during the months and years which followed upon the Irish uprising.

Yet, for all the differences from what was happening in England and Scotland, events in Ireland were so closely interlinked with those in the other jurisdictions of the British monarchy that it is difficult to imagine that any meaningful insurrection would have taken place were it not for the political turmoil that had beset England and Scotland during the preceding months and years. This means that the ‘three kingdoms’ or ‘composite monarchies’ context for the rising of 1641, which currently enjoys considerable favour in academic discourse, is essential to explaining why previously hesitant leaders cast caution to the winds and sought to resolve their difficulties through insurrection. On the positive side, Catholic leaders in all provinces of Ireland were greatly impressed by the way in which the Scottish Covenanter had been able to dictate terms to the monarchy through the simple expedient of having resort to arms, but on the negative side they would also have calculated that the difficulties being experienced by the king in dealing with both his English and his Scottish subjects provided them with a unique opportunity to redress their own problems through a show of force. Thus, to extend the composite
monarchy analogy, the challenge presented by the Covenanters in Scotland to the authority of the British monarchy was as vital to the rising of 1641 in Ireland as was the 1640 Catalan revolt against the Hispanic monarchy to the Portuguese insurrection of 1641 against that same authority; Portugal, said a contemporary witness, who might have been speaking of Ireland and Scotland, ‘would never have dared revolt without the Catalan example, since it was afraid of being rapidly overwhemed if it engaged alone in so hazardous a dance’.114

Reference to this parallel is apt because Irish Catholic leaders kept as close an eye on developments in Scotland as Portuguese nobles did on events in Catalonia. The example of the Covenanters had been cited by Sir Phelim O’Neill, in October 1641, as an explanation for his actions, but several months later Donough Mac Fynnen Mac Carthy in County Kerry remained convinced that as ‘the Scots had their wills by force of arms, so would they here in this kingdom’.115 Catholics in Ireland had had a clear understanding of events in Scotland since 1638, not only because there was a significant Scottish presence in Ulster, but also because they had agreed with Strafford to assist the king militarily in opposing the Covenanters. However, because of their involvement in Irish and Westminster parliamentary affairs, Catholic leaders also had a close understanding of developing constitutional tensions between crown and parliament in England, and of the malconsequences for themselves, as Catholics, that would inevitably result from any curtailment of the power of the monarch in either England or Scotland. If the knowledge of individual landowners in Ireland of what precisely was happening in England varied considerably, the conclusion that any diminution in the king’s authority would prove ruinous for them was inescapable since, as was noted in previous chapters, the Catholic landed interest in Ireland had had no constitutional support, besides the royal prerogative, to counter the unconcealed determination of their Protestant opponents in Ireland to destroy them as a ruling group. Therefore it seemed reasonable to those who feared the worst that they should strike a pre-emptive blow since they genuinely believed ‘that it was intended in England to extirpate all the Papists in this kingdom whereupon they took arms in the first place for the defence of their religion and next to maintain His Majesty’s prerogative which the parliament now (infected with Puritanism) did mainly oppose’. It was a short step from there to insisting that their actions enjoyed prior royal sanction, and that they were coming to the assistance of the king in his English difficulties, just as in 1638

115 Deposition of Thomas Dight (TCD, MS 828, fo. 194).
and again in 1640 they had offered to support him in recovering his authority in Scotland. In this respect Sir Phelim O’Neill’s device of presenting a document, which purportedly bore the king’s broad seal and authorized the Irish to put themselves on a war footing, proved compelling for members of the Catholic elite in all provinces in Ireland for several succeeding months. They were attracted by O’Neill’s claim possibly more because they wanted to believe that their actions enjoyed royal sanction than because they wished to deceive others into following them. Thus, in Munster, several months after the claim of Phelim O’Neill had been discredited, Lord Roche stated he had ‘a commission under the king’s hand and seal (which [he] received lately from Sir Phelimy O’Neill) whereby we (meaning the Irish) are authorized to ship and banish all the English and Protestants out of this kingdom if they do not win with us and do as we do’. When another insurgent in Munster was challenged to produce authority for his claim that he acted on behalf of the king he ‘answered and said (pulling out of his pocket a piece of paper) I have here his Majesty’s warrant sent to me by Mac Carty Reagh’. More specifically, O’Sullivan Mór remarked that if he ‘had not seen a commission from the king [he] would not have gone out in this action’. Such pseudo-documentary evidence was not necessary to persuade all people that they were acting in the interests of the king since the failure of the king to come to the assistance of the settler community could, in itself, be taken as proof that he supported the Catholic cause. Thus, as one insurgent put it to his victims, ‘if the king be on your side there was wind and weather enough that served to send forces and aid over unto you, and what we do we have the King’s authority for it and do fight for and in his Majesty’s behalf’. Cormac Mac Fynnen Mac Carty was similarly convinced ‘the King of England was on their side, his reason was that otherwise . . . he having two neighbouring kingdoms (meaning England and Scotland) his Majesty would send over some forces by this time’.  

This invocation of prior royal approval satisfied many of tender conscience at the upper reaches of Irish Catholic society that their resort to arms was morally justified, but they never went beyond such rationalizations to formulate a common set of objectives which they might pursue by force. Their failure to do so is explained by the contradictions that quickly appeared in the further legitimizations they embroidered as the action proceeded. Individuals from Leitrim or Wicklow, whose loss of land and status was still fresh in their memory, believed that the primary purpose of any action should be the redress of the wrongs they had so recently suffered. The actions of some of the landowners in Ulster who rose in arms indicated that they too

116 Deposition of Walter Baldwin (TCD, MS 823, fos. 165–8); deposition of Jasper Horsey (TCD, MS 822, fos. 109–10); deposition of Osmond Crode (TCD, MS 823, fos. 138–9); deposition of John Johnson (TCD, MS 828, fo. 286); deposition of Richard Turnor (TCD, MS 829, fo. 145); deposition of John Sweate (TCD MS 825, fo. 256).
sought after the reversal of the plantation in that province, but they could
never identify this as a prime objective because any assertion that they were
seeking to cancel a plantation designed by King James I would have been in
blatant contradiction to their claim that they had risen in support of the royal
prerogative. They therefore had to limit themselves to vague complaints about
their poverty and loss of status, and their ambition to achieve greater freedom
of religion than was then available. Landowners west of the river Shannon,
apart from those in Leitrim and parts of Sligo, were more concerned over
the changes that were likely to happen in a future plantation of Connacht
than over what had occurred in the past, so they too concentrated on the
recovery of their local power, and on the demands of the Catholic churchmen.
The Leinster Catholic gentry (apart from those in Longford, Wicklow, and
Wexford) aimed more at their reinstatement in senior positions in the admin-
istration of the kingdom, but they too, either of their own volition or in
response to the demands of their subordinates and of the Catholic Clergy,
made it clear that their resort to force was justified principally because they
sought to have the Catholic church restored to its lost glory. Catholic
landowners in Munster similarly believed that their action was morally justi-
fied because ‘they were not preferred to any places of honour, nor made
judges of assize, and that they had not the liberty of their religion’.117

These sets of objectives on which the common agreement of the elite was
never established may strike today’s observer as conservative, or even reac-
tionary, but these demands would have appeared revolutionary even to
moderates in England and Scotland because any one set of objectives would
have involved the king in granting either public favour to Catholics, or a
formal sanction for the practice of Catholicism equivalent to that being sought
for Presbyterianism by the Covenanters in Scotland. This parallel might have
seemed valid to the Irish landowners who formulated the claim, and to the
clergy who prompted them to do so, but it would have been completely unac-
ceptable in England and Scotland not only because it, like the initial demand
of the Scottish Covenanters, countered the ambition of King Charles I to
have all of his subjects united within a single Anglican communion, but, more
emphatically, because it threatened the very foundations of the Protestant
Reformation in Britain by requiring the monarch to restore Catholicism as
the official religion in one of his three kingdoms. To attempt to do so in
the 1640s was certain not only to lose the king the support of his Protestant
subjects in Ireland, but to undermine his authority as a credible Protes-
tant monarch in both England and Scotland also.

While the religious demands made by Catholic landowners in Ireland ran
directly counter to the principles espoused by their counterparts in England
and Scotland, so also did the constitutional propositions to which they

adhered. Their concern, as they stated repeatedly, was to uphold the royal prerogative against the efforts of the English parliament to curtail it, and they seemed as anxious in 1641 to go to the assistance of the king in asserting his authority over his more recalcitrant English subjects as they had been the previous year to assist the king militarily against the Scottish Covenanters. Moreover, while they might depict the rule of Strafford in Ireland as ‘most avaricious and tyrannical’, and while some Irish Catholic parliamentarians had assisted their Irish and English Protestant colleagues in effecting the impeachment which led to his execution on 12 May 1641, they quickly regretted having been thus implicated in weakening the power of the monarch. Thus while some rebels in Leinster did not hesitate to loot the residence of the former governor at Jigginstown, most remarks of the insurgents concerning Strafford’s rule in Ireland, as these were reported in the depositions, regretted the governor’s passing. One Ulster insurgent professed ‘that if my Lord Lieutenant had not been put to death they had not made this insurrection’, and a second ‘said that the earl of Strafford was the plotter of this their rebellious rising, and that if the said earl had been living they should not have had so much trouble in vanquishing Ireland . . . and that the said Earl of Strafford’s son was gone over into England to raise forces to relieve and help them the rebels’. Such sentiments may be taken as proof of the naïveté of the insurgents, as well as testimony to the success of Strafford in concealing from Irish Catholics his true intentions towards them, but they provide witness also to the hostility of the Irish elite towards those people, whether based in England, Scotland, or Ireland, who sought to curtail the prerogative of the king on which their survival depended.118

The emergence of mutual misunderstandings among people who seemed to be speaking the same political language is explained partly by the intersection of grievances which were a peculiar product of the Irish historical experience with problems which were general to the governance of a composite monarchy. However, on closer inspection, it appears that the political principles fostered by the leaders of the Irish insurrection were at the opposite pole from those cherished in England and Scotland, quite simply because the three peoples did not always speak the same political language. Many Catholic leaders were indeed conversant with the procedures of English common law and they could couch arguments deriving from basic common law assumptions. However many had also been to continental Europe or were closely associated with priests who had been trained there, and some of the justifications for their actions cited by the Irish insurgents derived from the wider register of political ideas which was current in the Catholic jurisdictions of

118 Deposition of Edward How (TCD, MS 835, fo. 29); deposition of John Rathborne (TCD, MS 813, fo. 243); deposition of Thomas Carpenter (TCD, MS 813, fo. 290); deposition of Alice Champion (TCD, MS 835, fos. 196–200); deposition of Dr Robert Maxwell (TCD, MS 809, fos. 5–12).
Europe. This means that we must take account also of a continental European context to the Irish rising of 1641.

Nobody on the Catholic side argued, at the outset of the insurrection, that any monarch who would command the loyalty of Catholics had, of necessity, to be a Catholic, but this proposition, which came to be stated openly after 1645 when Rinuccini was appointed as papal nuncio to Ireland, was already being hinted at in the pronouncements of gentlemen insurgents during the early months of the insurrection. Thus, in Munster, one deponent described how it had been explained to him by his assailants that ‘our religion was a new found religion invented by Martin Luther and Calvin . . . and that they would never trust an Englishman upon any occasion whatsoever no more than they would a Turk which did deny Christ’. Consequently, although the insurgents could claim that ‘whatsoever they now did was by authority from the king, they were the Queen’s soldiers and the King’s subjects, and poor gentlemen in distress’.\(^{119}\)

Gentlemen deponents could thus get over the dilemma that stemmed from the fact that the monarch, to whom they were morally obliged to offer allegiance, happened to be a Protestant, by pointing to the Catholicism of his queen. However those of lower rank, who but echoed the sentiments of their betters and who might have been more influenced by their seminary-trained priests, were altogether less perspicacious when they invoked royal authority for their actions. One Knougher, a gardener, was said to have remarked that ‘they had three kings on their side, the King of England, and the King of France and the King of Spain, and that they had it to show for what they did under the broad seal of England’. It was not far from there to arguing that theirs was both a legitimate cause and the one that was more likely to prevail since ‘there was no nation would help the English except the Turk’, while ‘the Roman Catholics in the Low Countries . . . the King of France, the King of Spain would send them help in this present quarrel’. Some were not even bothered to justify their actions, and one deponent discerned from a ‘discourse’ with his captors that ‘they cared not under whose protection they were so they had power to beat out these English Puritans out of Ireland, if it were from the Turk himself’. This same point was put even more emphatically by one Robert Freeman, gent., of County Limerick, ‘a most dangerous rebel’, who was cited as saying ‘that after they (meaning the Irish) had banished the English out of Ireland they would have no relation to England at all but have a king of their own. And that they but made use of the king’s name for their own ends and to clear the country of the English.’\(^{120}\)

\(^{119}\) Deposition of William Wood (TCD, MS 823, fo. 55).

\(^{120}\) Deposition of John Parker (TCD, MS 829, fo. 197); deposition of Elizabeth Nelson (TCD, MS 821, fo. 153); deposition of John Fletcher (TCD, MS 823, fo. 68); deposition of Henry Hughes (TCD, MS 823, fo. 155).
The fact that even those rebels described as gentlemen by the deponents could be so easily diverted from lofty political discourse into launching verbal and physical attacks upon the British settlers within their community is in itself proof of the visceral hatred of the settlers that had been long suppressed and that came to be voiced openly once Irish Catholic landowners saw the opportunity to reverse the changes that had been implemented over the previous half-century. The loss of land and status which they had suffered must have always rankled and most grasped at the opportunity that presented itself in 1641/2 not only to recover the estates and offices that had once been theirs, but also to break the cycle of indebtedness that had led to a further deterioration in their position. Lord Roche, whose father had been a prime casualty of Edmund Spenser’s ambition, had not forgotten the past humiliations endured by his family, and, as he emphasized his loyalty to the crown, he added ‘further in a smiling manner’ that he would ‘promise . . . the English shall eat no more fat beef in this kingdom’. Similarly in October 1641 as the carrier who had been sent from Dublin with a demand for an overdue debt of £11 was ‘robbed by the rebels on his journey to Cork . . . the bill [was] taken by those that robbed him and torn in pieces with many oaths and testations of the rebels that there should never be debt collected in this kingdom anymore’.121 If the leaders of Catholic society could fall to ousting the settlers in the community with such alacrity those at the lower reaches of society were even less restrained in their efforts to expel the settlers from their houses and farms and to seize their goods. Once the initial military challenge had taken place looting became the principal preoccupation of the insurgents, except in Leinster where the popular onslaught preceded the formal opening of hostilities. The universality of this indiscriminate pillage, which was frequently accompanied by gruesome attacks upon the persons of the Protestant victims, and which stemmed from deep-seated resentment, renders the Irish Catholic uprising of 1641 essentially different from contemporary disturbances in England and Scotland. It was different also because some priests in Ireland advanced religious justifications for what Protestants regarded as grand larceny.

Some of the Catholic clergy attempted to restrain the insurgents from their more dastardly deeds and to divert their energies into religious channels, but this sometimes produced new outrages, and some priests who had knowledge of continental affairs could draw parallels with the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre which they, like the priests they encountered in the seminaries of France and Flanders, would have interpreted as a Providential intervention to restore harmony to a Christian community by eliminating the pollution of heretics through the enforcement of divine justice.122 Attempts to measure

121 Deposition of Jasper Horsey (TCD, MS 822, fos. 9–10); deposition of Lieutenant Thomas Bromley (TCD, MS 810, fo. 121).

122 Crouzet, _La Nuit de la Saint-Barthélémy_, 515–24.
the intensity of popular animosity against Protestants and Protestantism in Ireland by calculating the numbers who were killed in the entire conflagration are now seen to be futile, and a far better sense of the totality of the Catholic onslaught that was launched against the settler population is conveyed by three distinctive features of the insurrection; the strippings inflicted by the Irish Catholics upon their victims, the rites of violence enacted against Protestant objects and bodies, and the role played by women and children in the disturbances.

Stripping people of their outer garments, and even of their shirts, was in early modern times, as it is in some parts of the world today, a form of theft, which was probably more widely practised then than in contemporary western society since the value of clothing, relative to total income, would have been much higher. The more common European practice during wartime of the early modern centuries was to strip bodies of their clothing after people had been killed on the battlefield, but stripping living persons of their garments seems to have been part of Scottish warfare. Thus the earl of Antrim charged that his rival, the earl of Argyll, had ‘preyed all the Ilye and stripped the women to their smocks which barbarity was never practised by the Turks’. It is, therefore, possible that stripping was practised elsewhere in Europe, especially where undisciplined bands of soldiers roamed the countryside.123 As political order broke down in Ireland during the course of the disturbances of 1641/2 the attention of the insurgents was first focused on living persons whom they frequently required to divest themselves of the more valuable clothes they were wearing, while also surrendering their moveable goods, and whenever they refused to disrobe their clothing was forcibly removed at knife point. This aspect of the onslaught became more complicated when the victims of the assault took to hiding money, or valuable documents, on their persons, and assailants seem to have considered that such efforts at concealment gave them licence both to strip their victims until the sought-after coins clinked to the floor, or to tear women’s tresses from their scalps almost as if concealment was tantamount to stealing. Some body searches could be even more terrifying, as, for example, that endured by Mary, the wife of William Everitt, a shoemaker in Askeaton, County Limerick, who was ‘stripped stark naked’ by the raiders and ‘four of them took her by the hands and stretched her out upon the table and searched her privities for money’.124

This ordeal of Mary Everitt, as is clear from the narration, was considered exceptionally cruel, and most strippings that occurred in all provinces of Ireland during the course of house raids were conducted with some decorum by people who had previously been neighbours to the victims. Stripping also

123 Antrim to Hamilton, 14 July 1639 (Edinburgh, SRO, Hamilton MSS, GD 406/1, no. 1165).
124 Deposition of William Eames (TCD, MS 823, fo. 157–8).
must have had a psycho-sexual aspect to it, but this was not necessarily predominant, as was suggested by John Shrawley, the vicar of Eskagh in County Sligo, when explaining that, after a particular siege, the women, but not the men, were stripped, but for the simple reason that their clothes were of some value whereas the men were dressed in rags. It was accepted on both sides that attacks which culminated in stripping would sever any friendship that had previously existed between assailants and assailed, but this was seldom a matter of concern to the Irish who believed that they were ridding themselves of unwanted neighbours when they cast them out into the winter cold wearing only shifts or nightshirts. Many insurgents and their victims did, however, meet again, and sometimes sooner than expected, and it was particularly galling for the settlers to see their clothes, or, worse still, the garments of their dead relatives, being worn by their assailants in circumstances where they could neither reclaim their property nor bring charges against their robbers. Dorothy Rampine saw the cloak of her murdered husband Zachary Rampine being worn by Brian Mc Coromagh Maguire, but she could not bring him to book because he had ‘come in upon Sir William Cole’s protection’, and was in Dublin where he swaggered ‘up and down in the streets among the king’s liege subjects as if he had not robbed any of the English’.

Strippings which were executed in the settlers’ own homes by their former neighbours were demeaning for the victims and placed them in danger of death not only from exposure but in the course of defending themselves. Ejection from their homes did not bring an end to the travails of the Protestants since many settlers from all provinces in the country endured multiple stripplings before they eventually reached a place of safety. John Robinson, from the parish of Mosley in County Cork, was ‘stripped twice, once at the robbing of his goods, and again by the way coming to Cork by a matter of a dozen of the rebels whose names he knoweth not’, and the wife of John Gowrly from the town of Armagh had been stripped seven times before she found her way to Newry, and thence to Dublin. Each repeated stripping of Mrs Gowrly happened ‘after she got other clothes’, and this persisted until the rebels ‘at length left her not so much as her smock or hair lace, but left her naked’. These second-phase stripplings, where the assailants could expect to find nothing of value, were usually executed by bands of insurgents, men, women, and, occasionally, even children, who were strangers to the victims, and who went about their task with such ritualistic fervour that their only purpose could have been to further degrade and dehumanize people who, at this point, were no more than shivering corpses. As Magdelene Redman was seeking to make her way to Birr with a sizeable group of refugees who had already been robbed of their more valuable clothes, they were again set upon by armed assailants and this time were all left stark naked. Then

125 Deposition of John Shrawley (TCD, MS 831, fo. 75); Dorothy Rampine (TCD, MS 835, fo. 247).
when, out of a sense of shame, they covered themselves with straw, some of
the rebel gang took to torching the straw with a flame and Redman believed
that all would have been killed ‘but that some of the rebels more pitiful than
the rest commanded those cruel rebels to forbear’.  

This episode indicates that even as the settlers were being degraded and
terrorized some moral restraining force still operated within the community
of the insurgents. Some priests constantly enjoined upon the insurgents that
they should provide the settlers with the opportunity of ‘turning to Mass’
before they expelled them from the community, and scrupulous priests also
strove to have those who then proved themselves incorrigible heretics to be
given an opportunity to leave the community rather than be murdered. Their
efforts at moral persuasion were, as is clear, not always successful, but these
humane priests can be credited with saving some lives, and the low incidence
of rape that occurred, if we are to judge from the reportage in the deposi-
tions, may also be due to the persuasions of priests or others who enjoyed
moral authority. Mary O’Dowd has suggested that, in a situation where polit-
cical order had collapsed and where the settler population had come to be
regarded as a legitimate target for attack, rape is likely to have been alto-
gether more frequent than is suggested in the depositions. She, therefore,
attributes the low level in the reportage of rape to the possibility that many
women deponents, or their husbands or fathers, were reticent to acknow-
ledge publicly that they had been defiled. This theory is, however, countered
by the fact that some episodes of rape were reported, sometimes graphically,
by deponents from all provinces, including one incident of multiple rape
where the victim’s name was deliberately obliterated from the record. More
particularly there are a few references in the depositions to insurgents being
restrained from raping their victims, and these narrations suggest that the
insurgents considered rape to be a more grave moral transgression than
murder. It was reported that John Bird and his wife Elizabeth from Kildare
town had ‘turned to Mass’ before the outbreak of insurrection, but that ‘after-
wards’ the insurgents rejected the couple, because they were English, and
stripped them, ‘and would have ravished the woman but some of the company
would not consent, and would have killed them both but that the earl of
Antrim and the earl of Castlehaven saved them and entertained them’. That
rape was considered a serious crime within the Catholic community is also
reflected in Gaelic poetry where rape was included on the lists of transgres-
sions committed by the Irish in their moment of victory which explained why
God had permitted the Catholics to be defeated in what had been a
Providential cause. However, while catalogued as a crime, rape was always
given less prominence than offences such as greed, disrespect for holy places,
and the excommunication that had been incurred by those Catholics in the

126 Deposition of John Robinson (TCD, MS 824, fo. 37); deposition of John Gowrly (TCD, MS
836, fo. 57); deposition of Magdelene Redman (TCD, MS 814, fo. 188).
Confederacy who had refused to be guided by the papal nuncio. This downgrading again suggests that rape was not as widespread as somebody approaching this evidence from the experience of contemporary warfare would expect.\footnote{127}

If it is true that relatively few women from within the settler community in Ireland were raped during the course of the disturbances of 1641 and 1642, this may have been because stripping people publicly of their garments was considered even more degrading than rape. Stripping also had special metaphoric appeal for the assailants because it symbolized the departure of these intruders from the properties on which they had settled in the same penniless state in which they had arrived. Stripping also became a great equalizer because it became evident, once those who had recently lorded it over the Irish were divested of garments which had signified their wealth and status, that they were no better than the most ragged Irish person. The significance of the associated symbolism cannot have been lost on the educated among the victims since there were many episodes in Spenser’s \textit{Faerie Queene}, notably that concerning Duessa/Mary Queen of Scots quoted in Chapter 1, where it was made apparent that a public stripping was the most degrading treatment that one might suffer.\footnote{128}

Such debasement of the bodies of people who were ‘foreign’ to the ‘community’ was consistent with the cultural rites of purification enacted by Catholics against Protestants in France during the wars of religion of the late sixteenth century. There Protestants were not only ritually killed in a manner that gave its modern significance to the word ‘massacre’, but there also, as in Ireland of 1641, were enacted the ritual destruction of Protestant places of worship, the desecration of bibles, the castration of cadavers, the disinterment of the bodies of Protestants from cemeteries, the burning of these corpses, and the disrespectful dumping of what remained of them into ditches and rivers. All of this, which was represented as just revenge for the blasphemies of heretics concerning Catholic doctrines, rituals, and places of veneration, was a prelude in Ireland of the 1640s, as it had been in France of the 1570s, to the recovery into Catholic hands of traditional places of worship and to the public restoration of the sights, sounds, and smells of Catholic religious devotion which previously had been curtailed or, in the case of Ireland, forced underground.\footnote{129}

\footnote{127} Mary O’Dowd, ‘Women and War in Ireland in the 1640s’, in Margaret Mac Curtain and Mary O’Dowd (eds.), \textit{Women in Early Modern Ireland} (Edinburgh, 1991), 91–111; deposition of George Burne (TCD, MS 839, fo. 7); deposition of Christopher Cove (TCD, MS 831, fo. 173); deposition of Andrew Adaire (TCD, MS 831, fos. 174–8); deposition of John Stubbs (TCD, MS 817, fo. 203); deposition of Suzan Steele (TCD, MS 817, fo. 213); deposition of William Collis (TCD, MS 813, fo. 285); deposition of William Dynes (TCD, MS 813, fo. 360); ‘Do chuala scéal do chéas gach ló mé’, in Pádraig de Brún, Breandán Ó Buachalla, and Tomás Ó Concheanainn (eds.), \textit{Nua Dhuanaire}, vol. i. (Dublin, 1971), 31–4, lines 72–88.

\footnote{128} Chapter 1 above, pp. 15–16.

While it may be true that this theatricalization of violence against Protestants, as it has been described by Denis Crouzet, makes it typically European, this does not mean that English and Scottish Protestants were unfamiliar with rituals associated with the sanctification of space. However, in both England and Scotland, where the continuous drive, since the sixteenth century, had been to bring Christian worship into conformity with the reformed religion of continental Europe, the popular ‘attack on traditional religion’, as Eamon Duffy has termed it, was focused upon the destruction of objects associated with religious doctrines and practices that had been condemned by Protestant divines, and the killing of Catholics was usually confined to the execution of Jesuits and seminary priests after these had been presented for formal trial before established authorities, who sometimes directed that they be subjected to unspeakable tortures and that their bodies be ritually mutilated and destroyed.¹³⁰ Most smashing of popish and pagan objects had been accomplished in both England and Scotland by the close of the sixteenth century, but the toll of destruction persisted in Ireland into the seventeenth century most notably with the assault upon St Patrick’s Purgatory of the 1620s. In England, and in Scotland also, intermittent outbursts of image breaking, the destruction of altar rails, the shattering of stained glass windows, and occasional efforts to sanctify the year to the satisfaction of Protestant zealots persisted almost to the close of the seventeenth century, but this might be likened to scratching the scabs of old wounds when compared with the comprehensive assault upon the objects associated with Catholic and popular devotion that had been accomplished in the previous century.¹³¹

These theatricals also seem anodyne when compared with the ritualized attack upon the bodies of Protestants, living and dead, that became such a prominent feature of the 1641 insurrection in Ireland. The enactment of such dramas seem to have been proceeded with in Ireland in imitation of what had happened in France some seventy years before, and presumably also, as in France, by way of revenge for the studied disrespect shown by Protestants towards Christ, his mother, and the saints. However, for all the similarities that it shared with the French experience, what happened in Ireland in 1641 differed from it in one essential matter. In France, both before and after the


Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Day in 1572, priests in their sermons called repeatedly for the eradication of Protestantism through the killing of Protestants, while murder in the name of religion seems to have been discouraged, or even condemned, by Catholic priests in Ireland of the 1640s. This is not to suggest that priests in Ireland, or in the continental seminaries where Irish priests had been trained, had come to reject what had happened in France in 1572. Far from it; the Massacre was seen in Catholic eyes as the great purgation which had saved France for the true faith, but, as Denis Crouzet has argued, the success of French Catholics in restoring religious cohesion to their community under Christ and their monarch made it possible for them to promote an intensification in individual and collective piety focused on the death of Christ on the cross. In this way, as the French Catholic community endured revenge killings at the hands of the hated Huguenots, culminating in the murder of King Henri III in 1588, they were able gradually to achieve an *intérieurisation* of violence through offering thanks to God for his deliverance of them from the danger of heresy. Then, as was noted in Chapter 7, this pietistic Catholicism, which looked askance at the instruments of violence being placed in the hands of the populace, was that to which Irish seminarians would have been introduced during their training on the Continent. This, as much as their deference to the Catholic proprietors who had launched the insurrection in 1641, may explain why priests in Ireland in 1641 responded differently from the French priests of 1572 to the breakdown of social order, and why they sought to justify violence for the advancement of religious aims only when it was directed by those whom they regarded as the leaders of the Irish Catholic community.\footnote{Crouzet, *La Nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy*, 525-55; Chapter 7 above, pp. 423-4.}

This essential difference in the role of priests in Ireland in 1641, as opposed to their role in France in 1572, means that it is not appropriate to refer to what happened in Ireland in 1641/2 as a ‘massacre’ either in the institutional sense, associated with what Protestants believed was the planned murder of Admiral Coligny and his lieutenants, or in the extended sense of *le massacre populaire*. This latter is the phrase used by Denis Crouzet to describe the Catholic fury that was provoked by the preaching of priests and burst forth upon Paris and many of the cities of France after 24 August 1572, resulting in the slaughter of perhaps 8,000 Huguenots in a matter of weeks.\footnote{Crouzet, *La Nuit de la Saint-Barthélemy*, 521.} However while there may have been no ‘massacre’ in Ireland in 1641 there was certainly an outburst of Catholic fury which concentrated upon the expulsion of Protestants from within the Catholic community and the destruction of objects and places associated with Protestants and Protestantism. Gaelic sources, as well as the testimony of Protestant victims, indicate that this movement was unquestionably encouraged by priests and was marked by the involvement of women and children in the assault upon Protestants in
the same way that these had been enlisted and activated also in France in 1572 as witness to the collective unity of a community gathered under Christ to eliminate the corrupting influence of heresy.

What the role and fate of women were in this, or any other, Irish insurrection remains unclear, and what information we do have, especially from the depositions, probably concerns the exceptional or abnormal rather than the mundane. Even with this bias there are acknowledgements in the depositions that particular Irishwomen, like particular priests or individual laymen, intervened to assist Protestants when they were in gravest danger. For example, Henry Boine from County Tyrone found before him, when he rushed to alert his household that an insurrection was under way, ‘an Irishwoman that was comen out of goodwill from Donoghmore, about six miles distant, to tell the deponent’s wife that it were best for her to be gone lest she might be killed’.¹³⁴ Such mentions were recorded in gratitude but it was also made clear in the narration that the offers of such kindnesses in moments of need were reciprocations of past friendships such as would have been anticipated in any normal society. Opposed to these were references to the atrocities and profanations perpetrated by such ‘viragos’ as Jane Hampson in County Armagh and Alice Butler in Kilkenny (described in earlier sections of this chapter), which seemed to prove that the natural order had been cast aside to the point where, as was mentioned by some deponents from all provinces, the women rebels were as fierce as the men.¹³⁵ Attention was also called in the depositions to other exceptional episodes such as armed women standing guard over men, as happened in County Armagh; or a jury of women trying a male settler for his life, as was reported from King’s County; or Mrs Mary Burke, eldest sister of the lord of Castleconnell, in County Limerick, commanding ‘about ten rebels, men and women, in men’s apparel’ when pillaging a neighbour’s house. These events were again emphasized as further proof that what was happening in Ireland constituted an inversion of all natural relationships. However they also supplied evidence of the totality of the onslaught that was being made against the settler community in all parts of the country. As one deponent from County Wexford put it, ‘the rebellion . . . was so general that the boys of ten years of age did rob and spoil and the Irish women were as vehement in attempting of their villanous actions of robbing and stripping the English as the male rebels’.¹³⁶ Many such

¹³⁴ Deposition of Henry Boine (TCD, MS 839, fo. 1).
¹³⁵ Deposition of Henry Boine (TCD, MS 839, fo. 1); deposition of Elizabeth Price (TCD, MS 836, fo. 101); deposition of Henry Ayliffe (TCD, MS 814, fo. 176); deposition of Ralph Turner (TCD, MS 817, fo. 27); deposition of Robert Berchall (TCD, MS 818, fo. 123); deposition of Thomas Ricroft (TCD, MS 818, fo. 124).
¹³⁶ Deposition of Ellen Matchett (TCD, MS 836, fo. 58); deposition of John Sheeley (TCD, MS 831, fo. 168); deposition of Christian Stanhawe (TCD, MS 836, fo. 75); deposition of Henry Ayliffe (TCD, MS 814, fo. 176); deposition of Sir Robert Tirrell (TCD, MS 825, fo. 25); deposition of George Cuby (TCD, MS 818, fo. 117).
attacks were of women upon women because, after the initial onslaught, many male Protestants were enlisted into forces designed to stand against the rebels and their womenfolk were left alone to undertake long arduous winter treks in search of security, frequently accompanied by infants and young children. Women were therefore more frequently exposed than men to the hazards of second-phase strippings by mocking strangers, and the women refugees, whether travelling in isolated family groups or in company, were often attacked by bands of rebel women who maintained a watch on the passages favoured by the refugees.137

Because it appeared to Protestants that the whole Catholic community had risen against them, those who endured were conscious that what happened in Ireland was entirely different from contemporary disturbances in England or Scotland. The victims, at all social levels, were also aware that most Catholic landowners in all provinces of Ireland, and regardless of whether they were of Old English or Gaelic backgrounds, were united against them as they had never been in any previous insurrection. The deponents also believed, with some justification, that even those few Catholic proprietors who remained loyal to the crown might defect at any moment because they were being subjected to constant molestation to join the insurgency. Elizabeth Nelson, for example, claimed to have seen a letter sent from the popish clergy of the kingdom to the earl of Clanricard ‘whereby they threatened him for favouring and siding with the English that he should not only be excommunicated by the Pope but that all the forces of Leinster and Munster would join together and burn and spoil his country’. The settlers were also aware that people at all social levels and of both sexes, including their own tenants and servants, and even members of their very households, were combined against them. Thus, for example, Peregrine Bannister complained that Teige Mc Daniel Crowley, who had been granted to him as a ward by the Court of Wards and Liveries, had deserted his house and was ‘now in open and actual rebellion’. It was easy to cite the pervasive influence of the papacy, through the agency of their priests, as being responsible for the comprehensive nature of the assault but those victims who reflected on it knew that something even more fundamental than religion was at play. These never admitted that the policies of their own government were responsible for their isolation at the moment of crisis, but they were forced to conclude, from what they heard, experienced, and witnessed, ‘that whatsoever the Irish should pretend it was the determination of the said Irish to take away root and branch of the English nation’, and they were further convinced by the strippings which indicated to them ‘that they should have no relief without they were gone but must find upon bark and roots’.138

137 Deposition of Edward Moore and Margaret Moore (TCD, MS 839, fo. 112); deposition of Marmaduke Batemanson (TCD, MS 833, fo. 215); deposition of Nicholas Simpson (TCD, MS 834, fo. 182).
138 Deposition of Elizabeth Nelson (TCD, MS 821, fo. 153); deposition of Peregrine Bannister (TCD, MS 824, fos. 33–4); deposition of Anthony Blunt (TCD, MS 823, fo. 190).
All contemporaries who reflected upon the 1641 rising in Ireland could see, as do present-day historians, that the action of the Scottish Covenanters had provided the occasion and, in some respects, the parallel for insurrection in Ireland, and it was equally apparent to contemporaries that what happened in Ireland heightened the existing tensions between king and parliament in England, and thus contributed substantially to the development of civil conflict there. In this sense the three-kingdoms context has proven useful for explaining how events in Ireland were intertwined with those in the other jurisdictions of a composite monarchy. However, while recent political events in Scotland and England can be said to have provided the occasion for a rising in Ireland the factors that led to the alienation of so many of the Catholic population from the government of King Charles I have to be identified from a study of the frayed relationship between members of the Catholic political nation in Ireland and successive administrations in Dublin. And to understand better the character of the insurrection in Ireland, once the political mould had been broken, account has to be taken of the close associations with the most fervently Catholic areas of the Continent that had been established by the Catholic clergy and laity alike over the course of a half-century. It is the overlapping of these various contexts that makes an understanding of what was happening in Ireland so elusive, but two salient factors were evident from the outset; the first was the extent to which the politico-religious concepts of a broad spectrum of the Irish population had been transformed since the outset of the seventeenth century, and the second was that this transformation reduced rather than increased the possibility of making Ireland British.
The evidence cited in the previous eight chapters will have made it clear that successive generations of servitors and settlers in Ireland were determined to reshape the character of the people and society in Ireland to a model which they defined as British. Attention has also been drawn to the variety of responses of the population in Ireland to this drive, and to efforts of continentally trained Irish priests in fashioning the character and society of these same people to a counter-model. Ultimately, in 1641, these two opposing ambitions came into collision, and while it was noted that the reforming endeavour of the priests was not the prime cause of the conflagration of 1641 it was clearly priestly involvement which provided the insurrection with some moral purpose and justification. Thus, what would have remained an orgy of looting and killing became a movement with which some people could proudly identify.

It is now proposed to follow this detailed study of the formulation of British plantation policy, its attempted implementation, and the reactions which it provoked with a brief configuration of the complex sequence of events that beset Ireland over the several years succeeding 1641. In doing so it will be argued that the competing interests and ideologies which then provoked the prolonged conflict that was resolved only by the Cromwellian conquest and confiscation of the country were consonant with and resonant of those which had been in opposition during the previous sixty years. To say this is not to deny the existence of a desire, emanating from the revolutionary impulses that derived from prolonged conflict in Scotland, England, and Ireland, and articulated by both regicides and radical captains in the parliamentary army, to fashion a completely new society in each of the jurisdictions of the executed King Charles I. Such zealots believed they were especially justified in commencing their experiment in social engineering in Ireland because the 1641 insurrection convinced them, as it did even reasonable Protestants, that society in Ireland was depraved. The desire to build a new order upon the ruins of the old did exert an undoubted influence over Cromwellian policy.

I am again grateful to John Morrill for advice on this chapter.

for Ireland.\textsuperscript{2} However, while this desire was inspired in part by the revolutionary experience of civil conflict in three jurisdictions it must also be conceded that those who imposed the Cromwellian settlement upon Ireland were consciously pursuing the course set by Spenser and his fellow reformers during the late sixteenth century, which had been occasionally invoked by their disciples during the first half of the seventeenth century. Spenser, and those who followed his lead in subsequent decades, had called regularly for the erection of a new society upon that which they wished to destroy, and they had employed the same rationalizations that were to be exploited by the Cromwellians to legitimize their policies.\textsuperscript{3} This was more than coincidental, since there was continuity, in both theory and practice, between the events and ambitions of the years following upon the insurrection of 1641 and those of the preceding decades.

Continuity was nowhere more evident than in the decision on the part of the English authorities of the 1640s and again in the 1650s to advance plantation as the sovereign salve for Ireland’s ills. More particularly, scholars have pointed to the influence of Edmund Spenser upon the opinions advanced by John Milton for the subjugation and reform of Ireland, but Spenserian influence could be more commonplace. For example, one advocate of plantation for Ireland in 1652 recommended that ‘he that desire[s] to advance the plantation of Ireland can hardly find better hints than are in Mr. Ed. Spenser his \textit{View of the State of Ireland}, published [sic] almost three score years ago, 1596’.\textsuperscript{4}

The formulation of the plantation settlement which the government of Oliver Cromwell sought to impose upon Ireland in the years subsequent to 1653 has been closely studied, even if a comprehensive analysis of the working out of the Cromwellian confiscation on the ground still awaits its historian.\textsuperscript{5} The Cromwellian scheme was certainly devised and implemented by Englishmen who had endured the red heat of civil turmoil and revolution in England before they experienced even more bitter military conflict in Ireland. It is


\textsuperscript{3} See above, pp. 47–55; 171–81.


therefore not surprising that the policies of the more articulate of them, notably Sir William Petty and Gerard and Arnold Boate, were unquestionably influenced, if not inspired, by the concern for scientific exactitude that came to the fore during the years of conflict. However account must also be taken of the fact that the decision to use the instrument of plantation to resolve Ireland’s instability had been taken by the English parliament as early as 1642, when that was far from being a revolutionary body. Once this is admitted it becomes clear that what is known to historians as the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland of the 1650s was an extension of, and anchored upon, the plantation scheme adumbrated in 1642, while each was a continuation of what had been in process since the 1580s. It was in 1642 that the decision was taken by the English parliament that 2,500,000 profitable acres of Irish land, to be ‘taken equally out of the four Provinces of that Kingdom’, should serve as security for those who would ‘adventure’ money to meet the costs of recovering government authority in Ireland. This parliamentary decision, which enjoyed the king’s agreement, was taken on the recommendation of representatives of the Protestant community in Ireland, and with the moral endorsement of a wide spectrum of the population of both England and Scotland whose opinions seem to have been influenced by Protestants from Ireland.

The promotion of the ‘adventurer’ scheme, and its continuing influence upon the ultimate Cromwellian settlement, has been expertly treated by Karl Bottigheimer and others, and the only concern here is to allude to its links with what had gone before. Due attention has been given to the presence of Irish-based members such as Sir John Clotworthy and William Jephson in the English parliament which passed the Adventurers Act, but insufficient account has been taken of the presence in London on 8 March 1642—eleven days before the Adventurers Act came forward for discussion—of Dean Henry Jones who had travelled to England in the company of Roger Puttock, John Sterne, John Watson, Randall Adams, William Hitchcock, William Aldrick, and Henry Brererton. These latter had nominated Jones as ‘the agent and attorney’ for ‘all our distressed brethren the clergy of Ireland, their wives and children, widows and orphans’ to present the ‘Remonstrance of our lamentable condition’. The opportunity for Jones to appear before the Commons did not occur until 21 March—two days after the Adventurers Act had been brought forward—and a printed version of the Remonstrance did not appear until still later. However, the essential point is that the bringing

forward of the Act, and its very shaping, is likely to have been influenced by lobbying by Jones and other influential Protestants from Ireland who had survived the assault of 1641. According to Jones’s printed account, which cannot have been significantly different from what he presented to the Commons, the Protestant community in Ireland had been unable to repulse the onslaught that was launched against them in 1641 ‘by reason of the surfeit of that freedom and indulgence which through God’s forbearance for our trial, they of the Popish faction have hitherto enjoyed in this kingdom’. The fault therefore lay with the repeated refusals of the government in England to implement the plantation schemes which the Protestant clergy, and their political leaders in Ireland, had consistently advocated as a means of suppressing popery.9

The Protestants from Ireland who sought to mobilize support in England ranged in position from the earl of Cork to Tristram Whitcombe (the Kinsale merchant we encountered in Chapter 7), and from multitudinous Protestant clergy, including Archbishop James Ussher of Armagh, to dislocated Protestants who became officers in the various armies which sought to hold some ground against the insurgents. The individual pamphlets which they wrote, or sponsored, were part of a massive propaganda campaign designed to mobilize successive English authorities into supporting the actions which they had long believed necessary for sustaining a British and a Protestant interest in Ireland. Their moral persuasion, more than the desire of London merchants and English parliamentarians to make windfall profits out of Irish land, explains the early and substantial subscription by both merchants and parliamentarians in the ‘Adventurer’ campaign.10

The moral imperative particularly explains the involvement of those ardent English Protestants, from both the merchant and parliamentary groups, who were just then disengaging from the futile Providence Island venture directed against Spanish influence in Central America. The fact that this privately sponsored, transatlantic onslaught upon papistry had been repulsed was all the more reason why the attack against the universal enemy should be relaunched closer to home once a call for assistance came from the besieged Protestants in Ireland. However, it is clear that the participants in the ‘sea adventure’, led by Robert, Lord Brooke, and Alexander, Lord Forbes, as well as English commanders of future military exploits, accepted, in a way that Wentworth had never done, that those best capable of devising an appropriate

9 Jones, Remonstrance, sig. B.
10 See, for example, A True Relation of the Miserable Estate that Ireland Now Standeth in, Manifested by a Letter Sent from the Lord Dungarvan, Son to the Earl of Cork (London, 1642); A True Relation of God’s Providence in the Province of Munster, Being a Printed Letter of Thomas Johnson, a Volunteer in Lord Dungarvan’s Troop (London, 1642); Tristram Whitcombe, A Most Exact Relation of a Great Victory (London, 1642); True News from Ireland (London, 1641); this latter was ‘sent from Dublin December 27 1641 by Tristram Whitcom, a factor there for a worthy alderman of this city’; True Relation of the Exploits of Sir Charles Coote near Drogheda (London, 1641); Ireland’s Advocate: A Sermon for the Relief of Irish Protestants (London, 1641).
strategy for the recovery of Ireland were those Protestants with knowledge and experience of the country. They would have been all the more ready to concede this since some of the more prominent Protestant figures in Ireland would already have been known to them. Thus those who engaged upon the ‘sea adventure’ made it clear that they were but assisting the efforts of Lord Ranelagh, who was president of Connacht, and Sir William St Leger, the Munster president, as well as Lewis Boyle, Viscount Kinalmeaky, and his brother-in-law Lord Barrymore.\textsuperscript{11}

While Karl Bottigheimer and other scholars who have studied the campaign to raise money for the Irish ‘adventure’ have been correct to place emphasis on the role played by merchants and parliamentarians, it must also be understood that the cause of Protestants in Ireland quickly became a popular cause in England. Thus many who subscribed small sums of money towards the cost of recovering Ireland did so with no expectation that they would be compensated for their efforts. This popular aspect to the subscription is best illustrated by the evidence relating to the collection of money in Buckinghamshire, and it seems safe to assume that what held true for Buckinghamshire was equally true for other counties of England and Wales which had close connections with Ireland, or from whence English settlers in Ireland had come. There is also some evidence that charity for distressed Protestants in Ireland remained in the minds of people in England long after the initial burst of enthusiasm. For instance, in January 1643, the mayor and burgesses of Coleraine thanked the English parliament for relieving them with wheat and peas to the value of £500, and for raising a collection on their behalf in the city of London and its suburbs. What inspired ordinary parishioners or citizens to contribute to such causes is not clear: it may have been the printed propaganda campaign which described in lurid detail, sometimes with the use of woodcuts, the unprovoked assault that had been launched upon unsuspecting Protestants, or it may have been the preaching of ministers who would have been alerted to the plight of Irish Protestants by clergymen who had just returned from there. Both the written and the oral campaigns, as one refugee clergyman put it, were designed ‘to excite the English nation to relieve our poor wives and children’. Even more potent in provoking excitement would have been the sight of Protestant refugees from Ireland—women and children rather than men who would have remained to fight—returning for security to their places of birth, and bearing stories of the real and imagined horrors they had endured. But if these stories, whether conveyed orally or in print, moved English Protestants to contribute to the relief of their co-religionists there was little said or written that was original; rather the concern was to present the insurrection of 1641 as proof of what

\textsuperscript{11} Karen Ordahl Kupperman, \textit{Providence Island, 1630–41: The Other Puritan Colony} (Cambridge, 1993), 344–5; \textit{A Relation of Sundry Occurrences in Ireland from the Fleet of Ships Set out by the Adventurers of the Additional Forces by Sea} (London, 1642).
English commentators had been saying for decades, or even centuries, concerning the barbarity of Ireland and its inhabitants.\textsuperscript{12} If the influence of Protestant refugees from Ireland can be discerned in the formulation of the Adventurers Act, the more prominent of these refugees also exerted considerable influence over the Cromwellian plantation scheme of the 1650s. Texts such as Temple’s \textit{The Irish Rebellion}, written specifically to denounce possible conciliation with the nefarious enemy, would have pointed to the need for the comprehensive plantation that previous governments had refused to proceed with.\textsuperscript{13} Then those with experience of Ireland also sought to influence the shaping of the scheme of plantation that would be implemented in Ireland once military victory had been achieved and the country had thus been made ready for a new imprint. Here it is unnecessary to go beyond the well-known pamphlet debate of 1655 between Richard Laurence and Vincent Gookin concerning the appropriate place for the native population within the plantation arrangement that was being worked out. Both authors agreed that this plantation, like the plantations in Munster and Ulster which had gone before it, should involve a segregation of the incoming settler population from the corrupting influence, and possible murderous intent, of the natives, but the fundamental difference between the two authors concerned the fate of the native population in the proposed scheme. Laurence, a radical Baptist officer in the Cromwellian army, wanted the removal of all the existing population from the lands to be planted in Leinster, Ulster, and Munster, and the transplantation of all natives resident on that property who could prove their innocence to lands west of the river Shannon. Gookin, on the other hand, an established Munster settler who had survived in Ireland by working with the Cromwellian regime, recognized, as a landowner, the impracticality of moving cultivators, as well as proprietors, from the land to be settled. Instead, he insisted that the farming population should remain on the plantation lands where they would serve as tenants and cottiers to the new Protestant proprietors, and that only Catholic landowners, together with their families, should be removed west of the river Shannon.\textsuperscript{14}

Although the plantation schemes envisaged by the English parliament in 1642 and by the Cromwellians in the 1650s were on a much greater scale than anything previously attempted in Ireland, the principle dividing Laurence from Gookin was fundamentally the same as that which, when previous


\textsuperscript{13} John Temple, \textit{The Irish Rebellion} (London, 1646); see above, pp. 461–4.

plantations were under discussion, had separated the idealistic schemes formulated by English-based theorists from the more pragmatic solutions favoured by servitors in Ireland. Laurence, like the earlier English-based formulators of plantation schemes, sought after the introduction to Ireland of a purely English community within three provinces, while Gookin, like the servitors of earlier plantations, would have settled for a mixture of the two populations provided English proprietors were dominant everywhere. Therefore in so far as Laurence, and those of the 1650s who shared his opinion, broke new ground it was when he denied the possibility of reforming the Irish Catholic population either by example or persuasion. It was this denial which explains the proposal that the natives should be corralled on estates west of the river Shannon, sealed off from the outside world by a colony of soldiers settled along the line of that river and of the Atlantic coast. This latter measure was to ensure that, in the event of war, the recalcitrant Catholics would have no opportunity to procure military support from England’s Catholic enemies on the European continent.

The Cromwellian scheme which was eventually adopted in the 1650s had made some concessions to the counsel of Gookin to the extent that it limited the transplantation of Catholics west of the river Shannon to those of high social position, and their immediate dependants. It was also less radical than what Laurence had envisaged in that it allowed for the possibility that those natives who were permitted to remain on the lands of the incoming planters in Leinster, Munster, and Ulster might be drawn to Protestantism both through compulsory evangelization, and through the economic inducements presented by the exemplary living of the new planters. Thus, as the Cromwellian officers, officials, and would-be landowners segmented the country into military commands, and as they eradicated those in Ireland, whether soldiers or Catholic clergy, who opposed their wishes, and obliged the surviving natives to attend at Protestant service, they were, wittingly or unwittingly, systematically following the prescription for reforming the country that Spenser had recommended in 1596.

To say that the Cromwellian scheme for reforming Ireland was imitative of Spenser is not to deny it an independent intellectual pedigree. Several Cromwellians, such as the Boate brothers and Sir William Petty, associated with promoting reform through example and economic enterprise can be identified as products of the evangelical Protestant spirit of enquiry and the New Science which are associated with the fervour of the English civil conflict during its revolutionary phase. However the Boates were also concerned to

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15 See above, pp. 129, 199.
16 On the transplantation scheme itself see R. C. Simington (ed.), *The Transplantation to Connacht, 1654–8* (Dublin, 1970), and on its working out in practice in one county see Ciarán D. Ó Murchadha, ‘Land and Society in Seventeenth-Century Clare’ (Ph.D. thesis, National University of Ireland, Galway, 1982).
show that their proposals were consistent with ‘the great pains taken by the English, ever since the conquest [the Norman Conquest] to civilize them [the Irish] and to improve the country’. More particularly, they acknowledged that their recommendations were also based upon their conversations ‘with several gentlemen who had been to Ireland especially Sir William Parsons, and Sir Richard Parsons’. Then also, as the Boate brothers lauded the prosperity which would ensue in Ireland once the natural resources of the country had been brought under the management of knowledgeable Protestants, they could exemplify their argument principally by pointing to the achievements of the previous generation of English settlers, ‘the introducers of all good things to Ireland’. Similarly, while Petty, in his Political Anatomy of Ireland (1672), explained how the perfect scheme for the reform of Ireland which had been designed (with considerable assistance from himself) precisely twenty years before, in 1652, had been diluted by the Restoration settlement, he was also conscious that 1672 marked another anniversary: that of 1172 when ‘the English invaded Ireland about 500 years since’.

Therefore, the Cromwellian settlement, which was the most ambitious of the plantations to which Ireland had been subjected, can best be understood when it is considered both as a culmination of plantation programmes which had been in process since the 1580s or were in prospect in 1641, and as a product of English revolutionary fervour of the mid-seventeenth century. Thus, the Cromwellian settlement was altogether more ambitious than any scheme which Wentworth might have executed if he had pursued the course of action which he had envisaged during his early years of service in Ireland, in that it envisaged a massive destruction and relocation of the existing populations, and looked towards the immediate transformation of Irish society in three of the country’s four provinces to an English model. However, as was noted in Chapter 6, the scope of the Cromwellian settlement was hardly more extensive than what Wentworth would have implemented, if circumstances had permitted him to proceed with all the plantations he had in mind. Moreover, while Petty and his associates mapped the lands to be confiscated more accurately than was done in any previous plantation, and sought also to estimate the economic potential of the soil of each parish to be planted, they still accepted that their scheme was drawing upon previous plantations’ agendas. Thus Petty acknowledged that his own ‘Down Survey’, which some historians have lauded as the ultimate achievement of the New Science, was the product of the efforts of all who had ‘admeasured by the chain and instrument’ ‘most of the land of Ireland . . . within these last 40 years’. In his acknowledgement, Petty made particular mention of Bodley and Raven in

Ulster, Mr William Gilbert and others who had surveyed Connacht and Tipperary, ‘in the Earl of Strafford’s time’, and he took personal credit only for surveying ‘the lands belonging to Papists anno 1641, in the three provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Ulster’. Therefore there is much to suggest that the Cromwellians in Ireland were proceeding with a scheme which had been decided upon in the 1580s, which had been implemented fitfully by those English people, including even Wentworth, who had favoured further plantations for Ireland during the decades before 1641, and which was again espoused with enthusiasm after the conflagration of that year.

Like many of the English who had settled in, or guided policy for, Ireland in the years prior to 1641, the Cromwellians hoped to curtail the influence of the Scots in Ireland. As with Spenser in the sixteenth century or Wentworth in the seventeenth, those who represented Cromwell in Ireland also wished to diminish, or eliminate, the existing interest of the Scots in Ulster, and in so far as the Cromwellians fostered any concept of Britishness it was a Spenserian notion of the Scots, no less than Irish, being required to adjust their lives to English modes. However the Scots had no intention of accepting this inferior role, and everything suggests that the involvement of Scots people with Ireland during the years after 1641 was consistent with their preoccupation with that country previous to that date.

The first substantial lowland Scottish interest in Ireland was, as was detailed in Chapter 4, associated with the process of official and unofficial plantation in Ulster during the first half of the seventeenth century. Then Ulster attracted a reasonable cross-section of Scottish society with some of the settlers being Catholic, others stridently Protestant, and still others, and possibly the majority, mildly committed to the Protestant Reformation but primarily interested in taking advantage of the opportunity for self-advancement which plantation in Ulster presented. The increasingly dominant influence upon these settlers was the Protestant one, and Ulster soon became the first place of refuge for those militant Scottish Protestants who were opposed to the moderate episcopal government that King James VI and I had insisted upon for the Church in Scotland. Already in 1625, the last year of that king’s reign, James Glendenning, a noted radical preacher, had organized an open-air revivalist meeting at Sixmilewater river in County Antrim which was to become the prototype for conventicles which were quickly spread by Glendenning and his associates throughout Ulster and into Scotland.

More radicals from Scotland were attracted to Ulster by the relative freedom in religious practice which Protestants there seemed to enjoy, and they

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18 Petty, *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*, 1672, 47.
arrived in Ulster in still greater numbers after 1633 when they had been scandalized by the religious rites and English prayer book favoured by their new monarch, King Charles I, when he had visited Edinburgh to be enthroned as king of Scotland. These late arrivals to Ulster were happily innocent of the malevolent attitude of Thomas Wentworth, who had just then taken up duties as Irish governor, towards any deviation from the king’s preferences in church government, ritual, and theology. Already in 1634, Henry Leslie, bishop of Down, had reported with alarm that twenty-five parish clergy in his diocese were non-conformists, of whom five were ‘young preaching schoolmasters, desperate nonconformists’, including Robert Blair and one Dunbarr who had recently been expelled from Scotland. These firebrands had been so successful in winning support for their interpretation of Protestant doctrine that the remaining parish clergy in the diocese of Down had been persuaded to ‘neglect all order’ to the point where not one church in three had a ‘common prayer book’ and even in those it was ‘seldom in the most never used’. The bishop sought to uphold his authority over his clergy, and their flock, by enlisting support from the Court of High Commission in Dublin to have the delinquents arrested. This merely exacerbated matters because the more brazen of the bishop’s opponents returned to Scotland, where they made common cause with the Covenanters in resisting the efforts of the king to enforce his authority over the Scottish Church. However their churchwardens who remained behind in Ulster persisted as ‘notable non-conformists’, and the bishop discovered, after he had arrested some of these churchwardens and sent them for trial to Dublin, that where the Covenanters in Scotland had ‘entered unto a bond to defend one another by arms’ the nonconformists of his diocese had ‘joined in a bond to defend one another by their oaths’. It was Leslie’s belief that, by so doing, they hoped to bring about a situation whereby the concessions being wrung by the Covenanters from the king would be extended to themselves in Ulster.

The work of the High Commission made Ulster an inhospitable place for radical Protestants and some, lured by the persuasions of John Winthrop, Jr., who had visited Ulster in 1635, had already attempted, in 1636, to make their way to New England only to have their ship the Eaglewing turned back by a storm. This they interpreted as a providential sign that they should ‘find an America in Scotland’ where the Covenanters were mobilizing themselves to stand against the interference of the king. Wentworth’s use, in 1639, of the notorious Black Oath, his sponsoring of publications to discredit the politico-

21 State of the Diocese of Down before the Last Royal Visitation’, 1634 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 20 (b), no. 179); Henry, bishop of Down, to Wentworth, 18 Oct. 1638 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 20 (b), no. 134); A Speech Delivered at the Visitation of Down and Connor Held at Lisnegarvey, 26 September 1638, wherein for the Convincing of the Non-conformists there is a Full Confutation of the Covenant (London, 1639).
theological principles of the Covenanters, and his stationing 500 troops in Ulster to ensure that none of the remaining dissidents would foment a covenanting movement in the province drove many from the congregations of these dissenting ministers back to Scotland. More were to follow in 1641 once Wentworth, now earl of Strafford, stationed his own newly recruited, largely Catholic army in Ulster while it awaited transport to Scotland or England for use against the Covenanters.22

Those religious refugees who departed Ireland went with the intention of returning, and their determination was all the greater when their countrymen who had remained in Ulster became casualties of the Irish insurrection of 1641. Sentiment in Scotland over the fate of their kin in Ulster was immediately aroused by preaching, by decrees from the Scottish Privy Council, but most effectively, as in England, by the appearance of refugees on their very doorsteps. Impoverished survivors of the insurrection first descended upon the towns of the west of Scotland, but concern soon became country-wide. Thus on 4 February 1641/2 the city of Edinburgh asked residents there to respond to the decree of the Scottish Council, ‘condoling the lamentable and deplorable estate of the many good Christians within the kingdom of Ireland who were being forced to flee to this country from the barbarous cruelty of the natives’, and directing that a ‘voluntary subscription’ should be collected in all churches the following Sunday.23

On the higher social level, two Scots made substantial investments in the English Adventurers’ campaign, but the more normal Scottish response to the crisis being endured by their kindred in Ulster was to volunteer for military service in Ulster. They were encouraged to do so by the king who was himself present in Scotland, soliciting support from the Covenanters in the event of a further deterioration in his relationship with the English parliament, at the moment when news of the insurrection in Ulster reached Scotland. Perhaps as many as 1,500 Scottish volunteers, as well as significant quantities of war materials, were made available for immediate service against the insurgents in Ulster, and the king, much to the consternation of both his critics and his supporters in all three kingdoms, proposed to accompany these troops to Ireland. This latter prospect was deflected by the suggestion of the Irish Privy Council that the king’s life would be in danger from those who had spilt the ‘blood of so many thousands of your faithful and innocent subjects’. Therefore, further negotiation over Scottish military support for the Irish cause was

22 The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630–49, ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge, Mass. 1996), 160; the America in Scotland quote and its context are discussed in Peter Donald, An Uncounsell’d King (Cambridge, 1990), 191–6; John Corbet, The Ungirding of the Scottish Armour; or, An Answer to the Information for Defensive Arms against the King’s Majesty which was Drawn up at Edinburgh (Dublin, 1639); see above, pp. 294–8.

between delegates from the Scottish parliament and Council and representatives of the English parliament, rather than between either of these bodies and the king. The arrangement eventually agreed upon was that the Scots would supply an army of 10,000 men for service in Ireland, and that the cost of men and munitions would be paid for by the English parliament, with an additional vague suggestion that the Scots would benefit, as it was intended the English Adventurers would, from the lands to be declared confiscate to the crown once the insurrection had been suppressed.24

The story of the involvement of the Scottish army with Ireland is well known and the details of its activities do not need to be recounted here. Its commander for most of its existence was Major General Robert Monro, who, after he had disembarked with his force in Ulster on 3 April 1642, concentrated his energies first on establishing and maintaining control over Counties Antrim and Down, and then on co-ordinating his efforts with the Laggan army, the Protestant settler force which had upheld its position against the insurgents in mid-west Ulster, in the valley of the river Foyle, and its tributary the river Finn. This focus on Ulster was logical, at the outset, because Monro could not run the risk of being cut off from his supply lines in Scotland. This was to remain an enduring concern, but Monro’s attention was, in any event, to be confined largely to Ulster, and to its relationship with Scotland, for the duration of his career in Ireland which did not end until 1650. This is explained by the fact that, although technically commissioned by the king and in the pay of the English parliament, the only consistent support and direction that the Scottish army received from Britain was that which came to it from Scotland. It was logical therefore that the principal objective of Monro and his army should have been the maintenance and extension of Scotland’s interest in Ireland, which was threefold. The first priority of the Scots and their army in Ireland was to recover the property of the Scots, and other Protestants, who had settled in Ulster during the previous half-century; its second was to take revenge on those who had been responsible for attacking and, it was presumed, murdering some of these settlers; and its third concern was to block the passage of any forces from Ireland that might seek to invade western Scotland by the short sea passage from the coast of County Antrim. For most of this period Monro’s army was pitted against the force built up by Owen Roe O’Neill in central Ulster after his arrival there from Flanders, in July 1642, and after his appointment as lord general of the Ulster army of the Catholic Confederacy which had been established at Kilkenny in May 1642. As long as Monro’s army remained intact the possibility existed that it

24 Stevenson, Scottish Covenanters, 43–65; Conrad Russell, The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637–42 (Oxford, 1991), 417–23; undated draft to king, probably from the Irish Council (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Nalson MS 12, fos. 80–2); copy Lord Justices and Council to Mr Secretary Nicholas, 23 Apr. 1642 (Bodleian, Nalson MS. 12, fos. 24–7); A Letter Sent to His Majesty from the Lords Justices and Council of Ireland 23 Apr. 1642, Concerning his Majesty’s Resolution to go into Ireland (London, 1642).
might be mobilized in Ireland to achieve broader objectives. However, since it was never so employed, the Scottish army became embroiled in the broader struggle in Ireland only to the extent that other armies, first that of the combined forces of the Catholic Confederacy, and latterly that of Oliver Cromwell, were sent against Monro with the purpose of destroying his army, or driving it out of Ulster. All of this suggests that the involvement of the Scots with Ireland during the years 1642–50 was determined principally by their association with Ulster in the decades before 1641.25

If the English and Scottish involvements with Ireland in the years immediately after 1641 were prefigured by what had happened before that date so also were the policies pursued by the several elements of the Irish population. Those Irish Catholics who had been deeply engaged in parliamentary politics before 1641 continued to insist after that date, as they had in 1640 (and for decades before), that their ‘vast expense of treasure and blood’ in the interests of the crown down through the centuries bore witness to their being the ‘loyal and dutiful people of this land of Ireland being now for the most part derived from British ancestors’. Consistent with this was their claim, once they constituted themselves into a Catholic Confederation in 1642, that their objectives were to establish ordered government in that part of the country which remained in the control of Catholics, to defend that territory, and to launch attacks upon those whom they identified as enemies either of themselves or of the crown. Their ultimate ambition then was to draw upon the resources of Ireland to provide military assistance to King Charles I in his struggle with all those, whether in Ireland, England, or Scotland, who had challenged his prerogative.26

While these may have been the objectives which the majority of the lay members of the Confederation understood their motto of pro deo, rege, et patria Hibernia unanimis to represent, there was a minority lay element, as well as a coherent Catholic clerical bloc, who interpreted these allegiances differently. The fundamental difficulty arose from their different understandings of what religious toleration for Catholics, represented in the Confederates’ motto by the words pro deo, really entailed. It will be clear from earlier chapters that for most Catholic landowners and lawyers who had participated in parliamentary politics or in the negotiation of the Graces in 1628, religious toleration meant the absence of religious persecution. What they had been persistently seeking in their negotiations previous to 1641 was legislation to the effect that the estates of Catholic landowners would be free from the threat of plantation; an assurance that Catholics who took a simple oath of allegiance to the crown would enjoy the same rights as Protestant subjects;

26 Copy ‘The Humble Remonstrance of the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses in the Commons House in Ireland Assembled at Dublin, 1640’ (Bodleian, Rawlinson MS A237, fos. 4–5); Micheál Ó Siochrú, Confederate Ireland, 1642–9: A Constitutional and Political Analysis (Dublin, 1999).
and an acceptance that the collection of recusancy fines would be discontinued, and that priests would be free to engage in discreet pastoral work without fear of arrest. Those who had pursued that agenda in the years before 1641 had suffered many setbacks, but they also had reason to be proud of their achievements. Therefore they clung to these same objectives during the years of their participation in the Catholic Confederacy, in the knowledge that most of what they required had been conceded in practice. The only item outstanding was the parliamentary Act granting them security in their estates, and, in April 1641, a renewed assurance on this score had been given by King Charles.²⁷

However, while the position adopted by substantial Catholic landowners, usually portrayed by historians as moderate or pragmatic, retained its appeal for many participants in the Confederation at Kilkenny, there were others, and particularly the clerics there, who had a different understanding of what religious toleration for Catholics entailed. In canvassing for the adoption of their definition, these people were requesting the Confederation to pursue an objective which the conservatives recognized would never be conceded by any monarch who wished to remain on the British throne. For these more radical members, and particularly for priests who had been trained on the Continent, Catholics could not be said to be enjoying religious freedom until they had churches of their own where they might practise their faith openly without interference from state authority. They were thus rejecting, as inadequate, the clandestine Catholicism which the lawyers and Catholic landowners would have settled for. The clerics could justify their intransigence on this point by pointing to the importance of the spectacle of Catholicism, when practised in its full splendour, in fostering faith by inculcating awe among the faithful. Some of the clergy also wished to recover all church lands which had fallen into lay ownership, including into the possession of Catholics, since the time of the Reformation. This claim was rejected by the Old English landowners within the Confederation both because it threatened to divest them of property they had held for generations, and because it stemmed from the desire of priests to be an independent force, free from the patronage of Catholic landowners who might seek to control their actions and pronouncements.

These varying interpretations of what freedom of religion entailed led, unsurprisingly, to a split in the Confederate camp, and more particularly after 1645 when Archbishop Rinuccini, who had been appointed nuncio to the Confederation, insisted that no settlement should be made with the king until full religious toleration, as this term was interpreted by Rinuccini, had been assured. While the intransigence of Rinuccini on this issue has frequently been remarked upon, usually unsympathetically, it was not generally understood,

²⁷ Copy King Charles to the Lords Justices and Council of Ireland, 3 Apr. 1641 (Bodleian, Nalson MS 13, fo. 17).
until Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin investigated the subject in the Vatican archives, that Rinuccini’s position was no more extreme than that adopted by most Catholic bishops in Ireland well before the arrival of the nuncio there. 28

It also seems that these different understandings of what freedom of religion entailed, and the fissures within the ranks of the Catholic community to which they could give rise, had been so apparent for at least a decade before 1641 that they were well known to government officials and members of the Protestant community. Reference has already been made to the interest which Wentworth took in the divisions between the Regular and Secular priests in Dublin and its vicinity. Similarly, in 1633, the supposedly benign William Bedell, bishop of Kilmore, complained both of ‘the Pope’s clergy’ in his diocese being ‘double in number to us’, and of the presence among them of ‘a rabble of irregular regulars, commonly younger brothers of good houses’ who had taken to ‘moulding the people to the Pope’s obedience’ by ‘preaching the new superstitious and detestable doctrines such as their own priests are ashamed of’, including that which forbade Catholics to subscribe even to an oath of allegiance to a Protestant monarch. 29

Some lay leaders within the Catholic community, no less than some prominent Protestant figures, commented disapprovingly on such breaches of the conventions and politico-religious accommodations which had previously governed the practice of Catholicism within a Protestant state. They were concerned not only because such flagrant disregard for state authority was likely to provoke counter-measures which would fall heavily upon all Catholics, but also because they recognized that the adoption of such intransigent positions would disturb the delicate balance between Natives and Newcomers that was essential to communal harmony and the security of property. The resentment voiced by the landowning Tuites from County Longford against the friars who, they believed, had been responsible for goading the lower orders into insurrection in 1641 has been alluded to in Chapter 8. Similarly, in Munster, James FitzGerald deplored the attempt of his neighbour Thomas Carter, whose father’s tanyards he had saved from the fury of the insurgents, to link him, merely because of his Catholicism, with the political teachings of Catholic clergy ‘whose persuasion’, he professed, he ‘would not follow, but only in spiritual and godly matters’. 30

While the more secure Catholic landowners, and some priests who had customarily depended upon them, condemned extremism in word as in action, there were other landowners, and an increasing number of Catholic

29 See above, pp. 443–4; William, bishop of Kilmore, to Wentworth, 5 Nov. 1633 (Sheffield City Library, Strafford Papers, vol. 20 (b), no. 115).
clergy, who fostered no such reserve about stating, and seeking to achieve, their demands in religious, no less than in secular, matters. Thus, as was detailed in Chapter 8, many gentlemen from all provinces who had experienced economic difficulty engaged in a series of conspiracies throughout 1641, presumably with the intention of improving their lot by forceful means. Mention was also made of the willingness of dispossessed or pauperized Catholic tenants and cottiers to take advantage of the first opportunity to seize the lands and possessions of their Protestant neighbours. Similarly, Irish officers in Spanish service who had long contemplated a return to Ireland now had the possibility to do so. However, as they arrived they quickly appreciated that there would be no permanent home for them in Ireland unless the government could be persuaded to cast aside some of the plantations they had introduced. These, therefore, were enemies of the status quo in Ireland because being so was the only reasonable and pragmatic course open to people who had no existing stake in the country. Their years spent in an intensely Catholic environment in Flanders, France, or Spain would also have made these returned exiles ready to support the religious demands of the more militant Catholic clergy. Owen Roe O'Neill, who had returned from Flanders in 1642, would seem to fit this model. His ambitions can be ascertained only from his actions during the course of the Confederate Wars, rather than from any spoken or written testimony that has survived. However it is clear that the recovery of his lands and status in Ulster had become the ambition of Owen Roe’s uncle, the exiled Hugh, earl of Tyrone, during his years in exile until his death in Rome in 1616. Wentworth also reported that the exiled earl of Tyrconnell (the son of Rory O'Donnell) also wished to return and ‘replant himself’ on such conditions as, Wentworth believed, would ‘render him little less than a Prince of Ulster’.

It is easy to point to individuals within the Irish Catholic community, at home and abroad, who were keen to challenge the existing order in Irish society in the months and years before hostilities commenced in October 1641, and it is equally possible to point to the unveiled hostility of government officials towards all Catholics, and particularly Old English members of the Irish parliament, after the outbreak of insurrection in Ulster. However there is also evidence that there were people on both sides who wished to retain some middle ground after the hostilities commenced, just as they had been doing in the years and months before October 1641. Reference has been made in Chapter 8 to the valiant, but generally futile, efforts of some Catholic landowners to remain aloof from the fray, and while Protestants could not


contemplate being neutral, since they had become the target of attack, some
did try to maintain working relations with, and even to protect, their Catholic
dependants within their spheres of influence. Here the unlikely example is
Richard Boyle, earl of Cork. It has been already noted that, from the moment
he emerged from the obscurity of Munster, where he made his fortune, to
become active in politics, Cork always identified himself as a strident oppo-
nent of religious toleration for Catholics. However, on another level, he
maintained contact with Catholics who were equal to him in social position
and education, as also with Catholics who were his dependants, and in this
he remained constant until his death in 1643. Cork, for instance, had no
compunction, in 1640, over requesting Dr Tirrell, ‘rector of the Irish College
in Paris’, and therefore a notable opponent of the official effort to Protestan-
tize Ireland, to convey a letter to the Protestant divine M. Marcombes who
was then tutor for two of Cork’s sons while on their Grand Tour. At the local
level, Cork’s trusted estate manager John Walley, himself no slouch when it
came to criticizing Catholics or Catholicism, complained that Thomas
Carter, Jr., of Mocollop Castle, had permitted the soldiers under his
command to vent their ‘hatred against these poor people that live peaceably
and endeavour to pay the rent’, and thus frightened away the Irish tenants
whom Cork ‘had planted’ on his estate.\(^{33}\)

It was unfortunate for Walley’s estate management, and for the income of
his master, that the hates, fears, resentments, and suspicions which had been
kept under reasonable control in Ireland during the years of peace could not
be contained once the political mould was broken by the initial insurrection
in Ulster. It was detailed in Chapter 8 how customary restraints were cast
aside first in Ulster and then quickly throughout the other provinces as word
spread of what was afoot in the northern province. More astute observers of
Ireland can hardly have been totally surprised by the outburst in Ulster, and
the prescient earl of Cork had observed ten years earlier that Ulster, as
opposed to Munster, was ‘so rude and remote a part of the kingdom, as if
any trouble or insurrection (which God forbid) should arise they would be
the first to be wasted’. Munster, as it transpired, proved itself the more stable
province, but even from there it was reported in May 1642 that ‘all the Irish
tenants of the Irish town [of Bandonbridge were] long since fled away and
almost all their cabins and thatched houses . . . pulled down’. Similarly, on
the Protestant side, ‘divers women, both married and single, of good note’
had fled to Youghal from whence they hoped to take ship for England. There
was, apparently, no immediate reason, other than an unsubstantiated fear
of imminent attack from the opposing religious group, why people of
either persuasion in these securely Protestant areas of Munster should have

\(^{33}\) Cork to Marcombes, 18 Jan. 1640 (Chatsworth, Cork Letter Book 2, fo. 406); John Walley to
Cork, 22 Apr. 1642 (Chatsworth, Lismore Papers, vol. 23, no. 7).
abandoned their homes. However, fleeing they did, and flight provoked rumour which, in turn, occasioned further panic and ultimately the collapse of all communal relations as members of both religious communities in every region of the country identified those of the opposing group as the enemy to be destroyed.\textsuperscript{34} 

As communal conflict gave way to open warfare the leaders of the opposing forces in every province of the country called for outside support, and help usually arrived from a source which was predictable in light of the previous associations of those calling for assistance. The various outside troops who engaged in Ireland invariably worked in close association with those whom they had come to support. Thus, the pre-1641 aspirations of the various competing groups in Ireland were never lost sight of, and this may go some way towards explaining why the conduct of warfare in Ireland during the entire period 1642–52 became mired by the desire for revenge and the settling of local scores. In the case of Ulster the principal support for the Protestant population came predictably from Scotland, with only limited English aid being provided by London merchants to Derry and Coleraine. On the other side, the Catholics of Ulster came to enjoy the support of Owen Roe O’Neill, together with those of his military subordinates within the Irish regiment in Flanders who were also exiles from Ulster. This aid to the Catholics of Ulster was augmented by assistance from some Catholic Mac Donnells in Scotland, whose involvement may be explained primarily by their animosity towards Argyll and the Covenanters who supported the Protestants in Ulster.

Some of the professionals on both sides who became involved in the Irish conflict sought to observe whatever rules or conventions of military conflict they had seen practised in either Britain or the Continent. However it quickly became apparent that warfare in Ireland was constrained by no moral economies. Thus after the first victory registered by Monro, who commanded a combined force of Scots and British settlers, all the prisoners he captured were summarily shot. This, as was noted in Chapter 8, was taken by Phelim O’Neill and his associates as a justification for their forces, in turn, to execute whatever Protestant settlers they then held in custody. Such tit-for-tat killing was to characterize the war in Ireland from this first engagement at Kilwarlin Woods, outside Lisburn, in 1642 to the final Cromwellian victory ten years later.\textsuperscript{35} 

The ensuing war in Ireland, during both the Confederate phase, 1642–9, and the Cromwellian phase, 1649–53, was characterized by a sequence of sieges interspersed with a few pitched battles, with counter-insurgency activity taking place continuously on both sides. During the first phase of the war,
the sieges seldom achieved their purpose because the besieging armies usually lacked either the artillery necessary for taking defended positions, or the means to transport big guns to places far into the interior. Not daunted by this, all besiegers, in what was a very complex conflict, had resort to scorched-earth policies aimed at destroying all crops, vegetation, and living things in the vicinity of the position being targeted by them. This was done without any regard for the well-being of the civilian population, with the purpose of forcing the defending garrison to surrender or to come to terms. It was quite different during the second phase, because the Cromwellian army arrived in Ireland equipped with modern siege guns and it enjoyed continuous replenishment of supplies, at least during the first two years of its sojourn in Ireland. This technological advance made for short sieges, but what the civilian population of the countryside was spared was made up for by the exemplary execution of the defending garrison, even where these were English soldiers. Thus no quarter was offered to anybody in arms, officer or soldier, in September 1649 and again in October 1649 when Drogheda and Wexford were successively taken by the forces commanded by Oliver Cromwell. Unarmed civilians were also killed in the taking of Wexford, although this was because they were caught in the cross-fire rather than because slaying non-combatants was part of Cromwell’s policy of giving no quarter which, he hoped, would ‘tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future’. However, it must also be noted in Cromwell’s favour that, whenever he was forced by military circumstances to grant terms to besieged garrisons—notably at Clonmel—he observed the terms of surrender to the letter. 36

While battle may have been less frequent than siege during both phases of the conflict it was especially vicious when it did occur. Moreover, where one army gained supremacy over the other no quarter was given to anybody other than to officers or prominent figures who might subsequently be used for ransom or as pawns in negotiation. 37 The result, as Pádraigh Lenihan has made clear, was casualty rates among the defeated armies in the battles in Ireland which, when calculated in percentages or in terms of the ratio of casualties to captured prisoners, usually far exceeded the norms on the European continent or those of the worst royalist defeats in the wars in Britain, at Marston Moor (1644) and Dunbar (1650). Therefore, the bloodiest conflicts in the Wars of the

36 Pádraig Lenihan, The Confederate Catholics at War, 1642–9 (Cork, 2001); Wheeler, Cromwell in Ireland, 83–8, 94–100; the quotation from Cromwell after Drogheda is quoted p. 87; I am grateful to Pádraig Lenihan for permitting me to see the relevant sections of his forthcoming book on the Confederate War in typescript; see also Tom Reilly, Cromwell and Drogheda (Drogheda, 1993).

37 An early example of ransom being demanded concerns a Mr Maunsall, an associate of the earl of Cork said to be worth £10,000, who was captured by Sir Geoffrey Galway of Limerick who, in September 1642, demanded a ransom for his release; the authorities countered by having Francis White and one Clancy, merchants of Limerick, arrested and imprisoned in Ilchester. Thomas White of Limerick to his son Francis in Ilchester gaol, 21 Sept. 1642 (Bodleian, Nalson MS 2, fo. 150); Cork to Latimer Sampson of Freshford in Somerset, 30 Sept. 1642 (Bodleian, Nalson MS 2, fo. 153); John Ashe to William Lenthall, from Freshford, 30 Dec. 1642 (Bodleian, Nalson MS 2, fo. 243).
Three Kingdoms were unquestionably the Irish ones. Of these the battles with
the highest casualties were Dungan’s Hill (1647), where the Confederate army
of Leinster was essentially annihilated with a loss of at least 3,000 men; Knock-
nanoss (1647), where the Munster army of the Confederacy met a similar fate,
also with a loss of about 3,000 men; Rathmines (1649), where possibly as many
as 4,000 of Ormond’s reconstituted Confederate army were slaughtered; and
Scarrifhollis (1650), where the Ulster Confederate army that had been created
by Owen Roe O’Neill (who was himself dead since the previous year) was essen-
tially wiped out with a loss of perhaps as many as 4,000 men.38

While military historians can estimate and dispute the casualty rates in
battle, there is no means of knowing how many people lost their lives as a
result of counter-insurgency measures, and the resulting famine and disease,
because the principal victims would always have been civilians. What is clear
from all evidence from all sides is that from the outset of the contest vast
swathes of the country were laid waste, as a consequence both of the delib-
erate intention to deprive the opposing forces of food and fodder, and of the
demands of the various armies for provisions. Already in 1643, an anony-
mous author supported his opposition to any cessation of hostilities by his
claim that the insurgents were at breaking point because famine had ‘made
them unnaturally and cannibal-like [to] eat and feed one upon another’.

What may have been calamitous in certain areas in 1643 was more general
by 1649 after the country had endured eight years of intermittent strife. Worse
would follow as a consequence both of the formal Cromwellian conquest,
which brought at least 43,000 fresh English soldiers to a country already satur-
ated with fighting men, and of the mopping-up operations conducted by the
Cromwellian forces in Leinster, Munster, and Ulster against the bands of
‘tories’ who would not concede victory even after the armies in which they
had fought had been destroyed. Then, after Cromwell had himself departed
from Ireland and left the completion of the task of conquering Ireland to his
son-in-law Henry Ireton, the bloodiest and most prolonged aspect of the
struggle persisted until 1653, by which time the Cromwellian troops had taken
all the defensible positions over the river Shannon and the town of Galway.
By then also, the Cromwellian forces had overawed all opposition in all four
provinces and had rounded up possibly as many as 40,000 Irish soldiers to
travel in contracted ships of the Commonwealth to serve in Spain or any
country which would take them.40

38 Estimating casualties in war is always difficult, and more so in the early modern period; these
estimates come from Lenihan, The Confederate Catholics, 190–1; Wheeler, Cromwell in Ireland, 79, 37, 171;
Charles Carlton, who seems to have been the first to attempt a comparative calculation of losses in
war in the three kingdoms, would hold that battles in Scotland were every bit as bloody as in Ireland,
39 Anonymous document against the cessation (Bodleian, Nalson MS 21, fos. 11–13).
40 Wheeler, Cromwell in Ireland, 193–4, 181–223; R. A. Stradling, The Spanish Monarchy and Irish
The tendency in this narrative has been to refer to the victorious forces as Cromwellian. This is justified because the vast majority of troops on the government side in any engagement after 1649 would have been some of the 43,000 who arrived in Ireland under Cromwellian command or some of the 9,000 parliamentary soldiers already serving under Michael Jones when Oliver Cromwell disembarked. This usage is also justified because the major sieges at Drogheda, Wexford, Clonmel, and Limerick were undertaken by the recently arrived army from England, and because their artillery was essential to successful siege warfare. However, while not discounting the importance of the Cromwellian army to the total victory achieved, it must be remembered that Protestants who had lived and served in Ireland for years before the arrival of Cromwell played a crucial role in the military campaign. Moreover, it was they who were most closely associated with the bloody battles of the campaign, with counter-insurgency campaigns, and with the scorched-earth policy that must have been the principal cause of the deaths of non-combatants. The number of civilian casualties, according to the calculations of Sir William Petty, may have reached 400,000 deaths from slaughter, starvation, and disease. Here it is also important to recall that the decisive military victories of the entire eleven years of conflict were all commanded by officers who had been born in Ireland and who had been engaged in warfare there from the outset of the conflict.

The military commander at both the battles of Dungan’s Hill and Rathmines was Colonel Michael Jones, head of the parliamentary forces in Ireland from the time Ormond had surrendered Dublin to him in 1647 until the arrival there of Oliver Cromwell, within days of Jones’s victory at Rathmines. Jones, as is well known, had enjoyed a successful career in the parliamentary forces in the western theatre of the English Civil War before his appointment to Dublin in 1647, but he was no stranger to Ireland, being son to Lewis Jones, bishop of Killaloe. He was therefore brother to Theophilus Jones who was also to play a vital military role in the Cromwellian campaign, to Ambrose Jones who was minister at Kells in County Meath both before 1641 and after the Cromwellian incursion into Ireland, and to Henry Jones, dean, and subsequently bishop, of Clogher, and soon to be spymaster general for Ireland. Henry Jones, as was mentioned, had been one of the prime movers in compiling the 1641 depositions, and he, more than anybody else, recognized how useful this body of evidence could be to the Protestant cause in Ireland. It was he also who had deployed this evidence first in his Remonstrance before the English parliament in 1642, and then before a sequence of Cromwellian investigations into the culpability of Catholic participants in the 1641 insurrection. It is therefore likely that the sanguinary military practices of Michael Jones were partly inspired by the persistent calls by his brother Henry for revenge for what he was seeking to prove had been a premeditated massacre of Protestants in 1641. The commander of the victorious forces at Knocknanoss
was the even-more-Irish Morrogh O’Brien, first earl of Inchiquin, a man of Gaelic lineage, although his mother was a St Leger. Inchiquin was an accomplished soldier, who had fought on many sides, but always in his own interest, during the tortuous campaigns in Munster since the first outbreak of hostilities in that province in 1642. The victor of Scarrifhollis was also Irish born, being Sir Charles Coote, a long-serving government official, a veteran of the prolonged conflict in Ireland, especially in its Ulster sphere, and a substantial landowner and manufacturer in Connacht, Ulster, and Leinster.

All three commanders, more than any English Cromwellian, would have wanted a short decisive conclusion to the wars, and Coote and Inchiquin had manifested their ruthless determination to achieve total victory over their opponents long before the arrival of Cromwell in Ireland, and also after his departure. Then both became active participants in the mopping-up campaigns; Inchiquin in Munster, and Coote in Ulster and Connacht. Others with previous experience who proved implacable in pursuing their opponents to the death were Roger Boyle, Baron Broghill (son to the first earl of Cork), and the regicide Sir Hardress Waller, each with substantial Munster interests to recover and defend. The military actions of all these, and others, who had acquired a stake in Ireland well before 1641, suggests to James Scott Wheeler that ‘they often appeared willing to exterminate the Irish population’, thus justifying his observation that ‘they, more than Cromwell, made the conquest an ethnic war’.41

The evidence clearly sustains Scott Wheeler’s observation, but these continuities with the past are alluded to principally in support of the contention that what ensued in Ireland during the Cromwellian conquest was a product of the policies favoured by English settlers and officials in Ireland, and their children, since the closing decades of the sixteenth century. Individuals like Broghill, Coote, and Michael Jones would have seen the force supplied by the Rump Parliament for the conquest of Ireland as the equivalent of that which Spenser had solicited in 1596. This would have made them all the more anxious to play their part in what they expected would be the final chapter in the completion of the Spenserian agenda.

The argument for continuity with the past is also sustained from what little evidence survives of Irish Catholic outpourings on their fate at mid-century. The traumatic impact of the Cromwellian onslaught on a people who had been persuaded by the verses of their priest/poets, and presumably also by sermons, to believe that the redemption of them, the people of Israel, was at hand, is registered in a series of so-called political poems composed during the 1650s.42 Their authors, some of them anonymous, some who had been writing for decades, all had to explain why the optimistic predictions of the recent past had

41 Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland*, 5.

42 The analogy with the Israelites in Egypt is developed most closely in the poem ‘Muscaid do Mhisneach a Bhainbha’, attributed variously to Geoffrey Keating (Seathrún Céitinn) and Pádraigín
been so utterly confounded. All of them alluded to tricks of fate, with references to dice and playing cards, as well as to the will of God, toil Dé, whose workings were beyond human comprehension. More consistently, the authors referred to Irish Catholics having provoked the wrath of God, either because some of them had succumbed to pride, greed, lust, and gluttony when victory was within their grasp, or because some of their number had been excommunicated for their refusal to be guided by the Pope’s nuncio in political matters.43

Another striking aspect of the Gaelic verses of the mid-century is the blunt manner in which they narrated the trauma they had collectively suffered, frequently incorporating English words, or Hibernicized variants of English words, into their vocabulary. What was being described in these verses was the consequences of defeat, rather than the military engagements themselves. Special emphasis was placed on indignities suffered, such as the forced transportation of Irish soldiers to Spain, or the removal of smaller groups to various parts of British America including the West Indies, or the expulsion, the incarceration, and the execution of priests.44 And, as with the author of Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis in the 1620s, the most cutting remarks of the authors of the 1650s were reserved for those Irish Catholics who had been tempted by the opportunities for self-advancement to abandon their faith and culture and join forces with the Cromwellians:45

Fabhar mór gheallann ’s a thalamh le chéile
do gíbha d’iompo dhló ar shórt uilc éigin.
Turcach Íudaíach Múráíach Négro
’s an dial dá dtígeadh i bhfuirm dhaonna,
do bheidís grámhar leo i bpáirt ’s i n-aonta:
Catalic buan a bhfuath go léir sin,
Gach secht creidimh eile atáid réigh leis.

Haicéad, see E. Mac Giolla Eáin (ed.), Dánta, Amhráin is Chaointe Sheathrúin Céitinn, Dochtúir Diaghachta, 1570–1670 (Dublin, 1900), 70–6, esp. stanza xvii.


45 On Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis see above, pp. 436–9; the quotation comes from ‘Tuireamh na hÉireann’, in O’Rahilly (ed.), Five Seventeenth-Century Political Poems, 93.
(They promise great favour, and his land as well, to anybody who would turn to them on any evil pretext. They would embrace and join forces with Turks, Jews, Moors, and Negroes, and the devil if he assumed human form; they steadfastly abhor Catholics, but will accommodate every other religious sect.)

Regular reference was made to the general loss of land and status by Catholic proprietors, to the trek across the Shannon of those who could prove their innocence, to the presentation of evidence drawn from the 1641 depositions—*an Leabhar Dubh* (the Black Book)—at the court hearings at Loughrea, to fellow Irish people bearing false witness against those who were convicted, and to the innocent having to bribe court officials to obtain title to what little land was being accorded them in Connacht. Most of these losses and humiliations were recognized as being particular to the Cromwellian years, and successive authors drew upon the English vocabulary of debasement that was peculiar to this episode. This was done most memorably in one passage which echoed the horror of the final episode of the military campaign with the defeated Irish being tracked down malevolently by the victorious Cromwellian troops intent on revenge and intimidation:

Le *execution* bhíos stúil an chéidhfr,
costas buinte 'na chuinne ag an ndéanach.
*Transport, transplant*, mo mheabhair ar Bhéarla,
*Shoot him, kill him, strip him, tear him,*
*A Tory, hack him, hang him, rebel,*
a *rogue, a thief, a priest, a papist.*

(What the first man expects is execution, and the last that costs will be awarded against him. All the English language I can recollect is, transport, transplant, shoot him, kill him, etc.)

While alluding to what was particular about the Cromwellian intervention, successive authors also made it clear that what was happening was the culmination of a process that had been under way for decades and which they had attempted, and failed, to arrest. In one remarkable passage referring to the Ulster plantation King James was declared responsible for the depredations usually associated with Cromwell:

*Is d’órdáigh a dtalamh do thamhas le téadaibh*
do chuirt Saxanaigh i leabaidh na nGaol nglan
*is transplantaiton* ar chách le chéile.

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(And he ordered their lands to be measured with ropes, he replaced the pure Irish with Saxons, and transplanted them all.)

In similar vein, as the author of *Tuireamh na hÉireann* (The Dirge of Ireland) proclaimed movingly on the prowess, determination, and military demeanour of Oliver Cromwell and his son Henry, together with their associates, he gave them credit merely for completing the conquest of Ireland; a task which, according to that author, had been under way since the reign of Henry VIII:

> Olibher Cromuil, cura na féine  
> ’s a mhac Henri go cróga taobh leis.  
> Fleetwood, Ludlow, Waller is Éarton,  
> shua teann na n-each ngarbh ’s na n-éide,  
> a chuíomh ’s a phhiostal ag gach éinneach,  
> cairbín stopaithse is firelock gléasda.  
> ’S iad do chríocnaig conquest Éireann.

(Oliver Cromwell, the scourge of freemen, and his son Henry, brave beside him, Fleetwood, Ludlow, Waller, and Ireton, a tightly packed host in military uniform riding their rough steeds, each one with his sword and his pistol, a holstered carbine, and a cocked firelock. It is those who completed the conquest of Ireland.)

This particular passage is unusual because authors of political poems at the mid-seventeenth century never ascribed individuality, and seldom names, to their opponents. Instead, Cromwell himself (who regularly features as an ogre in Gaelic poetry of subsequent decades and centuries) and those who arrived in Ireland with him are identified by type rather than as persons. The type was the same as that devised by an earlier generation of Gaelic poets to describe those English and Scottish settlers who had arrived in Ireland during the process of plantation in Ulster. All newcomers, as well as the Irish people who had benefited from association with them, were consistently portrayed as uncouth people of mean breeding and low social standing sometimes linked to a trade, who, by an unhappy accident of fate, had been elevated to take the position of the generous patrons of music, poetry, and religion who had ruled benevolently over their patrimonies for centuries. Frequent mention was made in the poems of these noble families of decayed fortunes, and more especially of their illustrious members, and their qualities were contrasted with the base mercenary instincts of the upstarts who had come to domineer over those who rightfully belonged within Irish society.

In treating of those who had been dispossessed, no distinction was drawn between families of Gaelic and Anglo-Norman ancestry. Instead, following Geoffrey Keating’s reinvention of Ireland’s past, all were represented as having merged over the process of time to become a single people united

by intermarriage and a common attachment to Catholicism, as also by a common hostility to the doctrines of Luther and Calvin whose spread to Ireland had been enabled by King Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth I: 51

Do bhiodar caoin sibhialta tréitheach,
ba mhaith a ndlithe, a gcrideamh ’s a mbéasa.
Gach duine d’úmhlaig, do bhí a chuid féin leis.
Do bhiodar ceannsa mar cheann cléire.
Do shíolraig a bhfuil trí na chéile,
do bhí an Gael Gallda ’s an Gall Gaulach.

(They were gentle, civilized, and gifted, their laws, religion, and customs were good. Everybody was submissive, enjoying what was his own. They were as gentle as the head of a religious order. They were descended from co-mixing; the Irish were made foreign and the foreign made Irish.)

This view of what had happened in the immediate past, and of longer historical developments, became fixed in the minds of Irish Catholics, first because it was committed to verse, and thus to the memory of the incalculable many, and second because several of these poems were copied, and adaptations of them were composed, in subsequent centuries. As a consequence, an updated version of this interpretation of the history of seventeenth-century Ireland was made available to singers and reciters of succeeding generations. For example, the account of Ireland’s past, and of the role of conquest and plantation in shaping the society of Ireland, which had been articulated in ‘Tuireamh na hÉireann’ (The Dirge of Ireland), in the mid-seventeenth century, was replicated in the early eighteenth century in ‘A Bhanba is feasach dhom do scéala’ (Ireland, I am well informed of your story) a composition by Aodh Buí Mac Cruitín, a County Clare poet, and again in the early nineteenth century in ‘Seanchas na Sceiche’ (The Story of the Bush), a historical narrative in verse attributed to the blind minstrel Antóin Ó Raiftearai who was then active in Counties Mayo and Galway. For Mac Cruitín and Raiftearai, as for the Catholic authors of the mid-seventeenth century, Ireland’s woes began with King Henry VIII; they were persisted with during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth; and they were intensified under the rule of King James, King Charles, and Strafford. Then, the latter, according to Raiftearai, having measured Ireland by chain, paved the way for the most comprehensive plantation of all, that imposed by Oliver Cromwell: 52
Ansin a gluais Cromail is a shluaite trí Éirinn,
ag gearradh roimhe an méid a d’fhéad sé,
thug sé duiche agus fearann do Chromwellians,
agus chuir sé lucht cóistí agus eachtraí chun móna agus sléibhe.

(It was then that Cromwell and his crowds went through Ireland, cutting before him as much as he could, he gave ancestral lands and estates to Cromwellians, and he put those of coaches and of famous deeds to bogs and mountains.)

There is, therefore, a remarkable consonance of opinion between the evidence concerning the Cromwellian involvement with Ireland that can be gleaned in official accounts, and the views expressed in sources of Catholic and Gaelic provenance. Quite obviously they do not agree in every detail, much less in their sympathies, but both lead to the conclusion that what has come to be known as the Cromwellian settlement was not the product of any one mind or any short-term decision but rather the fulfilment of a programme that had been delineated several decades previously (Catholics would trace its origin to Martin Luther and Henry VIII), and that had been proceeded with intermittently, albeit not systematically, from the moment it was first decided upon. They would both also have agreed, although neither would have used the phrase, that the ultimate purpose of the programme had been that of Making Ireland British. Both would also have concluded that the scheme had succeeded, like none before, in imposing a British, or at least an English, superstructure upon Irish society, although they would still have questioned if the scheme would ever achieve its ultimate purpose of changing the religious, linguistic, and cultural allegiances of the vast bulk of the Irish population. Thus they would both also have agreed that the official scheme for promoting change in Ireland would have to be declared a failure because it had not met the Spenserian requirement that every Irish person should ‘in short time learn quite to forget his Irish nation’.

Sir William Petty, who acknowledged the influence of Sir John Davies rather than Edmund Spenser, believed that the prescription which the Cromwellians had applied to Ireland had the potential to meet that requirement. Here he made particular mention of the year 1656 when the Cromwellian scheme for Ireland was in full force. Then, according to Petty, when all Catholic landowners ‘were under clouds, transported into Spain, and transplanted into Connaught’, and when the English ‘adventurers and soldiers’ could be seen to have taken their place as ‘landlords and patrons’, the ordinary population ‘were observed to have been forward enough to relax the stiffness of their pertinacity to the Pope’. The opportunity to take advantage of that general willingness of the Irish to comply with the wishes of their


new masters had, according to Petty, been lost when, with the Restoration of 1660, the Cromwellian settlement in Ireland had been modified, and in some respects undone, with the return to their estates, ‘almost by miracle’, of some Catholic proprietors. These then renewed their patronage of priests who, as Petty diagnosed the problem in 1672, ‘actually and immediately govern the people’. They did this, according to Petty, negatively, by convincing the people to ‘have humble opinion of the English and Protestants, and of the mischiefs of setting up manufactures, and introducing of trade’, and positively, by offering ‘comfort [to] their flocks, partly by prophecies of their restoration to their ancient estates and liberties, which the abler sort of them fetch from what the Prophets of the Old Testament have delivered by way of God’s promise to restore the Jews, and the kingdom of Israel’.54

As he summarized these sentiments, Petty might have been quoting from the Gaelic verses being composed by Dáibhí Ó Bruadair, his neighbour in Munster, at the very moment he was writing. Petty was still ready to propose fantastic strategies for ‘transmuting one people into another’, but even he knew that his proposals no longer had any possibility of being adopted as official policy. Thus, in the 1670s both Petty and Ó Bruadair were acknowledging, one with sadness and regret the other with hope and satisfaction, that the experiment at Making Ireland British had, in every respect, proven a costly failure.

54 Petty, The Political Anatomy of Ireland, 1672, 29, 36, 41, 66; Mac Ealean, Duanaire Dháibhíd Uí Bruadair.
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This makes no claims to being a comprehensive bibliography of early modern Ireland, much less of the range of subjects touched upon in this volume. Rather, it is a listing of the principal sources to which I have had occasion to refer while reading and researching for this book. For comprehensive bibliographies of early modern Ireland readers should consult T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland, iii: Early Modern Ireland, 1534–1691* (Oxford, rev. edn. 1991), 634–748.

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Glossary

This is a list of words from Irish, quaint English, and Hiberno-English that became commonplace, sometimes in an Anglicized derivative of Irish, in the English used by officials and settlers in Ireland.

**bawn**, a defensive earthen works encircling a castle and the small area of ground in its immediate vicinity; sometimes a bawn was constructed when the building of a castle was still in prospect.

**bodach**, a churl or rough uncouth person; sometimes Anglicized ‘bodagh’.

**booley, booleying**, from *buaile*, meaning literally the place in the uplands where cattle were tethered for milking during the summer months; the term booleying thus came to be used by English observers to connote transhumance.

**creach, creagt**, from *caeraigecht*, meaning herds of cattle with their attendants. The term was sometimes used in its Anglicized form to designate booty, especially cattle.

**creat**, from *creat*, meaning shape, used in its Anglicized form to connote an Irish peasant dwelling.

**gallowglass**, from *gallóglach* (singular *gallóglach*), meaning literally foreign fighting men. The term came to be used in its Anglicized form to connote Scots mercenary soldiers, but these were also sometimes referred to as Redshanks.

**garran**, from *geanán*, a gelding; the term in its Anglicized form came to connote the pony commonly used for ploughing and as a pack animal throughout Ireland.

**kern, kerne**, from *caetharnaigh*, meaning, literally, foot soldiers; this came to be used abusively to connote all professional fighters in Gaelic society; the form of the word used most frequently in the seventeenth century was woodkerne, to indicate those former kerne who persisted as robbers in preference to being absorbed into settled society.

**plat, platt**, a scheme for improving government at the central or local level, usually proposed by a private projector, or a person holding a modest position in government pay, who hoped to effect some reform while also benefiting from the proposal.

Redshanks, see gallowglass.

**skeans, scians, sgians**, from * sceana* (singular *scian*), meaning knives or daggers.

**tanist**, from *tánaiste*, or *tánaiste*, the person second in rank to the lord or his heir apparent; English officials came to use the term, or its derivative tanistry, to designate the mode of political succession followed in Gaelic Ireland.

**uriaghts**, from *uirité* (singular *uirí*), meaning subsidiary lord, tributary king, or satrap.

**woodkerne** see *kern*. 
Index

Abbeyleix 508
Abercorn, James Hamilton, earl of 228
absentee planters 178
Achenson, Sir Archibald 228, 230, 235
Act of Kingship (1542) 45, 109, 409
Act of Oblivion (1603) 160, 181
Act of Supremacy (1603) 160, 181
action, function of 117
Acts of Attainer 214, 209
Adaire, Andrew 309–311
Adams, Randall 518
Ardare 116
administrators 102, 178, 203, 211
clergy and 103
commitment to reform 103
Corruption 113
extended reach 161
legal officers 301, 303
link with landownership 309
military personnel as 106
provincial; treasurers 301
nationality 301
rivalry and patronage 105
views on use of Palesmen 105
adventurers 403
Adshed, Helenor 403
advanced Protestants 217, 267, 269, 295, 554
‘adventure’, Irish 553
Adventurers’ Act 45, 133
agriculture 148, 226
in Connacht 235
experiments 202
improvements 330
in Munster 339
in Ulster 349
see also livestock
alcohol 315
Aldrick, William 553
Aldworth, Robert 344
allegory 12, 14, 151, 289, 33, 55, 57
Allen, Matthew 474
Americas 152, 207, 380
comparable conditions in Munster 316
Irish plantation as model for settlements 172
Munster trade links with 212, 261
Providence Island venture 554
Spanish migration to 211
transportation to 573
see also Massachusetts; Virginia; West Indies
Andrews, Mr (agent) 111
Anglicization 94, 118, 161, 277, 325, 329
Anglo-Norman precedent 121, 224, 249, 283
Anketell, Mr (agent) 230
Annandale, John Murray, earl of 232
Annesley, Sir Francis 240, 248, 259
anti-Catholicism 31, 179, 190, 402
and allocation of land 302
application of English statute law 174
Dublin campaign against Old English 171
of Dublin government 501
in England 64
in English parliament 459
exclusion from office 173
of planters 153
policies of Loftus and Cork 173
proclamations prohibiting Catholic clergy 203
views of servitors 170
Spenser’s views 34
see also Catholicism; Catholics, Irish; recusancy laws
anti-English sentiment 387, 407, 324
anti-Protestantism 428, 189, 90, 290, 245, 522
Armagh, County: billeting in 200
plantation 189, 193, 196, 201, 211, 237
Scottish army in 562
Antrim, Randal Mac Donnell, 1st earl of 240
Antrim, Randal Mac Donnell, 2nd earl of 260
Aphew, Richard 80
ap Robert, Owen Rolland 493
Apsley, William 102
Archer, John, of Clapham 383
Armagh (town) siege of 472, 477, 483
Armagh, County: billeting in 295
depositions from 346, 261
plantation 290, 211
1641 insurrection in 154
472, 473
Armenian code 379
army 60, 75, 163
administrative role 203
corruption 167, 34, 73
decline 204
demobilization 71
175
293, 171
expenditure on 66, 163, 166
Irish troops raised for use against Covenanters 294
links with administration 106
army (cont.)

 manufacture of ordinance
 non-combatant element
 policing function
 Scottish troops in Ulster
 sources of recruits
 Wentworth’s mobilization
 see also captains; soldiers
 artisans
 abandonment of tenancies
 in Connacht
 in Dublin
 in Munster
 asset stripping
 Athleague
 Athlone
 Athlone Castle
 Athy
 Atkinson, Abraham
 Atkinson, Roger and Edith
 atrocities
 see also stripping
 Augher
 Bacon, Sir Francis
 ‘Certain Considerations Touching the Plantation in Ireland’
 Baggenal, Henry
 ‘The Description and Present State of Ulster’
 Baggenal, Mabel
 Baggenal, Sir Nicholas
 bagpipes
 Baille, William
 Ballfour, Lord of Clanowley
 Balfour, Sir William
 Ball, John
 Ball, Nicholas
 Ball, Thomas
 Ballinakill
 Ballinamore
 Ballyalla Castle
 Ballyfagan
 Ballymoran
 Balkinglass, James Eastace, Viscount: revolt
 (1579)
 Balkinglass, manor of
 Bandon
 Bandonbridge
 Bannister, Peregrine
 Barkley, Captain
 Barnes, Henry
 Barnwell, Nicholas
 Barry, James Fitzjohn
 Barry, John
 Barry, Viscount
 Barry family of County Cork
 Barrymore, David, earl of
 Barrymore, Lord Viscount
 Barton, Robert
 Bateman family
 Bath, Robert
 Bayne, Morris
 Baylie, Richard
 Beacon, Richard
 Saloon his Follie
 Bealllynycarrygry
 Beatagh, Richard
 Bedell, William, bishop of Kilmore
 Beecher, Phane
 Begg, Patrick
 Belfast
 Bell, George
 Bellowe, John
 Belfast
 Bedell, William, bishop of Kilmore
 Benn, James
 Bennett, Nathaniel
 Bentley, James
 Beresford, Tristram
 Berkeley, Sir Edward
 Bethall, Richard
 Billing, John
 Bingham, Sir George
 Bingham, Sir Henry
 Bingham, John
 Bingham, Sir Richard
 ‘The Description and Present State of Ulster’
 Bingley, Richard
 Billingsley, Henry
 Bingley, John
 Binns, Richard
 Bishop, John
 ‘There Have Been Six Plantations in Ireland since the Memory of Man’
 Boate, Gerard and Arnold
Index

Bodley, Sir Josias 207 558
Bogarde, Jean van der 311
Boine, Henry 348 477 479 803 548
Bonny, Clauwe 381 4
Boothe, George 380 522
Borlase, Edmund 463
Bottigheimer, Karl 553 555
Boulté, Mary 533
Bourchier, Sir George 67 153
Bourke, William 469
Bourke, Sir Theobald 499
Boy, Hugh 98
Boyle, Sir George 327
Boyle, Edmund 469
Bowrchier, Captain 314
Bourke, Sir Theobald 499
Bourke, William 469
Boyton, Alexander 499
Browne, John, of Connacht 510
Browne, Anabelle 387
Browne, John (leather-maker) 143
Browne, Sir Valentine 433 444
Browne, Sir Valentine 138 40
dispute with earl of Clancar 140
petition for land 82 109
as surveyor of Desmond estates 82 109
133 134
Browne, William 469 497
Brownlow, John 238
Brownlow, William 238 239
Bryskett, Ludo 47, A Discourse of Civil Life 8 14 16
belief in education 52 52
53 53
Buchanan, Elizabeth 497
Buckingham, George Villiers, 1st duke of: assassination 268 269 272
benefits from impeachment of Middlesex 266
clients 178 246 248 240 250
interests in Ireland 178 246 248 240 250
lobbied on plantation schemes 260 1
262 265
opponents 251 251
relationship with earl of Nithsdale 263
support for plantation 266
support for servitors 247
Buckinghamshire 555
building: in Ulster 207 214 155 216 217 16
220 222 223 225 16
230 240 3
in Wexford 179 179
in Wicklow 282
see also towns
Bulkley, William, archbishop 370
'Burgage lands' 326
Burghead, William Cecil, 1st Baron 117
plantation of Munster 124 126
128 129
burials: exhumation and ritual humiliation of
Protestant bodies 515 516 532 545
as flash point 443 449 65 490 514 15
Burke, Lady Mary 62
Burke, Mrs Mary 54
Burke, Myles, see Mayo, Myles Burke, Lord Viscount
Burke, Richard, see Clancar, Richard Burke, 2nd earl of
Burke, Richard, see Clancar, Richard Burke, 4th earl of
Burke, Richard, of Mayo 93
Burke, Ulick, see Clancar, Ulick Burke, 5th earl of
Burke, William 93
Burkes of County Mayo 92 93 4 93 10
Burley, William 487
Burn, George 477
Butler, Alice 516 548
Butler, Elizabeth 270 272
Butler, Sir Richard, of Kilcash 526 527
Butler, Sara 346 1
Butler, Sir Stephen 333 337
Butler, Thomas, Viscount Thurles 271 272
Butlers 503 524 528
see also Mountgarrett
(viscounts); Ormond (earls of)
Button, Sir Thomas 439
Index

Butt’s Discourse on the State of Ireland 288
Byrd, Thomas 270
Byrne, Hugh 471
Byrne, Owen 522
Butter, Sheriff of Waterford 597 508 520

Caban, Peadar 421 439
Calvinism: Catholic propaganda against 425 doctrine of predestination 33 451 Scots and 237 278 289 204 482
Campbell, Agnes 89
Campion, Mr (preacher) 225 224
Campion, Thomas 370 374 43
Canning, Captain 480
Canning, George 212 13 217 23 226 227 229 230 331 132 3 434
Cappoquin 147 319 320 34 534 captains 75 103 ambitions 75 182 184 85 claims for land 83 184 125 4128 166 and commercial ventures 85 degeneration 161 dislike of settlement with Tyrone 168 Irish 47 18 as landowners 160 123 240 203 395 left out of Munster land allocations 169 209 143 links with administrators 106 18 misuse of office 74 18 94 161 254 pilfering 78 92 re-employment 503 relationship with planters 157 as sheriffs 97 102 in Ulster 180
Carbery 309 16 222 229 326 328 Carew, Sir George (later earl of Tones) 73 163 166 208 219 268 426 Carew, Sir Peter 283 Carew, Robert 319 Carew, Roger 326 Carey, Vincent 61 106 Carle, Christopher 6 101 2 Carleton, Sir Dudley 280 Carlingford 79 80 Carlisle, James Hay, earl of 270 273 Carlow, County 61 175 261 271 379 396 396 164 insurrection in 1502 502 502 413
Carlton, Ambrose 481 482 Carr, Ralph 285 Carrickfergus 85 94 260 362 Carrickfergus Castle 85 86 Carrickmacross 334 Carrigaline, manor of 306 325 Carrigallen 384 385 493 Carter, George 344 Carter, Thomas, of Munster 365 Carter, Thomas, Jr., of Mocollo Castle 397 Carty family 327 328 Cary, Sir George 171 172 Cary, Sir Henry, see Falkland, Henry Cary, Viscount Cary’s Fort 281 Cashel 527 Castle Coote 495 Castle Dermot, manor of 399 Castlebar 500 387 499 Castlecomer 372 379 381 397 398 402 507 9 Castleconnell, Lord 528 Castlehaven 431 340 Castlehaven, dowager countess of 230 Castlemaine 84 castles 217 18 229 373 Castletown, Baron, see Stewart, Andrew, Lord Ochiltree Castletown 316 337 339 358 Catalan revolt 536 Catholicism: attitude to popular violence 547 catherine literature 422 3 Elizabeth’s attitude to 64 James VI and I’s moderation towards 174 linked with rebellion 107 Lombard’s policy towards 449 loyalty of Irish landowners to 432 and moral reform 39 mystical 424 spillage of Irish natives from 435 6 in towns 174 4; see also anti-Catholicism; Catholics, Irish; clergy, Catholic; Counter-Reformation; priests, seminary Catholics, Irish: common cause with Old English and Gaelic Irish 412 18 compromise with Protestant state 456 3 concept of Catholic monarch 540 concessions granted by Charles I 266 360 274 297 499 440 443 457 fear of Protestants 457 friction with Protestants 445 31 grievances 245 256 473 475 486 4 improvement in position 457 4 justifications and support for 164 insurrection 462 4 488 493 493 506 517 518 525 530 535 532 lack of sources regarding 493 as landowners 380 522 in Leinster 362 364 378 380 381 lobbying by 284 merchants 388 post-164 objectives 593 3 propaganda and missionary efforts of exiles 420 31 radical reactions to Cromwellian conquest 454 3 tension between gentry and priests 519 21 and Wentworth’s downfall 459 60 and Wentworth’s policies 279 81 283 3 304 458 9; see also anti-Catholicism; Catholicism; clergy, Catholic; Confederation of Kilkenny; Graces, the; Old English; priests, seminary Catholics, Scottish 482 Caufield, Toby, Lord 490 20 474 Cavan, County 183 187 200 207 378 385 386 deposits from 349 350 351 353 354 357 380 iron-smelting 359 Cecil, Sir Robert, see Salisbury, Robert Cecil, earl of
Cecil, Sir Thomas 124
Cecil, Sir William, see Burghley, William Cecil, 1st Baron
Céitinn, Seathrún, see Keating, Geoffrey
Celtic golden age 423, 425
Challown, Henry 315
Champion, Alice and Arthur 354, 355
Champion, John 153, 300
Chandler, Robert 147
chapmen 302
Chappell, Charity 475
charity 555
Charlemont 477
Charles I, king: alienation of Protestants in Ireland 456; conflict with Covenanters 282, 284, 288-9, 291, 311, 458, 460; dealings with Irish Catholics 266-67, 269, 274-5, 307-8; motivated by revenue problems 266-67, 284; and Old English 408 and Ormond lands 272-3, and parliament's plantation scheme 535; and patronage 238; and religion 279, 560; and 1641 insurrection 466; 517; chapmen 527
Chaucer, Geoffrey 35
church lands: abuse in disposal of 114; campaign for restoration to Catholic church 119, 204; 564 in Connacht 387; leased to laity at low rents 307; recovery from laity 277-8; in Ulster 180, 181, 200, 202; Wentworth's plans for 277; 300, 307
Churchyard, Thomas 77, 126
Cicero, Marcus Tullius 122
civil liberty, encouragement of 247, 250, 279, 284
Clancar, earl of (MacCarthy Mor) 140, 151-5
Clandeboy 86, 87, 188, 233
Clannmorris 83
Clanricard, Ulick Burke, 5th earl of 284, 495
Clapham, Marmaduke 523
Clare, County 280, 283, 285, 310; O'Brien estates 330; 1641 insurrection in 495, 500
Clare, Aidan 258, 267, 404, 405, 443
Clare, Alexander 154, 15
Clare, Margaret 148, 15
Clare, William 340, 485
classical influences 183, 184, 408, 414, 34, 35, 43, 53; and plantation schemes 121, 128
Clandeboy 197; and Ulster plantation 184
Clayton, Sir Randal 325
clearances of population 432, 434, 556
Cleeve, Thomas 477
clergy, Catholic: criticisms of 445, 555; discouragement of murder 417, friction with Catholic gentry 519-20; imprisonment 174; missionary efforts 431; political activities of exiles 416-17; 401; and 1641 insurrection 488, 491-11; 406-7, 506, 517, 518, 21, 524, 541-2; substantial presence and quality of 142; Wentworth’s attitude and policy towards 279, 280, 281, 283-5; 443, 564; see also Jesuits, priests, seminary
clergy, Protestant: in Connacht 206, 386, 387; corruption of 444; educational attainment 443; 1641 insurrection 488, 491; in Fermanagh 356, 35; and Irish language 442; 451, 4 in Leinster 578; in Meath 442 in; as moneylenders 378; 388;; problem of lay proprietorship 306; role in Ulster plantation criticized 252; Scottish 234; 214, 43; Wentworth’s preference for English clergy in Ireland 279, 277
Clifford, William 66
climatic change 212-13, 216
Clougher 239
Clonakilty 322, 337
Clone, Jonas 333, 344, 345
Clones 348
Clonfert 337
Clonmel 527, 569, 571
Clothmakers’ Company 222, 227, 233
Clothworth, Sir Hugh 236, 237
Clothworthy, Sir John 230, 237, 297, 470, 482
Clove, Stephen 343, 344, 345
Cloyne, bishop of 391
Coke, Sir Edward 275, 290
Coke, Sir William 334, 513
Coleraine (town) 188 204 3 329 486 555 568
transformed into fortified trading centre 103 104 201 202 246 215 217 226
Coleraine, County 200 201 203 218 217
Colley, Garret 452
Collis, William 722
colonels 121 161
colonial spread 172 325 383 46
colonization: economic benefits 121 214
as instrument of education and reform 31 2
land quality as factor 149 327
location as factor 149 150 1 322
policies and views on 123 1 132 247 275
326 propaganda 136 214
recruitment 134 140 226 311 155
religious justification 144 153 161 280
see also plantation schemes
Colthurst, Edmund 234
Combe, Nicholas 322 334
commerce, see trade and commerce
Commission of Defective Titles 164 177
commission of 1622 245 78 298 301 332 360
441 442 brief 243 4 on conditions of soldiers 304 10 divisions among servitors exposed by 296 influence 243 1
negative report of Ulster plantation 240 3
and Old English 256 2 258
reasons for lack of action on 243 4
recusancy fines 207 reflects views of certain interest groups 247 reformers’ and parliamentarians’ views 251
servitors’ views 248 4 undertakers’ views 258
Committee of Estates of Scotland 294 1
companies, London 100 201 202 209 6
212 23 25 277 294 agents 215 217
and closure of Londonderry Company 297
financial outlay 214 15 216 218 18
220 18 shortcomings 215 216 221 222
284 286 Star Chamber hearing 297
Wentworth’s policies towards 278 282 see also specific companies
Condor, Patrick 156
Condon, of north County Cork 258 333
Confederate War 262 146 568 70 571 2 see also Cromwellian conquest
Confederation of Kilkenny (Confederate
Catholics of Ireland) 105 166 1 501 2
324 aims and role of clergy 519 24
324 differing interpretations of religious freedom 163 524
164
patron concept 121 and recovery of lands 369 shortage of gunpowder 175 16
conflict resolution 12 29 13 165 156 386 572
Connacht (255 233 310 404
appointment of sheriffs and subsheriffs 61 23 264 11
Bingham’s assets 27 17 clergy 366 368 387
412 commercial activities 388 14
301 corruption of officials 262 163
claims to land 259 fears of plantation, and campaigns against 255 257 260 285 6
284 338 grievances of Catholics 257
language 516 loans 202 122 officers’ attempts to settle 284 12 patterns of settlement
284 14 position of Gaelic landowners
264 11 142 proposed plantation (1620)
260 261 6 273
Protestant community 386 146 3 550 provincial council 165 166 Scottish petitions for land in 258 161 142
insurrection in 386 38 38 492 500 ‘swordsmen’ transplanted to 204
Wentworth’s plantation plans 280 281
Connolly, Owen 470 1 473
Conor, Donogh (Donatus) 577 58
Conquest, policy of 39 34 53 57 124 166
Conyn, Florence 416 423
‘corthors’ 201 202
conspiracies 460 256 470 1 502 6
Constable, Jane 366
Constable, Joan 314 488 1
converticles 295 339
Conway, Henry 366
Cooke, John 216
Cooke, Sir Walsingham 379 507
Cooke, William 370 374
Coole 535
Coolefaddoo 321 322
Cooley 78 80
Cooper, John 135 144
Coote, Sir Charles 254 1 285 371 373 4 382
495 508 527 522
ironworks 339 344
386 492
Coote, Childe 502
Cope, Anthony 237
Cork (city): disease in 71 2
Cork, County 148 150 1 292 528
lawlessness 315 pattern of settlement 336 47
plantation over-subscribed 138
Cork, Richard Boyle, earl of 99 277 373 386
395 554 and anti-Middlesex faction
259 60 appointed lord justice 260
262 and commerce 311 13 effect of Wentworth’s policies on 277 290 1
13 efforts to protect dependents during insurrection 367 estate
gift to Clancarid 332 and iron-smelting 350 237 13 and planting of Ormond lands 273 14 rent rolls 318 322
323 rents from tenants 318 524 321 rents from towns 320 13 and workers and artisans 315 13
corporations 113
5 corruption 126 373 of administrators 113 16
244 245 246 245 1 256 9 306 of army and officers 67 17 17 91 16 25 4
Index 615

Church officers of legal officials in Connacht of 302
of officials in Connacht of 103

Cosby, Arnold 372
Cosby, Francis 78
Cosby family 372
Cosha 382
Cotes, Robert 326
Cottrell, Ellias 346
Council of Trent 277
Counter-Reformation 7, 4, 93, 104, 107, 112
change of attitude to Ireland by papacy 456; dissemination of message by Irish exiles 410, 421, 311 and insurrection 488, 490, 313, 516, 518, 10
324, 327, 382, 444, 551 and Leinster 362 and missionary efforts in Ireland 437; and Old English 406, and political thought 354, 13 priests 444, 445, religious strategies supported by landed and merchant elites 444 see also priests, seminary

Court of Castle Chamber 277
Court of Chancery, Irish 253
Court of High Commission 590
Court of Wards 140, 431
courts 201 records 403

Covenanter, Scottish 282, 284, 288, 301, 408, 473, 460, 192 Catholic landowners willing to assist king against 339, as precedent for Irish insurgents 489, 491

534, 535, 159 similarity to Irish situation 530, 538 Ulster non-conformists and 560, 561

Covenanters, Scottish 328

credit networks 339, 4, 343, 353, 256, 365, 378, 383, 388, 389, 390, 393, see also debt; loan; mortgaging

Cregan, Donal 416
Crofton, William 495
Crofton, William 495
Crofton, William 495

credit networks 339, 4, 343, 353, 256, 365, 378, 383, 388, 389, 390, 393, see also debt, loan, mortgaging

Croke, Hugh 219, 220
Crowley, Michael 385
Crowley, Michael 385
Crowley, Michael 385

depositions of 1641; as evidence for patterns of settlement 335, 401, as historical source for insurrection 495, 467; 6


Derry, see of 277

desecration, ritual 300, 310, 310, 310, 310, 310, 310, 310

Desmaistres, Peter 131, 131

Desmond, Eleanor, Countess of 128
Desmond, Gerald Fitzgerald, 14th earl of 404
case for and against leniency towards 125
death 127, 128
disposal of properties of 83, 110, 125
invocation of Papal Bull against Elizabeth 124
rebellion (1579) 63, 67, 68, 102, 107, 124, 133
Desmond, Richard Preston, earl of 270, 272
Desmond, Sir Thomas of 128
Desmond estates, see Munster plantation
Devlin, Baron 113
Devonshire, earl of, see Mountjoy, Charles
Blount, Lord
dialogue 34, 43
diet 229
Digby, George, Lord 372, 373
Digges, Sir Dudley 254
Dikes, Andrew 261
Dillon, Sir James 399
Dillon, Sir John 238
Dillon, Lord, of Costello Gallen 201
Dillon, Sir Lucas 117
Dillon, Sir Luke 145, 149
Dillon, Robert 6, 67, 88
Dillon, Robert, of Athlone 95
Dillon, Thomas 95
Dingle 327, 328
‘Directions for Establishing a Plantation’ (anon) 399, 400
‘Discourse on the Present State of Ireland, 1614, A’ 411, 412
Dowen, Sir Henry 178
Doile, John and Margery 436
Dolbier, Katherine 453
Dowville, William 407
Donegal, County 200, 226, 232, 233, 241
Donnelly, Brian 474
Dorchester, Viscount, see Carleton, Sir Dudley
Dowally 359
Dowdall, James 453
Dowkes, Jane 436
Down, County 188, 196, 211, 232, 237, 447, 563
Down, diocese of 590
Downham, George, bishop of Derry 267
Downpatrick 449
Drake, Sir Francis 77
Drapers’ Company 237, 207, 470
Drayton, Nathaniel 435
dress 225, 271, 482, 523
Drogheda: siege 1641 34, 483, 486, 487
siege 350, 571
Drope, Bartholomew 366, 48
Drumanlasse 359
Drummond, Sir John 230
Dublin 185, 362
avtisans 364, 523
behaviour of soldiers in 67
Catholicism in 172
173, 174
closure of religious houses 265
commercial links with Ulster 351
362, 360
earl of Cork’s estates 310
English presence in 159
foreign presence in 396, 370
interests in Connacht 388, 392
Protestant entrepreneurs in 364, 374, 384
surrender of (1647) 771
Ulster refugees in 348
see also Pale, English; Trinity College
Dublin Castle: alleged plot to seize 470, 483
Dublin Council 107, 117
Dudley, Ambrose, see Warwick, Ambrose
Dudley, earl of
Dudley, Robert, see Leicester, Robert Dudley, earl of
Duff, Patrick 443
Duff, John 79
Duffield, William 475
Duffy, Eamon 346
Duffy, P.J. 334
Dundaniel 315
Dunganon 239, 409, 450
Dunganon Castle 470
Dungan’s Hill, battle of 370, 371
Dungarvan 309, 315, 327, 331, 515, 533
Dungarvan, Richard Boyle, Viscount 230, 291
Dungiven Castle 470
Dunne, Barnaby, of Brittas 372, 431
Durra, Thomas 383
Dyce, John 108
Eagles’ (ship) 350
East, Samuel 322
East India Company 313
Eastcott, Edward 450
Eaton, Ann 325
eclogues 331
Ediss, John 308
Edgeworth, Otho 305
Edinburgh 232, 263, 361
education: colonization as instrument of 132
as means of reform 4, 10, 13, 31, 34, 43
50, 54, 56, 88, 134, 263, 333, 408; part of surrender and regnant scheme 43
Edwards, David 33, 56, 161
Edwards, William 147
Egerton, Thomas 129
Elice, Edward 218
Elizabeth I, queen: and appointment of officials 4, 84, 93
death 167, 171
depiction by Spenser 10, 11, 16, 20, 24, 36, 41
excommunication 63
Fear of Spain 165
marriage plans 11, 12, 13, 31, 43
and recall of Grey 126
scruples over Ireland 64, 104
118, 123, 133
‘Elizabeth’ 121
2
Elliot, Archie 481
Elliot, Richard 477
Ellis, Steven 415
Ely, Viscount, see Loftus, Adam, Viscount Ely 455
Ely O’Carroll, King’s County 174, 178, 244
emigration 455
enclosure 220, 250, 359, 460
English common law cited in 1641 418
insurrection cited in 1641 172, 123, 432
Old English ability to use entries as prerequisite for 1641 246
Scots’ lack of knowledge of 236
Emmison 322, 326, 341
Emniskillen 327
Ennis, Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of 76, 77, 165
Ennis, Walter Devereux, 3rd earl of 334, 391
estate management 330, 437, see also
agriculture; rents; tenants
estate records 308
European influence 170, 410, 411, 413
419, 20, 390, 40, 549, 7, 559; see also
Counter-Reformation; exiles, Irish; priests; seminary
Everitt, Mary 542
exiles, Irish 148, 326, 456
as a military threat 183, 184, 280, 102, 118, 440, 155, 9, 401,
and monarchical rule. 401
political preferences of 410, 20, 422, 425, 566, 7
riff with Catholics in Ireland 457
expenditure, see finances, English state; finances, Irish state
faction: at English court 38, 44, 103, 75, 80, 104, 19
126, 142, 166, 250, 64, 266, 305, in Ireland 615, 96, 103, 104, 105, 107, 412, 13, 114, 117
250, 292, 8, 279
Faerie Queen (Spenser) 38, 3, 4, 3, 4, 48, 52, 53, 415
abandonment of 10, 22, 31, on
degeneration 10, depiction of ‘Britain’ 244
7, depiction of Ireland 261, 243, 109
on education 55, 6, Mary queen of
Scots depicted as Duessa 15, 16, 19, 39, on
moral issues 15, 15, 32, 8, as political
allergy 10, 24, 39, on role of poet 12
10, 4, on Scotland 4, stripping in
15, 16, 545, violence in 15, 118, 25, 42, 42, 8
37, 8, 56
Falkland, Henry Cary, Viscount 246, 247, 260,
261, 2, 263, 2, 266, 267, 3, 274, 21, 305
Fallerto, William 485
famine 109
Farney 334
Fawkes, Guy 174
Feitère, Piaras 328, 427, 8, 528
Fennell, Edmund 528
Fenton, Alice 390
Fenton, Edward 125
Fenton, Sir Geoffrey 410, 117, 118, 42, 309,
advocates pardon for Desmond 126
on benefits of Munster plantation 132, 162
request for property and land 115, 116
Fenton, Samuel 317
Fermanagh, County 183, 187, 196, 200, 290
Davies/Huntingdon properties 332, 333
patterns of settlement 335, 351
Scottish involvement in 1641 481
insurrection 481
Fernoy 290
Fethard 327
Fews, the 329
finances, English state: of Charles I 266, 276
283
cost of military presence 66, 103, 303
drain on exchequer 194, 302, 40,
of Elizabeth 118, 123, of James VI and I 175, 244
Middlesex and 270
sources of 61
finances, Irish state: bankruptcy 304
improvement in 305
fishmongers’ Company 216
Fishmongers’ Company 216
Fitzgerald, Gerald and Mabel, of Dromana 430
Fitzgerald, Gerald 521
Fitzgerald, James, of Ballyglynny 380
Fitzgerald, James, of Munster 515
Fitzgerald, James Fitzmaurice 106, 107
Fitzgerald, James Fitzthomas 162
Fitzgerald, Maurice 380
Fitzgerald, Piers, of Ballysonan 506
Fitzgerald, Thomas 324
Fitzgeralds 565, see also Desmond, Gerald
Fitzgerald, 14th earl of; Kildare, Gerald
Fitzgerald, earl of
Fitzmaurice, Patrick 176
Fitzpatrick, Jeffrey 68
FitzStephen, Robert 283
Fitzwilliam, Sir William 60, 73, 89, 38, 156
108, 112 and Legge 113, opposition to
appointment of Palesmen 103 and reform
104, 107, 111, self-effacement of 105
Flack, Robert and Philip 316
Flanders 88, 418, 456, 491, 566, 568
Fleetwood, Thomas (minister) 318
Fleetwood, Thomas (undertaker) 132
Fletcher, George 356
Flight of the Earls 183, 187, 195, 357
Forbes, Alexander, Lord 154
Ford, Alan 206
Foreside, Anne 455

Index 617
Index

Forsythe, John 224
Fortescue, Sir Faithful 296
fortifications 78, 281 2 see also castles
Fortune, John 377
Foster, James 319, 326
Fowle, Robert 87, 88, 35, 16
Fowler, Elizabeth 39
Fowler, John 316
Fowre, Abby of 113
Fox, John 530
Foxe, John: Acts and Monuments 39, 49
Franksland, Owen 394
freeholders 210, 24, 221, 226, 230, 375
Freeman, Robert 540
French, Robert 353
Fres, Ann 388
friars 279, 443, 518, 19, 765
frontier: atmosphere 213, 232, 315, 316, 323, 33
wood kerne 432, 3, 435
Fuller, Thomas 526

Gaelic brehon law 46, 61
Galbraith, Humphrey 337
Galen Ridgeway 373, 397
Galloway, Geoffrey, of Limerick 170
Galway (town) 100, 387, 499
Galway, County 176, 285, 286, 281, 368, 386
Gambe, Robert 408
Gardener, Mr Justice Robert 94, 114, 115
Garvey, John, bishop of Kilmore 94
Gate, John 493
Garnon, Antoin 423
Gee, Henry 365
genealogy, importance of 25, 48, 436
Geoffrey of Monmouth
Geoghegan, Thomas 380, 522
Gerrard, Sir William 64, 105
Gibbons, Symon 313
Gibson, Richard 376
Gilbert, Henry 276
Gilbert, Sir William 376, 559
Gill Abbey 259, 306
Gillespie, Raymond 203, 466, 473
Giralduis Cambrensis 47, 43, 44
Glanbarahan 340
Glasslough 486
glass-making 101, 317, 320
Glendenning, Alexander 224
Glendenning, James 556
Gloaster 381, 12
Goldfinch, Henry 399
Goldsmith, John 449, 294, 497
Goodwin, Mary and James 392
Googe, Barnaby 82
Gookin, Daniel 513, 325
Gookin, Vincent 559, 7

Gordon, Valentine 308
Gorsan, Nicholas 136
Governer, office of 58, 60, 61, 67, 104, 13, 112
260, 274, 275, 276, 395 260, 305 political hiatus
created by Charles I 269 programmatic
governors 103, 17, 276 reversion to English-
based appointees 249 7
Gowry, Mrs 143
Grace, Jane 473, 476
Graces, the 266, 260, 272, 273, 280, 305, 307
404, 495, 497, 449, 444, 547, 459, 456
Grady or O’Grady family 530
Graham family 482
Grandison, Lord, see St John, Sir Oliver
Grasy, Richard 215
Green Castle 79, 80
Greenblatt, Stephen 16, 18
Greene, Captain 85, 101
Greene, Thomas 453
Greg, Nicholas 551
Grenan, William 442
Greville, Sir Richard 197, 143, 147, 259
Greville, Fulke 100, 125
Grey de Wilton, Thomas, 1st Lord 3, 5, 19
77, 112, 118, 10; 120; appointment as
governor 101, 15, 124 on condition of
soldiers 69, 70, n., 71, 72, criticised by
Wallop 108; Leinster campaign 78
Munster campaigns 50, 11; recall 5, 50, 51
125, 126; and reform 104 as soldier 106
and William Piers 87
grey merchants 392, 393
Grymes, George 373, 374
Grymes, William 237
gunpowder 377, 515, 16
Guttrich, Richard 333

Haberdashers’ Company 215, 18, 222, 227
233, 331
Hadfield, Andrew 11, 42
Hadson, Richard 180, 182, 251, 2, 256, 264, 416
Advertisement of Ireland 256

Haicéad, Padraigin 462
Haige, James 234
halter 51 2
Hamilton, Alexander 526
Hamilton, Sir Clad 225, 234, 233
Hamilton, Sir Frederick 142
Hamilton, Sir George, of Greenlaw 228
Hamilton, James, earl of Abercorn 228
Hamilton, James, 3rd marquess of 263, 280
289, 90, 291, 293, 294, 297
Hamilton, Sir James, of Bangor 227
Hamilton, James (favourite of James VI and I)
188, 103
Hamilton, John 356
Hamilton, Lady Lucy 202
Hampton, William [290]
Hampson, Jane [483, 488, 1448]
Hampton, Christopher, archbishop of Armagh [235]
Hancock, Robert [373]
Handlyn, Raymond [70]
Harington, Sir John [169]
Harrington, Sir Henry [73, 6]
Harrision, Richard [398]
Hartpole, Robert [78]
Hartson, James [470]
Harvey, Gabriel [34]
Hassell, Mr (vicar) [316]
Hatton, Sir Christopher [129, 130, 142, 143, 144]
Havelish [399, 320]
Hawes, John [315]
Hawksworth, Amy [387]
Hay, Sir Alexander [106]
Hay, James, see Carlisle, James Hay, earl of [320]
Hayes, John, of Newtown Butler [352]
Haylin, Thomas [545]
Heigh, Robert [224]
Hepple, John [151]
Henderson, Philip [37]
Henrietta Maria, queen [417]
Henry VIII, king [45, 6, 377, 378]
Herbert, Sir William [120, 123]
Crofts [57, 122]
and Munster plantation [150, 152, 153, 154, 156]
Hibbert, John [350]
Hicks, John [327]
Hider, Thomas [283]
Hillier, George [34]
historian, role of [104, 462, 4]
historical memory [69, 104, 176, 378, 409, 413]
426, 416, 2, 476, 414, 497, 558, 376, 7
historical record, revision of [426, 50, 413, 15]
420, 423, 501, 2, 574, 7
historiographers: Richard's condemnation of [429]
Spenser's role of [104, 20, 21]
historiography: of 1641 Insurrection [461, 44, 501]
Hodder, John [329]
Hodges, Dr [477]
Holden, Roger [220]
Holland, John [341]
Holles, Denzi [142, 143]
Hollington, Nathaniel [503]
Holmstead, John [382]
Hool, James [355]
Horne, Robert [345, 2]
Hovenden family [372, 8]
Hovington, Captain [68]
Howell, Robert [384, 398]
Hubright, Derrick [311]
Huiberts, Derrick and Anthony [369, 70]
Hull, Sir William [349]
Hulton, Andrew [391, 2]
humanism [37, 143, 32, 577, 57]
Humphrey, Thomas [358]
Hunt, Humphrey [342]
Hunter, Robert [226]
Huntingdon, earl of [261]
Huntingdon, Lucy, countess of [312, 4]
Hurley, Ranell Oge [327]
Husband, John [379]
husbandmen: payment delays to [67]
Hussey, Edmund [238]
Hyde, Arthur [545]

‘I.B.’ [222]

Idough [176, 366, 8]

Imokilly, seneschal of [156]

Inchiquin, Morrogh O'Brien, 1st earl of [372]

Inishowen [104, 200]

Inns of Court: Insurrection: Justification for [472, 473]

pattern of [472, 477, 486, 492, 5, 497, 506, 509, 14]

of prophecy [489, 5, 578]; see also rebellion

of 1641 Insurrection: pattern of [489, 38, 139, 454, 4]

of aid to Catholics [508]; aid to

Protestants [511, 588]; anti-English

sentiment [587]; assistance to king as

justification [576, 2], 539; atrocities [476]

of clergy and gentry [488, 491, 494, 496, 5, 511]

of 1324, 1424; 1426, 1541

of 11, 171, 181, 21, 524, 451, 3, 44, 47, 8

of Convocation and Clare [386, 387, 8]

of 492, 500; constitutional aims [538, 40]

destruction of legal documents [478]

division of families [530]; effect on

Cromwellian policy [511, 3]; exacerbates tensions in England [530]; exiles called upon

of historiographical background [461, 49]

of issuance of protection and passes [477]; landowners and [524, 34, 535, 9, 544]

of Leinster and Waterford [450, 4, 473]

of 501, 2, 539; linked with turmoil in

of England and Scotland [533, 7]; looting [541]

of loss of land and status as motive [537, 88]

map [479]; motivations of peasantry [521, 14]

in Munster [524, 14, 357, 67, 8]; rape and

reasons for escalation [472, 8]

religion as motive [490, 14, 52, 527]

ritual desecration [400, 516, 517, 8]

rumours of king’s
intermarriage
Irish people, native: attacks on planters
Johnson, John Dennis
Ireland
Johnson, John Dennis
Jones, Henry
Jones, Michael
Jones, Thomas, bishop of Meath (later
archbishop of Dublin)
Jones family
Juliannstown, battle of
Irredentism
Irk, Milan
Irvine, Sir John
Irvinestown
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
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Ives, Samuel
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Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samuel
Ives, Samu
Index 621

Kingsmill, William 310
Kinneigh 337, 339, 341
Kinsale 159, 243, 344
Kinsale, battle of 74, 163, 166
Kircubright, Lord, see McClelland, Sir Robert
Knight, Alexander 350
Knight, Francis 473
knights service 280
Knockananoss, battle 570, 571, 2
Knowde, James 328
Knowles, Sir Francis 76
Knowles, Richard 352, 3
Knowles, Sir William 76
Knox, Andrew, bishop of Raphoe 108

Lacy, Eddy 528
Lacy, Pierce 528
Lambeg 227

land: Catholic merchants and [100] 263 claims by private individuals [176] 2 as common concern of establishment 307, 18 corruption in allocation of 209 crown title to [177] 260, 6, 270, 283, 262 defective title 116 fear of royal claims to 255, 279 lack of respect for old titles 262, loss of crown revenue through grants to favourites [114] res nullius concept 133, 4; seizures [283] sold in order to obstruct plantation 274 speculation 100, 270, 274, 310 used as security on loans [327], 366, 412 see also church lands; plantation schemes

landowners: captains as 90, 125, 240, 303, 305
Catholic 380, 411, 110, 144, 444 charges of rebellion used to discredit 271 native Irish 290, 210, 264, 4, 402, 460, 123, 380, 1, 411, 12
430, 4, 522 and 1641 insurrection [524] 34
453, 4, 541, 146 seen also estate management; rents; tenants; undertakers

Lane, Ralph 83, 211, 3, 110
Lane, William 81, 4
Langford, Henry and John 387
Langton, John 343

Langton, Nicholas 440

language: bi-lingualism of English settlers 81
89, 90, 450, 5 bi-lingualism of Irish natives 415, 450, 5
415, 17 as political weapon 453, 4
prevalence of Irish 424 and religious literature 425; 425, see also political language

Las Casas, Bartolomé de 196
Laud, William, archbishop of Canterbury 286, 290, 264, 265, and Wentworth’s policies 276, 278, 279, 284, 287

Laurence, Richard 355, 2

law 201 misused 101, 2 see also English common law; Gaelic brehon law; martial law

law officers 301, 2, 303
Lawrence, James 326
Lecky, W.E.H. 464, 466, 467, 201
Lee, Geoffrey 147
Lee, Thomas 103
Leech, Edward 417
Legge, Robert 113, 16
Leicester, Robert Dudley, earl of: faction of 3, 113 and Mary queen of Scots 20
Munster plantation scheme [108] 1, 125
and purge of army [73], Spenser and 109, 34
Leigh, John 310, 129, 240
Leinster 48, 21 agriculture 370, 376, 17 artisans 374, 1, 278, 381, 2, clergy [306], [306], 133, 17
518 Confederate army defeated 370
merchants 383, migration to 211 pattern of settlement 262, 84, 1641 insurrection in 450, 4, 473, 501, 24, 399 towns 170, 2
Leitrim, County 176, 178, 265, 350, 354, 486
388, 1641 insurrection in 492, 17500

Leix [128], 9
Lenihan, Padraic 564
Lennox, dukes of 164, 274, 286
Leslie, Henry, bishop of Down 350
Le Strange, Sir Thomas 99
Lewes, Hugh 80
Lewes, Thomas 385

Lifford 193
Lightbond, William 378
Lightwood, Simon 346, 392

Limavady 216
Limerick, County 125, 176, 325
Billinghseyle estate 147, 38 desirable land in 154, 153
Desmond properties 110, 1641 insurrection in [528] 5, 48, Thomond’s influence 330, unrest of soldiers in 72, 3
Lisfinny 320, 324
Lisgoole Castle 132, 333
Lismore 34, 309, 319, 20, 326, 331
Liston, John 225
Little, David 482
livestock 329, 370, 379 in Munster 339, 49
435, 7 numbers 147, 48 selective breeding 147, 32, 32, slaughter of English breeds 407, 523 in Ulster 349, 390, 331
loans 327, 11, 338, see also credit networks; debts; mortgaging

Locke, John, of Swords 371

Loftus, Adam, Archbishop of Dublin 103, 107
112, 303 advocates mercy for Desmond 126 alleged corruption of [114] 17, 116, 117, campaign against Old English Catholicism 173 link with Burghley faction 113
Loftus, Adam, Viscount Ely 373, 374, 379 as lord justice 268, 8, 274
Loftus, Sir Arthur 379
Loftus, Nicholas 379
Lombard, Peter, archbishop of Armagh 415
London, fashion treaty of 416 see also companies, London
Londonderry, County 204, 205, 214, 268 soldiers billeted in 296
Londonderry, Robert Ridgeway, earl of 397
Londonderry, Thomas Ridgeway, earl of 373
Londonderry Company 297
Lone, James, of Edinburgh 233
Long, George 101
Long, John 6
Longford, County 157, 241, 271, 372, 387, 520
1641 insurrection in 503, 514, 517, 520 lords, Irish and allocations of property 84 campaign against Catholicism 175, 176 disputes with English officials 93, 174 effect of Act of Kingship 46, 57 effect of Munster plantation 154, 175, 176 employment of exsoldiers 74, 176 influenced by Old English land claims of loyal Munster lords 190 as landlords 329, 514 as participants in Tyrone revolt (tenency towards) 167 as planters 241 as protectors of Munster planters 162, 478 relationships with Pale 50, 561, 562
Loughinsholin 216
Loughrea 336
Louth, County 372, 373, 433, 473, 505
Lowe, Thomas 341
Lowther, John 512, 13
Lowtherstown 354
Lucas, William 509
Luker, John 448
Lurgan 239
Lurrah Abbey 396
Luther, Martin 423, 427, 576, 577
Lynch, Sir Henry 339, 4
Lynsey, Mrs Robert 241, 5
Lyons, bishop of, Cork 162

Mac Aingil, Aodh 423, 434
Mac an Bháird, Fearghal Óg 410, 430
Mac an Bháird, Laoisreach 427
Mac an Chaoláin, Domnachdha 428, 430

MacArt, Lawrence 521
Mac Art, Niall 190
Mac Art, Turloch 268, 269
Mac Brian Arragh 255
Mac Bryan, Shane 182
McCabe, Richard 45
McCaffrey, Loghlin 393
McCall, Mungo 232
McCann, Toole 475
Mac Cartans/McCartans of Ulster 240, 470

Mac Carthy, Cormac Mac Dermot 155
Mac Carthy, Sir Cormac Mac Teige 155
Mac Carthy, Donough Mac Fynne 536
MacCarty, Florence (1641 insurgent) 38, 52
Mac Carthy, Florence (son-in-law of Clancar) 509
Mac Carthy Mór, see Clancar, earl of
MacCarty-Morrough, Michael 442, 456
Mac Carty, Cormac Mac Fynne 536
McCauley, James Duff 474
McClelland, Adam 225
McClelland, George 293
McClelland, Marion 224, 292
McClelland, Sir Robert (later Lord Kircubright) 223, 229, 233, 239, 239, 239
McClelland, William, of Maghera 233
Mackay, Sir John 176, 478
Mac Craith, Michéal 126
Mac Cruitín, Aodh Buí 514
Mac Daire Mhic Bhruidain, Tadhg 430
Mac David, Phelimy Reaugh 495
McDonell, Turlagh McCaffrey 496
Mac Donnell, Sir Randal 188, 201
Mac Donnells 463, 568; see also Antrim (earls of)
Mce Dowall, Alexander 433
McDowell, Alexander 232
Me Edmond, John 531
McGoghegan, Ross 241, 442, 514, 515
Mac Graindol, Thomas 394
MacGranjald family 492
Mc Gurn, John 268
Macchiaveli, Niccolo: The Prince 514, 516
Machinnes, Allan 524
McLaughlin, Joseph 238, 244, 255, 256, 392
303, 304, 305
Mc Mahon, Art 486
Mc Mahon, Collo Mc Bryan 495
Mchall, Heber, bishop 416
Mc Mahon, Hugh 388
Mac Mahon, Hugh Oge 479
Mac Mahon, Sir Ross 492
Mac Mahon, Rose 393
Mac Mahons of Ulster 202, 472
Mac Manus, Philip 393
Mc Murchie, John 224
McPateeck, 'widow' 235
McPatrick, Pierce 506
Mac Teigg, Thelagh 225
madder 514
Magennis of Ulster 370
Maguire, Brian Mc Coromagh 543
Maguire, Connor Roe 209
Maguire, Connor, Lord Enniskillen 470
Maguire, Cuconnaught 189, 184, 190
Maguire, Lord, of Enniskillen 368
Maguire, Patrick 391
Maguire, Rory 482, 402
Maguires of Ulster 472
Malby, Sir Nicholas 88, 68, 100, 101, 107, 69, 73
Malby, Sir Nicholas 325, 337, 343, 528
Malmesbury, Thomas 371
Malby, Sir Nicholas 401
see also artisans
Mallot, Robert 152
Mapother, Richard 478
Markham, Gervase 436
Markham, Roger 473
marriages, see intermarriage
Maxwell, Henry 481
Maxwell, Sir Robert 481, 505
Maxwell, Sir Robert 222
Maxwell, Sir Robert 4
Maxwell, Sir Robert 505
Maxwell, Sir Robert, of Pollock 262, 203
Maxwell, Robert, earl of Nithsdale, see Nithsdale, Robert Maxwell, earl of
Maxwell, Dr Robert 470
Maxwell, Sir Robert 222
Mayo, County 93, 274, 385, 388, 392
Mayo, Sir William 449
Mostian, Hugh 394
Mostian, Edward 394
Mostian, Thomas 107
Mawdesley, Thurston 505
Merit, John 447
Merriman, William 447
Merritt, Jane 332
Merritt, John 391
Middlesex, Lionel Cranfield, earl of 254, 298
Middleton, Ebenezer 357
migration 394
intermarriage 377
betterment 150
estimates of 210
gender balance in 211
Millner, John 383
Milton, John 381, 352
mining 87, 88, 314, 320, 374, 396, 308
Mitchelstown 337, 343, 728
Molyneux, William 407
Monaghan, County 102, 103, 183, 187, 188, 400
Monaghans, of: depositions from 349, 351, 355
monarchy: concept of Catholic 349, 353, 358
Moneymore 470, 473
monopolies 270
Monro, Robert 562, 4, 568
Montgomery George, bishop 181
Montgomery, Sir Hugh 227, 237
Montgomery, Isobel 227
Montgomery, Robert 235
Moody, T.W. 214
Moore, Sir Edward 90
Moore, Edward and Margaret 394
Moore, John 508, 9
Mordant, Nicholas 97
More, Thomas: Utopia 37, 38
Morgan, Hiram 91
Morgan, Patrick 96
Morgan, Sir William 70
Morris, George 507
Morrill, John 539
Morris, Matthew 375
mortgaging 327, 328, 4, 366, 387, 388, 412
439, 440
Morton, John 274
Morton, John 493
Moryson, Fynes 38, 163, 14
Mostian, Thomas 539
Mostian, William 87
Mostian, Edward 95

Index 623
Mountgarrett, James Butler, Viscount 307 309
Mountgarrett, Richard Butler, Viscount 271
Mountgomery, Sir Robert 132
Mountjoy, Charles Blount, Lord (later earl of Devonshire) 57 165 165 394 agreement with Tyrone and rebels 160 4 176 178
Mountjoy fort 171 recall to England 171 4 173 reduction of influence 174
Mountjoy fort 470
Mountmellick 371 373 451
Mountrath 371 44 382
Moyglare 379
Mullaghmast massacre (1578) 61 78 106
Multyfarnham 318

Munster: captains’ behaviour 102 Confederate War in 370 372 crown title to 283 Grey’s campaigns 50 45 migration into 211 preferred to Ulster by tenants 229 provincial council 65 106 rumours of new plantations (post-1600) 255 164 insurrection in 154 34 357 57 18 soldiers in 67 89 71 swordsmen transported to 204
Munster plantation 65 121 64 160 259 290 achievements 145 agriculture 339 40 artisans 317 81 221 225 324 church and 144 classical and scriptural models for 121 3 clergy 306 consequences 159 164 courts 301 degeneracy of 288 disincentives 140 3 disputes 140 140 4 division into seignories and subdivisions 190 2 earl of Cork’s estates 308 286 earl of Cork’s tenants and rents 318 27 early scheme in favour of Leicester faction 108 4 125 effect on Irish community 153 7 effect on Irish lords 154 173 183 emphasis on English nature of 130 132 exclusion of officials and captains 116 20 favouritism 140 2 influence on Ulster plantation 204 Irish rights to lands 140 lawlessness 315 17 linked with civility 158 24 livestock numbers 147 17 loans 327 military incentives 143 5 nationality of tenants 308 numbers of English settlers 146 officers’ petitions for land 821 3 84 Old English influence 403 over-subscribed 138 40 overthrow of Elizabethan settlement 162 4 pattern of settlement 336 47 planters given official posts 158 policies and opposing views on 123 problem of scattering of properties 157 and Protestantism 65 quality and location of land 142 149 31 261 recruiting 134 3 Spenser’s estate 37 41 2 surveys 821 3 109 133 134 tenants’ abandonment of patrons, and colonial spread 149 52 tenants’ treatment 143 towns 152 170 171 174 trade and merchants 311 15 343 6 undertakers’ inadequacies and difficulties 148 153 villages 130 4 Wallop and 108 11 Welsh involvement 147 Wentworth’s praise of 282 Murray, James, of Edinburgh 233 Murray, John, see Annandale, John Murray, earl of Muskerry 155 316 Muskerry, Lord Viscount 528 531 532 Myles, William 370

Naas 506 native Irish, see Irish people, native natural resources 151 214 217 310 111 314 15 320 329 4 383; see also fishing; mining Naunton, Sir Robert 270 271 Navan 383 443 446 506 508Needham, Symon 150 4 Nelson, Elizabeth 540 New British History 549 New Science 450 Newcomen, Sir Thomas 348 New Island 376; town 398 79; agreement 283 187; recall to England 288 301, 64; Spenser’s estate 341 348 – 40; division into 121 3; growth into 299 33 2; protest against 40; Spenser’s estate 341 348 – 40; Union of 169
Newcastle 365 324 346 Newcomen, Sir Thomas 379 Newton, John 431 Newcomen, Sir Thomas 379 Newton, John, see Annandale, John Murray, earl of Musker...
O'Neill, Turlough Laineach 81 86 87 89 90
O'Neill, Turlough Mac Henry, of the Fews 187
O'Neill, Turlough Oge 505
O'Neill sept 182 227 233 great O'Neill’s
inauguration site 241 247 288
O’Quinns of County Tyrone 470
O Raiftearaí, Antóní 576
O'Reilly, Philip Mulmore 494
O'Reillys of Ulster 472
origin myths 285 301 309 415 439 58
Ormond, James Butler, 12th earl of 272 396 571
Ormond, marquess of 526 528
Ormond, Thomas Butler, 10th earl of 60 117
attitude to English officials 105 107
claim to Munster lands 84 considered for
post of governor 65 and Irish rights to
lands 140 moderate views as cause of
English suspicions 125 126 132 150 160 and
Munster campaign 125 168 objection to
intermarriage 102 protection of Munster
planters 102 as queen’s adviser 64 on
suitability of ‘persons of small ability’ for
lands 128
Ormond, Walter Butler, 11th earl of 260 270
Ormond estates 270 283 286 292 308 396 406
O’Rourke, Sir Brian 62 67 265
O’Rourke, Owen 492 498
O’Rourke’s of County Leitrim 176 492 494
Orrery 329
Osbaldestone, Thomasine 511
Osborn, Robert 473
Osborne, Robert 452
Ossory 260 261
O’Sullivan, Owen 528
O’Sullivan Beare, Philip 427
O’Sullivan Mór, the 528 537
O’Tooles of Leinster 168 507 520
Oughtred, Henry 134 135 143 145 146 149
Paddeson, Thomas 346
Pagden, Anthony 133
Page, William (clother) 342
Page, William (literary distributor) 12
Pagett, Roger 327
Painter, Richard 333
Patience Chloinne Tómas 336 38
Palatinate, elector of
palatinate jurisdiction 159 270 285
Pale, English 43 55 59 66 159
appointment of officials 64 115 behaviour of soldiers in
67 collection of cess 110 and corruption
113 defence of 60 2 finances 65 16
influence of Counter-Reformation 112
114 pillaged during 1641 insurrection 487
relationship with English officials 116 117
see also Dublin; Leinster; Old English
Palesmen: language 416 as soldiers 68 views
on use as administrators 105 116 17
papacy 416 456 516 549
parishes 202 13
Parker, Geoffrey 73 4
parliament, English 408 410 450 460 57
1642 plantation scheme 553
parliament, Irish 405 407 8 409 410 566 and
the Graces 268 269 of 1643 273 280 of
1649 292 297
Parmenter, Christopher 481
Parsons, Sir Lawrence 259 372
Parsons, Sir Richard 558
Parsons, Sir William 237 238 254 253 259
260 1 262 379 385 470 538
‘Reasons for the Plantations in Ireland 249 50
Parsonstown, see Birr
patia, Irish concepts of 421
Patton, Sandy 224
Pawlish, Hans 224
Payne, Robert: A Briefe Description of Ireland
136 145 150
Pearson, Richard 477
peasantry: resentment over elevation of 436 49
and 1641 insurrection 473 475 479
502 4 504 509 524 524 522; see also
tenants
Peasants’ Revolt (Germany) 39 169
pedlars 392 3
Pelham, Sir William 71 108 125
Pembroke, Mary, countess of 26
Penock, Michael 383
Perceval, Sir Philip 318 10 228 436 439 490
496
Perceval family 326
Perceval-Maxwell, Michael 211 224 465 6
Perkin, John 361 469 78 491
Perkins, Thomas 212 217 433 4
Perrott, Sir John 64 67 110 112 112 161
dispute with Loftus 114 15 involvement
with Desmaistres and Williams 111 151 on
Irish soldiers 72 and Munster plantation
128 133 140 on Palesmen 60 praised
by Legge 114 as president of Munster
106 and reform 109
Peter’s Town 334
Pettig, Sir William 351 358 513
Perritier, Piers, see Perritier, Piers
Philip II, king of Spain 160
Phillips, Judith 512
Phillips, Margaret 476
Phillips, Sir Thomas 405 206 216 264
Piers, Sir Henry 88
Index 627

Piers, James 88

Piers, William 85, 94, 194

pilism 424

Pilling, Ralph 101

Pillsworth, William 444, 516

Pilltown 318, 319

pipe staves 314, 315, 392, 399

pirates 131, 228, 319, 345, 347

plantation schemes: civilizing reform as motive for 247, 252; classical and scriptural models for 121, 131, 161, 197, 199, 214 as continuing process 162, 176, 246, 255, 272, 274, 283, 298, 396; criticisms of 255, 262; Cromwellian 281, 283; defects 163, 248, 282; exemptions 281; financial incentives 165, 166; imposed on Gaelic lordships 179, 180, investment in 232; justifications for 260; lesser schemes 178, 183, 249, 251, 280, 290, 379, 380; linked with religious reform 277, 282, and midlands 28, 30, 108; monitoring 145, 148; obstructed by Tyrone settlement 168, 160, 70; Old English views 257, 258; and Ormond estates 270; policies and opposing views on 123, 126, post-1641 55, 62, as potential source of unrest 281, 284; pre-1629 (map) 186; revived by Lofts and Cork 261, 270 of servitor governors 172, Spenser’s model for 160, 162; and spread of Protestantism 65, 66, 289, 291; Wallop’s recommendations 108; Wentworth’s strategies 275; see also colonization; Munster plantation; Ulster plantation

poets and poetry: Gaelic 104, 410, 427, 473, 483

political influence on role of 12, 120, 133, 334, 380

political language: differences in 439, 490

Pollard, Edward 370

Pooke, John 236

Pooke, Thomas 502

Poolley, Honor 307

Poore, Alice 433

Popham, John 120, 130, 140, 142, 144, 145, 154

population: clearances 432, 434, 459, decimation (Munster) 173; movement 146, 164, 180, 211

Portadown atrocity 484, 485

Portugal 71, 136

potatoes 382

Poulton, Morgan 316

poverty 142, 146 of Scottish settlers 230, 233

Power, Sir William 530

Powerscourt, Lord, see Wingfield, Sir Richard

Praemunire, Statute of 174

Presbyterian, 278

presidencies, provincial 62, 65, 81, 92, 94, 100

101, 106, 158, 174, 260, 265, 301, 387

Preston, Lady Elizabeth 272

Preston, Richard, Lord Dinwall, see Desmond, Richard Preston, earl of

Price, Elizabeth 453, 473

Price, Samuel 503

Price, Theodore 251, 2

priests, seminary: call for expulsion of 171, 173, continental influence 416, 488, 547, and funerals 447, influence on insurrection 551, influence on local Irish 551, 540; links with Catholic landowners 411, 419, 444; missionary work 411, 431, 2; numbers and success in Ireland 441, 442; torture and execution of 546; Wentworth’s policies and 270; wish for open religious toleration 441, 488, 519, 564

Privy Council 104, 115, 134, 135, 187, 188

Privy Council of Scotland 104, 105, 197, 231, 2

561

Proby, Alderman 222

projectors, English 82, 83, 87, 88, 90, 101, 110, 111, 136, 151, 203

property: enhancement in value 382; move away from seigneurial 49, 51; officers and 27, 16; seizure of 69; see also land

Protestant depictions, see depictions of 1641

Protestantism: compliance of Irish natives with 435, 46, conversion of Irish to 153, 292, 31

Counter-Reformation propaganda against 424, 43, English parliament and 408; and moral reform 43, plantation schemes used to establish 65, 66, 208, 209; of ruling elite 218; and 256; 256; see also advanced Protestants; anti-Protestantism; Calvinism; clergy, Protestant; Protestants in Ireland

Protestants in Ireland 53, 54, 65, 112, campaign against Old English coerced into conversion to Catholicism 531, Connacht community 386, 387, 406, 406, 550; friction with Catholics 445, 51; influence on English and Scottish opinion 553, 555; invited by Irish Protestant lords 390; Leinster community 362, 378, 380, 381, 501; link with commerce 285; opposition to concessions to Catholics 267; and position of governor 269; post-1641 propaganda campaign 555, 5; protection of Catholic dependents by (during insurrection) 556; and radical Scots 559, 61; reject concept of English-based officials 246; resentment of concessions to Catholics 443, 444; resentment of Wentworth’s policies during Covenants crisis 206, 27.
Protestants in Ireland (cont.)
role in Cromwellian conquest 571 12 as
 tenants 52 1, 280, and Wentworth’s religious
reforms 276 1, 285; see also anti-
Protestantism; clergy, Protestant;
Protestantism
proto-industry 360, 377, 8, 409 1
 provincial councils 106 7
 Pullein, Samuel 425, 526
 Purcell, Pierce 59
 Purcells of Tipperary 525, 526
 Puttock, Roger 506, 553
 Pynchon, William and John 317
 Pyne, Henry 325
 Pynner, Nicholas 207 8, 211 240, 251
 Quarles, John 342
 Queen’s County 178, 353, 371, 372, 8, 382
 450 1, 1641 insurrection in 506, 520
 Queenseis, Richard 377
 Radcliffe, Sir George 307 2, 308
 Raleigh, Sir Walter 314, 319, 288, 308, 333 and
 Munster plantation 129, 320, 324
 Rambuss, Richard 32
 Rampine, Dorothy 353, 543
 Rand, Thomas 447
 Ranelagh 261
 Ranelagh, Lord Viscount 285, 495, 333
 Ranger, Terence 90
 rape 344 3
 Raphoe 196
 Rathmines, battle of 370, 371
 Raven, Thomas 324, 538
 Reagh, MacCarthy 328, 337
 rebellion: casual attitude to 261 charges of used
to discredit landowners 271; fear of 256
 270, 283, 34; provocation of 34, 44, 15, 9, 99
 108, 165, 51, 270; recusancy fines 207
 religion as justification 260, 290, 216; see
 also insurrection; insurrection of 1641
 Redfern, John 475
 Redish, Otto 340
 Redman, Magdelene 543 14
 Redworth, Glyn 419
 Reeve, John 260
 reformers: views on Ulster plantation 251 6
 religion: conformity in 216, 254, 378, 4, 439
 434 1, 531; enforcement of statutes in
 Ireland 7; as motive for insurrection
 260, 260, 316, 309, 404, 407, 409, 509, 512 14
 527, 538; Old English 404, 406, 407
 planting of 144, 202 2, 214, 277, 204
 Scots and
 278, 282, 283; 202; strategies for
 reform 33, 11, 15, 8, 162, 177 8, 277 18
 285; see also Catholicism; Catholics, Irish;
 Counter-Reformation; Protestantism;
 Protestants in Ireland
’Remonstrance of our lamentable condition’
(1642) 553 4
 Renaissance 14 6, 4, 16, 14, 34, 35, 44
 rents 215, 216, 220; church land 307; earl of
 Cork’s estates 318 26; see also tenants
 replantation, policy of 256, 258, 264, 268, 273
 republicanism 419, 20
 revolt, see insurrection; rebellion
 Reynolds, Henry 97
 Reynolds family 492
 Rich, Sir Nathaniel 257
 Richards, Nehemiah 477
 Richardson, William 399
 Riche, Barnaby 377 11
 Ridge, John 388 9
 Ridgeway, George 237, 258
 Ridgeway, Sir Thomas 185, 237
 Ridgeway family, see Londonderry (earls of)
 Right, John 332
 Rinuccini, Archbishop 564 5
 Robinson, John 343
 Robinson, Philip 310
 Robinson, Ursula 352
 Robinson-Hammerstein, Helga 477
 Robyns, Arthur 338 140, 143, 149
 Roche, Lord Viscount 156
 Roche, Lord Viscount 337, 541
 Roscommon, County 66, 100, 274, 335, 14
 387, 395, 495, 496
 Roscommon Abbey 388
 Roscommon Castle 99
 Rothe, David, bishop of Ossory 406
 Rothe, Joseph 453
 Rowley, Captain 418
 Rowley, John 311
 Rufin family 543
 Russell, John and Anthony 344
 Rutledge, Richard 386
 Sacheverell, Francis 237
 St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre 4 38, 577 577
 341, 547
 St George family 500
 St John, Sir Oliver [Lord Grandison] 172 237
 245, 254, 305, 435
 St Leger, Anthony 325
 St Leger, Warham 371 2 and Munster
 plantation 126 1, 143, 147, 148, 154, 155
 156, 157, 306, 325
 St Leger, Sir William 260, 278, 253, 226
 353
 St Patrick’s Purgatory 260, 346
Salisbury, Robert Cecil, earl of formerly
Viscount Cranbourne [166, 167, 169, 182]
Sambach, Sir William [366]
Samell, Richard [339]
Sands, Isaac [374]
Saunders (Sanders) family [323, 324]
Savage, Rowland [232, 433]
Scarriffollis, battle of [570, 572]
schools [203]
Scotland: aid to Irish Catholics [568]; aid to Irish
Protestants [561, 568]; Gaelic poets and
optimism over plantations [263]; possibility of union with
Ulster [25, 47, 39, 40]; see also Covenants
Scots in Ireland [171, 178]; abandonment of
tenancies [323, 324, 204, 9, 482]; and
Connacht [286, 385, 386, 388];
Cromwellian policies towards [559]; effect of Covenants crisis on
military role in Cromwellian conquest [561]; as officials [201]; opposition to
poverty and financial difficulties [290]; [232]; pro-Irish mercenaries in
Ulster [61, 62]; radical Protestants [559]; relationship with English [235];
Scotch culture and contacts perpetuated
[234, 2]; and 1641 insurrection [477, 478, 83];
soldiers used against O'Doherty revolt [195]; support from Scotland
[231, 2]; and Ulster plantation [192, 200, 208, 211];
[222]; [226, 227, 37]; [331]; [333]; [340]; [482]; [3];
[559]; Wentworth's policies [278];
and Sligo [282, 285, 286]; [287, 293]; [278, 450, 156];
Scott Wheeler, James [372]
scritures: as model for plantation
seigneors [130]; assignment of [123]; see also
Munster plantation
Sempill, Sir James [309, 10]
seneschals [61, 8, 112];
septs [46, 52, 52, 176];
Sergeant, Philip [374]
Sergier, Richard [388, 19]
servitors: anti-Catholicism [170, 171, 179]; anti-
Scottish feeling [169]; beneficiaries of lesser
plantations [178]; criticisms of [254]; as
deserving people [125]; [172, 178, 245, 427];
[290]; [205, 379]; factions [259]; gain
control of administration [171, 4]; jacobins of
towns [170, 171]; lobbying by [234, 292];
opposition to Tyrone settlement [169]; as
planters [143, 149, 169, 201, 209, 237];
[251, 305]; as policy makers [186, 172, 247];
[262, 172, 53]; [571]; and 1622 commission
[248, 53]; of [210] and Ulster
social conservativeness 428, 436, 538, 575
social engineering 57, 206, 551
social inversion 487, 83
soldiers 66, 75, 304
administrative role 304
billeting 67, 296, cause of grievances 66, 13, deprivation caused by
demobilization 73, 14 as deserters 70, 24
and disease 71, 2, expectations of land
extent of presence in Ireland 60, 4
as financial burden 66, 7, 8
gallowglass 60, involvement in 1641
insurrection 473, 66, 167, 28, 22
Irish 68, 72
payment arrears, and unrest caused by
67, 7, 2, 296, 304
readily available 302, quantity of
60, 7, 304, selling weapons 73, 14 as tenants
90, 3, 303, use of Palemen 68
see also army, captains; kerne
Somerset, Edward Seymour, 1st duke of 30
Sowther, Thomas 291
Spain 172, 116, attractions of service in 1473, 4
Irish exiles in 183, 184, 418, 566, threat to
Irish soldiers to
570, 573, Wentworth's
soldiers destined for 1496
Spanish Armada 135, 144, 162
Sprat, Richard 171
Spenser, Edmund 53, 3, 53, 66, 103, 120, 302
372, 383, 413, 414, 577, Colvin Cloud's Come
Home Again 56, 59, 83, 55, Prosopopia, or,
Mother Hubberd's Tale 33, 3 Shepherds
Calendar 34, 55, 'Two Cantos of
Mutabilitie' 41, 2 and Bryskett 41, 18
41, 3 dispute with Roche 156, on
education 31, 4, 55, 6, first visit to Munster
109, Gaelic poets' interest in 126
inadequacy as planter 149, 153, learning and influences 5, 9, 16, 14, 34, 33, as moral
philosopher 31, 42, 59 and Munster estate
32, 3, 119, 143, 541, open letter to
Raleigh 6, 14, 12, 19, recommends direct
conquest 63, 8, relationship with queen
59, 5, retreat to England 162, revivals of ideas of
249, 281, 287, 269, 307, 552
57, 59, 572, on role of the poet 12, 20, 5
34, 35, 56, on Scotland 25, 6, 7, 39, 40, 106
on the state and the court 33, 1, 10
supports Bingham 106, see also Fierie
Queene, View of the Present State of Ireland, A
Spenser, Walter 532
Spert, Richard 203
Spring, Edward 102
Spring, Thomas (captain) 102
Spring, Thomas, of Kerry 328
Springham, Alderman 222
Stafford, Thomas 170
Stanley, Ellen 314
Stanley, Sir William 74, 84
Stanhurst, Richard 168, 414
Staple, Juan 575
Staples, Sir Thomas 359, 478
Statute Staple Books 240, 327, 355, 356, 368
Steere, Richard 377
Stephens, Anthony 482
Sterne, John 535
Stevenson, James 384, 493, 544
Stewart, Andrew, Lord Ochiltree (later Baron
Castlestewart) 103, 108, 109, 231, 292
Stewart, James, of Cookstown 378
Stewart, Jane 386
Stewart, Robert 480
Stewart, Sir William 234, 360, 478, 483
Stewart, William, of Dunduff 223
Stewart, William (grandson-in-law of Tyrone)
478
Stewarts town 231, 239, 360
Stirling, John 544
Stone, George 153, 309
Stones, Thomas 368
Strabane 102, 3, 228, 239
Strayford, earl of, see Wentworth, Thomas
Strangford Lough 280, 60
stripping 15, 14, 479, 486, 494, 506, 525, 527
Stuarts: claims to crown of Ireland 440, 14, 419
Stubbs, John (lawyer) 15
Stubbs, John, of Longford 314
subsides, collection of 280, 60
surrender and regrant scheme 351, 52, 524, 4, 415
'Survey of the Government of Ireland, A'
486
'survey of the government of Ireland, A'
surveys 22, 3, 109, 133, 134, 140, 141, 538, 6
Sussex, Thomas, earl of 140, 80, 85, 103, 118
and defence of Pale 66, 61, 1, 66, fall 73
Sweden, County Cavan 358
Swift, Jonathan 107
Symson, Richard 217n
Taaffe, John, Lord Viscount 233, 257
Taaffe, Theobald 496
Taaffe, William 69, 97, 100
Talbot, James 442
Talbot, John 103
Tallow 320, 323, 324, 326, 434, 435
Tallowbridge 324
Tandragee 470
tanyards 374, 3, 55
Tara negotiations 501, 502
Tarbert 142
Tasso, Torquato 8, 6, 10
Tatardall, Henry 341
Taylor, John 352
Teigg, William [447]

Temple, Sir John: *The Irish Rebellion* [461, 4, 556]

Templehouse [468, 449]


tenants-in-chief [318, 10, 326, 375, 3]

Theocritus [34, 35]

Thirk, Joan [85]

Thomond [88]

Thomond, earl of [24, 42, 44, 89, 100]

Thomond, Donogh O’Brien, 4th earl of [285]

‘Thorough’, policy of [275]

Thurles [327]

Thurles, Thomas Butler, Viscount [271]

Tiergian, Henry [334]

timber [85, 87, 151, 179, 313, 314, 344, 438, 399, 490]


Tirry, William [534]

tibes [314]

toasts: as tests of loyalty [449]

tobacco [320, 345, 4, 392]

Tosper, Thomas [85]

Totten, earl of, see Carew, Sir George

Tracton Abbey [390]

Tracy, Edward [442]


Ulster insurrection and war (1641) 534, 466; 469, 474, 567, 688; Scottish army's role in conquest 561; see also Cromwellian conquest; insurrection of 1641

Ulster plantation
agriculture 349, 58, 353; artisans 290, 231
238, 240, 241, 243, 245, 247, 252, 254
202, 237
Chichester's treatment of loyalists 160, church lands 186, 500
202, 277
church's role criticized 25, 254
civilizing function 203, 44
classical model for 197, 160, 202
clergy 306, 356
by colonial spread 15, commercial links with Dublin 351, 362, 369, 392
communal bonds 344
comparision of English and Scottish planters 268, 333, 434; 'consorts'
201, 202
culture of attack by alienated Irish 220, 433, 474
Davies/Huntingdon properties 332, 44
defense of undertakers 253, 44
division of holdings 200
English settlers 360, 44
Essex estate exemptions 206, financial outlay 214, 215
216, 218, 19, 220
fortifications and castles 214, 217, 220
Graces' concessions to planters 268
sull between local officials and court 204, 145; hierarchical nature 202
income from rents 215, 216
individual claimants 201
influence of Munster plantation 202
Irish landowners 209
journey and hardships on arrival 212, 13, 220
king's investigations into 213
labourers 223
lack of integration
between Scots and English 482
London companies and 101, 201, 202, 205, 16, 208
209, 212, 234, 243, 243, 243, 243, 243
292, 286, 286
merchants 432, 432
missionary impulse for 202
negative report of 1622 commission 240
officers of state as model planters 237, 11
Old English exclusion from
257
parishes 202, 202
pattern of settlement 347, 624
Project of Plantation 83, 86
reasons for lower economic performance of settlers 359, 62
removal of 'seditious persons' 204
role of servitors 159, 201, 201, 354
role of undertakers 191, 191, 191, 191
Scotts and 192, 200
209, 211, 224, 224, 224, 277, 321, 335, 41
361, 482, 545, 61
shortcomings and failures of undertakers 209, 16, 226, 233
social conditions 473, 473, 473, 473
surveys 205, 205, 205, 205
tenants 206, 207, 210, 216
219, 220, 221, 222, 226, 227, 228, 232, 248
333, 44
towns 186, 192, 34, 202, 214
vaccant land

Wentworth's policies during
Covenanter crisis 204, 118
Wentworth's praise of 282
Wentworth's seizures of land 283; see also commission of 1622
underwriters 190
unemployment 473, 4
Uske 372
Ussher, James, archbishop of Armagh 267, 301

Vacant land, theory of 135, 474, 264
Vane, Sir Henry 284
Vaughan, Sir John 479
Vaughan, Rowland 377
Vau, Patrick 232
Vavasor, Elizabeth 463
Vevsey, Sir Edward 226
Wesley, William 305
Viceroy of 67

View of the Present State of Ireland, A (Spenser) 15
ambiguous attitude to Ormond 159, 60
anti-Scottish sentiment 40
on degeneration 48, 54, 57, 63
on English common law 45, 49
on gardening metaphor 23
historical lore 26
influence on Ulster plantation 203
Irish customs 175
on military solution 160
plantation scheme recommendations 160
on reform and education 160
on religion 160
role of the poet 11
Wentworth's familiarity with 287

Villiers, Sir Edward 260
Villiers, George; see Buckingham, George
Villiers, 1st duke of
Virgils 31, 315
Virginia 206, 213, 313, 316

Wadding, Robert 313, 522
Walker, Richard; grocer 333, 337
Walker, Richard; parson 230
Walker, Sir Hardress 333, 572
Waller, Thomas; Christopher 385
Walley, John 310, 314, 390, 367
Wallop, Sir Henry 281, 294, 25, 107, 114
Walsworth, Ralph 522
Walsh, Oliver 373
Walsh, Piers 116
Walshe, Nicholas 511