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Map 1 Map of Ireland, showing major towns and political divisions

IRELAND

A History

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University of Aberdeen

S.S.P. History
Optional Reading
- General history of
Ireland 1640 - 1660.

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and, predictably, much was found, notably that which related to his recruitment of Irish Catholics into a 9,000 strong army destined for the Scottish war (or, as was darkly hinted, to intimidate the English Parliament). Less predictably, perhaps, representatives of the Old English and New English communities had cooperated with each other to – so to speak – dish the dirt on Wentworth.

While preparations for Wentworth's trial were proceeding apace an army of Scottish covenanters invaded the north of England in August 1640, forcing Charles yet again to appeal to Parliament to authorise those financial subsidies needed to conduct the war against the Scots. Unknown to Charles, however, some covenanting leaders had been in discussion with the more disaffected of Charles's subjects, notably the fiery John Pym, who had informed his fellow Members of Parliament that Charles's object was to seek to 'prepare us for poperie', and his Ulster-based brother-in-law, John Clotworthy, a Presbyterian sympathiser, also involved financially in the city of London's plantation in Ulster. On religious, financial and political grounds, therefore, Clotworthy was no friend to Wentworth. There can be no doubt that Pym, Clotworthy and their supporters secretly encouraged the Scots to invade England in order to keep the pressure on Charles.[4] They were also determined to have Wentworth's head, for he was the one man who conceivably might have managed the crisis to Charles's advantage. In May 1641, despite Charles's assurances that he would never sacrifice him, Wentworth was found guilty of treason and executed. As Charles's authority took a sustained battering in two of his three kingdoms, his Irish subjects looked on, and sought to draw lessons from the clear Scottish triumph and what appeared to be the incipient collapse of Stuart government. Wentworth's death, like that of the earl of Kildare over a hundred years earlier, had opened up a power vacuum in Ireland; who would be tempted to fill it?

The Ulster Rebellion

The events unfolding in England in the summer of 1641 were viewed with grave misgivings by the Old English and by the native Irish leaders in Ulster (figure 3.1).[5] In England, the 'puritan' or 'malignant party', as the king's opponents were dubbed by Irish Catholics, appeared to be in the ascendant. These parliamentarians sought by a thorough reform in church and state to bring about that godly commonwealth which, since the adoption in the 1560s of Elizabeth's despised middle way in religion, had proved elusive. Central to their demands was an unswerving crown commitment to a vigorously anti-Catholic policy throughout Charles's kingdoms, and especially in Ireland, where anti-Catholic legislation was to be enforced and Wentworth's 'popish' army was to be dispersed.

3.1 Much more to the taste of later Irish nationalists was this heroic image dating from 1900 of Owen Roe O'Neill wearing Spanish armour and leading his troops to victory at Benburb, county Tyrone in 1646. National Library of Ireland.

Too late Irish Catholic leaders realised that, however harshly they had been treated by Charles and Wentworth, they could expect much worse should the English parliamentarians succeed in their struggle with Charles I.

The decisive response of the Scots when faced with (in their eyes) the destruction of their religion, seemed to offer the native Irish leaders a credible course of action. The Scots, confronted with a wholly unpalatable *diktat* from London, had bound themselves together under oath to resist it, had defeated the king's army sent to enforce it and had even invaded the north of England, causing Charles to pay them monies to advance no further. By any standards the Scots had achieved a brilliant success. They had demonstrated that they were not to be trifled with, Charles had been forced to concede to their demands and the offending religious policy was abandoned. Was there a lesson in any of this for those native Irish leaders who, as the English Parliament gained the upper hand over the king, gloomily contemplated the likely implementation of a rigorous, anti-Catholic, policy in Ireland? After all the native Irish were not entirely devoid of military muscle. They could point to the presence of many native Irish commanders, as well as thousands of native Irish soldiers in the Spanish and French services. In theory, these constituted an Irish Catholic standing army abroad. Could it be deployed in aid of their co-religionists at home? While Wentworth's Catholic army of some nine thousand men raised for the Scottish wars had been stood down at parliamentary insistence, the men had not yet been dispersed and might speedily be reassembled. Military calculations of this sort, as well as gnawing fears for the future should Parliament triumph over Charles, undoubtedly lay behind the conspiracy hatched in the summer of 1641. Clearly based on the Scottish model for successful resistance and designed to demonstrate that the native Irish Catholics still retained a capacity to command attention, the plot drew in native Irish leaders such as Sir Phelim O'Neill and Lord Maguire in Ulster, exiles such as Owen Roe O'Neill in Spanish Flanders, foreign sympathisers such as Cardinal Richelieu in France and some kindred spirits among the Old English.

The plans of the conspirators included the seizure of Dublin Castle but they failed to achieve this because word of their intentions had been divulged to the authorities who were therefore able to take precautions. Meanwhile, throughout west and south Ulster from 23 October on, groups of native Irish seized control of a large number of towns, castles and forts. Within a few weeks, as native Irish bands of soldiers marched south and as they inflicted a key defeat at Julianstown, county Louth, on forces loyal to Dublin Castle, leading members of the Old English of the Pale, alarmed by growing restlessness among their tenantry and reassured by the rebels' repeated declarations of loyalty to Charles I, moved to join them and to take control of their protest. They were, however, too late: the damage had been done, for while in its conception the rebellion was to

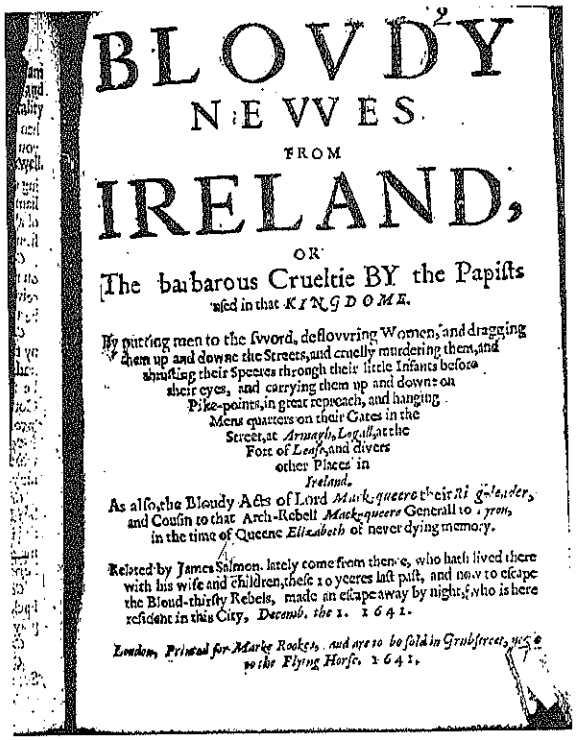
have been an armed demonstration on the Scottish model, in its execution it had immediately become a genuine people's uprising – the first in Irish history – with, as its principal feature, a pitiless onslaught by the native Irish on the settler population and their possessions. The rebellion plunged Ireland into a twenty-year nightmare of massacre and mayhem, involving total war, man-made famine and wholesale confiscation, and it quickly pitched the three kingdoms into multiple civil wars with frequent and bewildering changes of line-up in each conflict. Ever after, the rebellion was called upon to justify all manner of revenge, retribution and retaliation on the Irish. Indeed, it is arguable that Protestant–Catholic relations in Ireland have never wholly recovered from the Ulster explosion of October 1641.

An early headline in an English fly-sheet set the tone (figure 3.2). Dated 1 December 1641, it screamed 'BLOUDY NEWES from IRELAND, or, The barbarous Crueltie BY the Papists used in that KINGDOME', and went on to describe

> the putting men to the sword, deflowring of women, and dragging them up and downe the streets, and cruelly murdering them, and thrusting their speers through their little infants before their eyes and carrying them up and down on pike-points in great reproach, and hanging mens' quarters on their gates in the streets at Armagh, Logall [Loughgall].

Reports were received of wholesale massacres, of thousands, tens of thousands and even hundreds of thousands of Protestants tortured, drowned, mutilated, robbed, slain in cold blood and cast out on the roadside, stark naked and forced to make their own way to shelter. It mattered not that the casualty figures cited were, by a factor of ten, in excess of the probable settler population for the reality was frightful enough; perhaps four thousand died and another six thousand settlers perished of exposure. Nor were readers spared the grisly details of atrocities or denied the woodcut scenes (almost all lifted from illustrations of atrocities committed elsewhere in Europe) that brought home the full horror of the rebellion.

From the beginning, many in England held – and this is surely a measure of how far all trust had broken down between king and Parliament – that Charles I was, in some way, complicit in the rebellion. The Ulster rebels had announced that they were fighting to help the king maintain his position against the puritans, had claimed that they were in rebellion on his behalf and had even furnished themselves with a (forged) royal commission authorising their actions. In addition, at least in the early days, those in arms frequently made a point of not harming Scottish settlers and this, too, was seen as highly suspicious, for Charles was at that time negotiating with the Scots and a massacre of Scottish



BLOVDY
NEVVES
FROM
IRELAND,
OR
The barbarous Crueltie BY the Papists
used in that KINGDOME.

By putting men to the sword, deflowring Women, and dragging them up and downe the Streets, and cruelly murdering them, and shuffling their Speeres through their little Infants before their eyes, and carrying them up and downe on Pike-points, in great reproach, and hanging Mens quarters on their Gates in the Street, at Armagh, Lagall, at the Fort of Leasse, and divers other Places in Ireland.

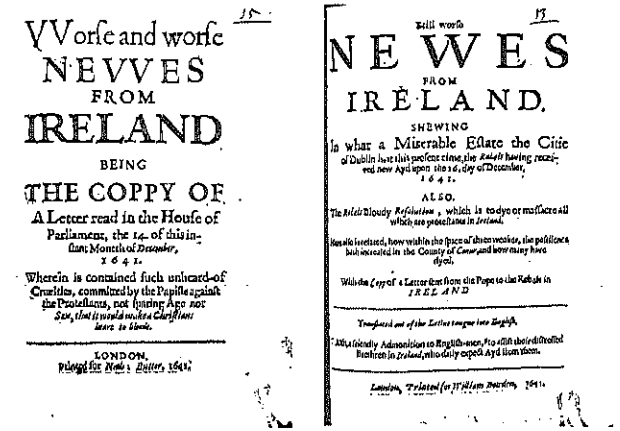
As also, the Bloudy Acts of Lord Mack-queere their Archi grand, and Cousin to that Arch-Rebell Mack-queere Generall to Tyron, in the time of Queene Elizabeth of never dying memory.

Related by James Salmon, lately come from thence, who hath lived there with his wife and children, these 10 yeeres last past, and now to escape the Bloud-thirsty Rebels, made an escape away by night; who is here resident in this City, Decemb. the 1. 1641.

London, Printed for Marke Rookes, and are to be sold in Grubstreet, at the Flying Horse. 1641.

3.2 News reports in London of the Irish rebellion. Sensational reports of massacre and cruelty would later justify exceptional severity against all those believed to be rebels. © British Library Board.

settlers in Ulster, by those claiming to act on his behalf, would not have been helpful. There had been repeated rumours throughout 1641 that the devious Charles had been seeking to make use of the Irish army recruited by Wentworth (just as Clotworthy and Pym had sought to profit from the presence of a Scottish army in the north of England). Under these circumstances of plot upon plot there could be no question of entrusting the suppression of the rebellion to the king, for his name and authority had been invoked by those in arms, and he was as likely to turn his army against his English subjects as against his Irish rebels



VVorse and worse
NEVVES
FROM
IRELAND
BEING
THE COPPY OF
A Letter read in the House of Parliament, the 14. of this instant Month of December, 1641.

Wherein is contained such unheard-of Cruelties, committed by the Papists against the Protestants, not sparing Age nor Sex, that it would make a Christians heart to bleed.

LONDON,
Printed for Nath. Butter, 1641.

Still worse
NEWES
FROM
IRELAND.
SHEWING
In what a Miserable Estate the Citie of Dublin is at this present time, the Rebels having received new Aid upon the 16. day of December, 1641.

ALSO,
The Rebels Bloudy Resolution, which is to dye or massacre all which are protestants in Ireland.

Herein is related, how within the space of three weekes, the petitions hath been acted in the County of Cavan, and how many have dyed.

With the Copy of a Letter sent from the Pope to the Rebels in IRELAND

Translated out of the Latine tongue into English.

Also a friendly Admonition to English-men, to aide their distressed Brethren in Ireland, who daily expect Ayd from them.

London, Printed for William Bowden, 1641.

3.2 (*cont.*)

(or friends). Eventually, in 1642, separate Scottish, parliamentary and royalist armies, were dispatched to Ireland.

What lay behind the frightfulness (figure 3.3) inflicted on the settlers in the popular uprising of 1641? An indiscriminate onslaught on them was neither planned nor sought by those behind the conspiracy. The likes of Sir Phelim O'Neill, Sir Philip O'Reilly and Rory Maguire had plotted a demonstration that would force the king and Parliament to back off from interfering in Ireland; murder and massacre were the last things they wanted. Perhaps it was a measure of how far they had grown apart from their followers that they too were taken by surprise by the eruption of sectarian fury which engulfed the Ulster plantation. O'Neill, O'Reilly and Maguire can be classed as 'deserving natives' who had done well out of the plantation of Ulster. All three were Members of Parliament and had apparently integrated well into the new, post-flight-of-the-earls dispensation. They made no demand for the destruction of the plantation: why should they, when they had profited from it? Maguire even held land taken from the great O'Neill. Admittedly, they were all of them deep in debt but they were motivated primarily by a well-grounded fear that a parliamentary triumph would bring total disaster, and by an overwhelming urge to hold on to what they had. There is little evidence of a burning desire to avenge wrongs.

With their followers, however, it was all very different. They had suffered under the plantation, had been subjected to harsh laws and had been

Exceeding Ioyfull Newes 26
FROM
IRELAND,
Or a true diſcovery of the preſent
Eſtate of that Kingdome at this preſent.

Wherein is declared what Townes
of Note, the *Engliſh* have taken from the
Rebells in ſeverall Seiges ſince the
laſt Forces went over.

Namely,

Limrick.	}	*Droghede.*
Waterford.	}	*Kilkennie.*
Wicklow.	}	*Waxford.*
Ackloe.	}	*Colerane.*
Clogham.	}	*Manahom.*
Galway.	}	*Garmaſton.*

Alſo a true Relation, by what meanes the Caſtle of *Limrick* was taken by Captain *Bartlet*, a Scotchman, to the great wonder of all the *Engliſh* Army, the Forces in the Caſtle being ſeven thouſand, and hee but five hundred foot, and one Troope of Horſe.

Ordered to be printed; *Ion. Bron. Cler. Parl.*

London, Printed for *T. Rider*, *Aug.* 27. 1642.

3.2 (*cont.*)

progressively marginalised ever since the conquest. High rents had meant that that little was left over for creature comforts, which might explain the high incidence of stealing garments and orher irems from the settlers in the first weeks of the rebellion. Again, as the years had passed, the amount of land held by the native Irish had declined sharply, as had the quality of that land retained in their

3.3 Lurid images of rebel atrocities in Ireland, almost all taken from continental publications, leave little to the imagination. Cambridge University Library.

3.3 (*cont.*)

3.3 (*cont.*)

possession, both of which sharpened resentment and bred rancour. And who is to deny the impact of the technicolour Counter-Reformation rhetoric of the Franciscans and Dominicans who were active in the plantation areas? Everywhere in the Europe of the Thirty Years' War, 'heretics', whether Protestant or Catholic (or Jewish), were denounced as pollutants who had to be cleansed from the community in order to render it healthy. Economic resentment, religious frenzy and visceral hatred of all things English and Scottish came together to produce the popular explosion in Ulster in October 1641. A comet had appeared in the night sky over Ulster, one that would reappear at intervals over the next four hundred years.

Confederate Ireland

In June 1642, at clerical instigation, the leaders of the Ulster rebellion agreed to take an oath of confederation (modelled on the Scottish covenant) with the Old English, and to bind themselves jointly to pursue common ends.[6] They also agreed to locate their headquarters in Kilkenny, far away from turbulent Ulster where the rebellion had broken out. The two groups had much in common, including a shared Catholicism, a naive trust in the king's promises and a dread

of what might lie in store should the English Parliament carry the day against Charles. However, these were not, on their own, sufficient for a confederation to be formed. The reality was that the Old English had little option but to throw in their lot with the native Irish. Their lands had already been listed for plantation by Wentworth and since Dublin Castle had quickly blamed *all* Irish Catholics for the rebellion, the Old English had already been pronounced guilty and, therefore, could expect no mercy. In addition, and no small consideration, the Ulster Irish were sweeping into the Pale and destabilising the region. Faced with a choice of joining in or being swept aside, it made sense for the Old English to form a confederation, situate its headquarters deep in their territory, draw up its objectives and thereby seek to control the direction in which it would move.

The Confederation of Kilkenny met for the first time in Kilkenny in October 1642, and it remained in existence until the fall of Kilkenny to Oliver Cromwell and his army in March 1650. However, the execution of Charles I in January 1649 is probably a better *terminus ad quem*, for the king's death deprived the Confederation of its main *raison d'être*. Modelled on the Irish Parliament, with a supreme council consisting of six members from each province and acting as an executive, and with a general assembly drawn from pre-existing parliamentary constituencies and functioning as a legislative body, the Confederation as a whole constituted both the last Home Rule parliament and independent government in Ireland until the 1920s. During its existence the Confederation raised taxes, recruited armies, maintained a navy, held prolonged negotiations with Charles's agents, conducted diplomatic relations with the chief Catholic powers in Europe and hosted that controversial figure, the papal nuncio, Archbishop Giovanni Battista Rinuccini. While the Confederation was eventually to succumb to internal rivalries and external attack, its existence for nearly eight years was a notable achievement and it represents, along with the later 'Patriot Parliament' of 1689, yet another of those quasi-legal representative assemblies that maintained, against all odds, the continuity of the parliamentary tradition in Ireland.

As the countdown to rebellion in October 1641 had shown, events in Ireland could not be understood without reference to developments in Scotland and, especially, in England, and this remained the case for the next sixty years. The *wars* of the three kingdoms began with the Scottish or Bishops' war of 1638, continued with the Irish rebellion of 1641 and finally engulfed England when Charles raised his standard at York in August 1642. These wars of many fronts, we may say, lasted until the final submission of the Irish confederates in 1653. There was, however, also a parallel crisis of the three kingdoms which was not so easily resolved, for it had long pre-dated the outbreak of the Bishops' war and it would continue until the creation of an English Protestant fiscal-military

state in the 1690s. It was a crisis that was not susceptible to a simple military solution, for it had multiple political, financial and religious origins. Was the English Parliament to be an event or an institution? How could the evident military incapacity of the Stuart state be remedied without recourse to absolutism? Was England to be a genuine Protestant power, rather than a sham one? What was Ireland's position to be in the multiple Stuart monarchy? The outcome of the wars of the three kingdoms would determine whether the multiple Stuart kingdom would survive; but the final resolution of the crisis that provoked the wars would take many decades.

The progress of the war in Ireland in the 1640s can be explained in a number of ways. One key to understanding is that provided by the ebb and flow of royal power in England in the 1640s. Between 1642 and 1645 the confederates devoted much time and effort to negotiations with Charles I, each side seeking to advance their cause. Charles sought a speedy cessation of hostilities, followed by a permanent peace in order to permit the royalist army in Ireland to return to England to engage his parliamentary foes. For their part, the confederates sought assurances from Charles on land titles, estates and on the position of the Catholic church. A cessation for one year was quickly agreed in September 1643, and subsequently extended, but a final peace proved elusive and by the time one was concluded in the summer of 1646 it was too late to make much of a difference, for Charles's military position in England was, by then, untenable.

The slow pace of the negotiations conducted by Charles's chief agent, the earl of Ormond, with the confederates over the years 1642 to 1645, can only be explained by the fact that Charles reckoned his initial position in England to be a strong one, and that therefore he need not offer much by way of concession to Irish papists. He also had to weigh up military advantage against adverse publicity in England, for any hint of an alliance with those who had allegedly perpetrated the wholesale massacre of Irish Protestants in 1641 would have been fatal to his cause in England. However, by 1645 Charles's cause was seemingly desperate: the entry of the Scots into the English Civil War on Parliament's side (September 1643), and the ensuing heavy royalist defeats at Marston Moor (July 1644) and Naseby (June 1645), persuaded him that only an Irish army acting on his behalf could turn the tide. His long-time negotiator, Ormond, had proved adept at prolonging discussions with the confederates while steadfastly avoiding commitments that might offer a propaganda victory to the parliamentary forces. Ormond's tactics were now redundant and he was to be sidelined. Charles dispatched his own man, the earl of Glamorgan, who in effect offered whatever the confederates wanted in return for an army to fight for the king in England. The sad reality was that the Glamorgan mission to the confederates was a measure of Charles's desperation rather than a change of heart; when he was in a position

to offer much, in the early years of the war, he preferred to stonewall, but after Naseby, when he was in no position to offer anything, much less deliver on his promises, he authorised everything to be put on the table. Embarassingly, when news leaked out of the terms Glamorgan had offered, especially those offering considerable improvement in the position of the Catholic church in Ireland, there was uproar in England and Charles was forced to repudiate him.

Another key to understanding developments in Ireland in the 1640s is that the dilemma of the Old English had by no means been resolved by the outbreak of hostilities. They had spent over forty years arguing that loyalty and Catholicism were compatible, and they had claimed to be loyal subjects of the king. Yet now they found themselves in rebellion with those whom they had long regarded as 'the king's Irish enemies'. They were very reluctant rebels, deeply uneasy at their alliance with the native Irish, and unhappy at not being able to fight openly for Charles. The shared Catholicism between the Old English and the native Irish was little more than skin deep, for the native Irish had clung to older practices – married clergy and the like – that had generally been purged from the more advanced 'Roman' Catholicism practised in the Pale.

In any case, there was ample scope for conflict between the two groups over monastic lands (of which the Old English, though not the native Irish, had been major beneficiaries), and indeed over the history of the past five hundred years. The Old English had, after all, grown great on the confiscation of native Irish lands and that had neither been forgotten nor forgiven. Moreover, while the Old English sought to win binding concessions from Charles, they well understood that delays in concluding a deal might render their military assistance ineffective, especially once the Scots added their firepower to that of Parliament. They also knew that Charles simply could not be trusted: as God's anointed one, he could lie, cheat and betray with impunity; his promises were meaningless – as Wentworth had learned to his cost. In short, the Old English dilemma of how to square loyalty and Catholicism, how to reconcile supporting the king's cause with opposing his wishes, so far from being resolved by the setting up of the Confederation of Kilkenny was in fact considerably sharpened.

Happily for the Old English, matters were no less complicated on the Protestant side, for the outbreak of the English Civil War in August 1642 had divided Protestant Ireland no less than Protestant England, and this division offers yet another key to understanding the events of the 1640s. Those Irish Protestants who adhered to the royalist side – Ormond was the most notable – could not but deplore the king's desire to conclude a deal with the confederates, and they would have their loyalty sorely tested by his attempt to recruit Irish Catholics for his armies in England and Scotland. In the event, when it came to the test, their loyalty quickly proved to lie with Protestant Ireland rather than with the king.

Rather than yield Dublin to Irish Catholic confederates who had concluded an alliance with his king, Ormond surrendered it in June 1647 to parliamentary forces under the command of Michael Jones.

Those Irish Protestants, mostly new English officials and settlers, who supported the parliamentary side had far fewer dilemmas to resolve. Their enemy was, in theory, the confederate Catholics, but any Catholic would do, for they were all presumed guilty and within a few days of the rebellion, volunteer forces commanded by Sir Robert Stewart in the Laggan area of Ulster, and Morrogh O'Brien (a fervent Protestant despite his native Irish origins), pledged themselves to Parliament and set out to roll back the rebels' territorial gains. In warfare that harked back to the darkest days of the wars of Elizabeth indiscriminate massacres of non-combatants, priests, prisoners and rebel soldiers were celebrated and scorched-earth tactics were adopted.

Early newssheets on the rebellion had clamorously announced disaster after disaster but, within months, the tide had begun to turn, and the message was now 'Exceeding Ioyfull Newes from IRELAND . . . wherein is declared what townes of note the English have taken from the rebells'. Moreover, the truce signed between Ormond and the confederates was entirely disregarded by those loyal to Parliament; indeed, any cessation of hostilities with papist rebels must surely have confirmed Parliament's suspicions that Charles was ready to deal with the devil, and it immediately issued orders that any Irish soldiers captured on English soil were to be promptly executed.

So far as those Irish Protestants who supported Parliament were concerned the chief cause for anxiety was the presence in north-east Ulster of a Scottish army of some ten thousand men commanded by Major-General Robert Munro. Admittedly, this force had been dispatched from Scotland, with the approval of the English Parliament, but once in Ulster it showed no disposition to move beyond the borders of that province, and there was rarely any cooperation between the settler-led Laggan army and the Scots under Munro. It was known that the Scots had long regarded all of eastern Ulster as theirs, and that they had designs on other adjacent areas. The static nature of Munro's campaigning throughout 1642 fuelled suspicions that the strengthening and consolidation of Scottish interests in Ulster took priority over both the punishment of Irish rebels and the amelioration of the plight of Irish Protestants.

The native Irish who had begun the rebellion had been quickly reinforced by the return to Ireland of thousands of swordsmen who had earlier fled Ireland to fight in Spanish regiments in the army of Flanders. At their head was Owen Roe O'Neill who had served for nearly forty years in the Spanish army, and who had recently defended Arras against the French. He was by far the most able military commander on the confederate side, and was to win an important

victory over Munro at Benburb, county Tyrone, in June 1646. His experience of war on the continent and his Counter-Reformation perspective led him almost immediately into the camp of the papal nuncio, Rinuccini, who arrived from Rome in October 1645 and who saw the Irish conflict as an episode in the continuing struggle between Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Rinuccini was, therefore, deeply suspicious of Old English eagerness to conclude a peace with the heretic king of England. He was equally distrustful of that other heretic, Charles's negotiaror, Ormond. Rinuccini forcefully reminded the confederates that they had sworn an oath of association which included a vow to restore the Catholic church to the status it enjoyed in the reign of Henry VIII. To his horror he saw that the Old English were quite prepared to abandon their oath if they could cut a deal with Charles, but he was resolved to keep them up to the mark, threatening with excommunication any who broke their undertakings. Owen Roe O'Neill sided with Rinuccini in this struggle, using his victory over Munro at Benburb to boost the nuncio's standing in Kilkenny. However, by this stage, matters were unravelling fast in England: even before Benburb, Charles had surrendered to the Scots, and, within a few months he was in the hands of English parliamentary forces. With Charles a prisoner, and the first civil war over, Parliament could turn its attention to Ireland.

Cromwell in Ireland

In June 1647 the Irish-born parliamentary commander, Michael Jones, with an army of two thousand men landed at Dublin.[7] Within a matter of weeks he had inflicted a crushing defeat at Dungan's Hill, near Dublin, on the Confederation's Leinster army commanded by Thomas Preston. For the next two years, until Cromwell arrived with his Ironsides in August 1649, matters in Ireland defy coherent desctiption. In December 1647 Charles escaped to the Scots, concluded an agreement by which he would introduce Presbyterianism throughout his kingdoms (ten years earlier he had tried to introduce Laudianism throughout his kingdoms) and promptly ignited the second civil war, this time with the Scots on his side. Meanwhile, relations between Rinuccini and the supreme council at Kilkenny had so far deteriorated that he had excommunicated its members for signing up to various truces with 'heretics'. With the defeat of the Scots by Cromwell, the capture of Charles, once again by parliamentary forces, and the announcement that he was to be put on trial for his life, it was clear that endgame had been reached. In February 1649, some weeks after Charles was executed, Rinuccini left for Rome, still bitter at the duplicitous Irish (Catholic and Protestant), and no doubt pleased thar Charles had been vanquished; a Protestant king

killed by fellow Protestants would surely scandalise all Europe. He left behind him a scene of military and political chaos. Highly improbable local alliances, grounded on the well-known maxim of *sauve qui peut*, were frequently concluded between erstwhile foes – for example, that at Derry between Owen Roe O'Neill, champion of the Ulster Irish, and Sir Charles Coote, hero of the Ulster settlers.

Cromwell's arrival at the head of some twenty thousand Ironsides in August 1649 and his ensuing swift campaign put a bloody end to all overt resistance. The storming of Drogheda and Wexford by his army and the ensuing massacres of their garrisons (including many English royalist soldiers) and of townspeople (mosrly Irish Catholic), to the number of nearly five thousand altogether, were exulted in by Cromwell as fit punishment for the atrocities of 1641 (even though neither town had been involved in the rebellion). In accordance with the loose laws of war then in existence (and but poorly adhered to in the period), Cromwell was within his rights in ordering the garrison at Drogheda to be put to the sword if they refused to surrender. At Wexford, however, if not Drogheda, negotiations were still continuing when the Cromwellian soldiers ran amok. However, a 'no quarter' order was far from mandatory and, in any case, the killing of civilians – clerical and lay – was generally reprobated (though in the Thirty Years' War examples abounded where this prohibition was ignored). Even in the supposedly 'civil' English Civil War, excesses could occur: following the fall of the town of Bolton in 1644, the royalist attackers slew the defenders and as many as seven hundred civilians. Cromwell and his army might have been determined on exemplary violence *pour décourager les autres* (as Ludlow, one of his commanders, claimed), but they were also stoked up by a lust for vengeance, a desire fuelled by the grotesque pamphlet literature on the massacres that had appeared since 1641.

Cromwell's actions at Drogheda and Wexford have subsequently guaranteed his place in that Irish pantheon reserved for those sent out from England to inflict military massacre on Irish civilians (Coroticus was the first to be installed). When Cromwell lefr Ireland in May 1650 he left behind a devastated country in which famine and disease, including bubonic plague, were rife. The eleven years of conflict had taken their toll: in the 1650s the economic writer, William Petty, making no distinction between the wars of Cromwell and those of the confederates, estimated that over 600,000 had died out of a population of about 1.5 million. Modern historians, more conservative, have estimated that between 20 and 40 per cent of the population perished during the years 1641 to 1651 (compared with casualty figures of 3.7 per cent for England and 6.0 per cent for Scotland). Perhaps a contemporary Gaelic poet summed it up best when he wrote simply, 'this was the war that finished Ireland'. With the end of overt and

organised resistance, the Cromwellians were now free to devise and implement whatever policies they chose for, as one of them put it, Ireland now lay like a 'white paper' before them. What would they write on that sheet of paper?

Cromwellian Ireland

'Cromwellian Ireland', the decade of the 1650s, during which Oliver Cromwell and his associates sought to govern Ireland has – to put it mildly – had a bad press, being synonymous in Catholic popular imagination with religious persecution, political outlawry, legal dispossession and forced transplantation of population.[8] Nor were Irish Protestants all that enamoured of the Cromwellians, for their fiscal policies proved onerous, their attempt at military rule by blow-in English captains was resented and their initial onslaught on the established church for complicity-through-negligence in the 1641 rebellion was resented. Admittedly, a legislative union between England and Ireland had quickly been declared, with a handful of Irish Members of Parliament going off to Westminster (and thus Cromwell could accurately be described as the first unionist); but his responsibility for the execution of Charles meant that he also possessed impeccable republican credentials; unsurprisingly, in modern Ireland neither Unionist nor republican has seen fit to acknowledge a debt to the Lord Protector, as he was to be titled in 1654.

Central to understanding the policies of Cromwell and the Cromwellians in Ireland is their experience of the civil wars of the 1640s, and the lessons that they drew from the favourable outcome to those conflicts. Cromwell, and the men in his army, were not mercenaries but rather ideological warriors who rejoiced in their Englishness and for whom, in their eyes, the victory vouchsafed to them by God was proof positive that they were on the side of godliness. Their triumph in Ireland, England and Scotland imposed a heavy burden on them to reconfigure church, state and society in these countries in strict accordance with God's plans, as revealed to them through prayer and biblical study. They must not rest on their laurels with military victory won; they had to go on to build that new Jerusalem, that city upon a hill which would act like a beacon to the ungodly, dazzling them, yet attracting them to the light.

In this scheme of things Ireland held a special place, both as challenge, given its perceived rooted papist culture, as exemplified by the horrid crimes of 1641, and as opportunity, given its clear lack of established or vested interests that might impede, as in England, the imposition of godly rule. Indeed the problems that the Cromwellians would encounter in England in the 1650s, and the corrosive disillusion that these gave rise to, made Ireland all the more important for the

implementation of godly policies. Ireland, following the devastation of the 1640s, it was claimed, was available for godly experiment in a way that England was not, for vested interests remained thick on the ground and, as the Cromwellians saw it, were determined to stifle any perceived moves towards religious, let alone, social and political reform.

For these reasons, the energy, and the urgency, which the Cromwellians initially brought to their policies in Ireland, and the vision that lay behind them, have led commentators to claim that their actions were altogether new and unprecedented. In fact there was little that was novel about their policies, though the determination with which they were pursued, marked off Cromwellian plans from earlier reform programmes, save perhaps those of Wentworth, barely ten years earlier. As before, the English government, having crushed rebellion in Ireland, now turned its attention to preventing a future one and this meant deploying those by-now familiar instruments of anglicisation – extensive colonisation, population transfers, religious change and the promotion of English language, customs, costume and law. And as had happened before to earlier reform packages for Ireland, announced to a roll of drums and a flourish of trumpets, the Cromwellian programme fell far short of success, not just for the familiar reasons of lack of money, the perennial dilemma of choice between coercion and persuasion, and ultimately a lack of will, but also because, contrary to official belief, Ireland was not, in fact, a 'white paper' on which anything could be written. Once again, those English governors determined to remake Ireland as England-in-a-minor-key quickly discovered that English aspirations sat ill with Irish realities.

Land, as ever, proved the touchstone. It was inevitable that military victory would be followed by an extensive confiscation of the lands of the 'guilty', whether royalists or rebels. The debts owed by Parliament, not including arrears of pay due to some 35,000 soldiers, exceeded £3 million, and Irish lands had been pledged throughout the 1640s as the way to clear those debts. Indeed, within months of the outbreak of the Irish rebellion, Charles had signed into law the Adventurers' Act (1642), which had authorised a massive confiscation of Irish lands to reimburse and reward those who would 'adventure' their money to suppress the rebellion, and Parliament had added further legislation to similar effect. By the 1650s all that remained for the Cromwellians to do was to determine who would forfeit all, or part of, their estates, and who would receive them.

In theory, by the Act of Settlement (1652), and Act of Satisfaction (1653), Catholic landowning east of the Shannon was almost entirely brought to an end. It has been estimated that some eighty thousand Catholics – and some Protestants, of whom the royalist marquis of Ormond was the most notable – were comprehended in these Acts, and were to lose everything, up to and including

their lives. Even those Catholic landowners who had shown 'constant good affection' during the wars of the 1640s were ordered to to remove themselves and their dependants to Connacht and to give up their lands in Munster or Leinster in exchange for much smaller estates in counties Galway, Roscommon, Mayo and Clare. A demand that all Catholics be corralled in Counacht was entertained for a time but, in a significant flexing of political muscle by the pre-1641 settlers, now dubbed the Old Protestants, this proposal was abandoned, largely on economic grounds. Catholic landowning was to be concentrated in Connacht, not because that was the poorest province (that distinction went to Ulster), but because it was the most Catholic, because plantation there had been deferred from Wentworth's time and because it was the furthest from the European mainland. A further security in this latter respect was provided by an enactment that those Catholics transplanted to Connacht were not permitted to reside within four miles of the coast in order to minimise the risk of foreign interventions. With Cromwellian thoroughness a new survey of the confiscated lands was undertaken so as to avoid both the exaggerations and understatements in acreage that had bedevilled earlier forfeitures. William Petty, the foremost political economist of his age, was deputed to undertake the task, and the resulting 'Down survey' of 1654–9 achieved, for the first time, a very high degree of cartographical accuracy. Indeed, Petty's maps were not generally superseded until the advent of the Ordnance Survey maps in the mid-nineteenth century.

Petty's survey had not begun when the order came for Catholic landowners, and their dependants, to remove themselves to Connacht. The original deadline of May 1654 was then put back to March 1655, and in May 1657 it was announced that the transplantation to Connachr had been completed. Inevitably, the results fell far short of what had been planned. Perhaps 1,900, mostly Old English, did in fact go to Connacht but as many again simply refused to move, and many of those who did travel west of the Shannon returned once times had become quieter. Religious settlement patterns in Wexford, for example, despite a precipitous drop in Catholic land titles in the 1650s, reveal a strong continuity between the 1640s and the 1790s: former owners, as had happened before, had simply become occupiers. The distribution of estates within Connacht, to Catholic landowners from elsewhere, was a shambles. Some did obtain the promised equivalence but a number received nothing, or much less than they were entitled to, and some who had been exempted by name from any compensation – the earl of Westmeath is a good example – ended up with over 11,000 acres. None the less, flawed as the distribution of estates was to prove, the overall conclusion was stark: the Cromwellians had achieved a revolutionary turnaround in landownership, with the Catholic share of the island of Ireland falling from around 60 per cent in 1640 to just 20 per cent in 1660. The transplantation

to Connacht (however incomplete it was) was to enter Catholic popular memory as a banishment of biblical proportions and, when elaborated and exaggerated in the nineteenth century, was held to be a crime that could be expiated only by the ending of landlordism itself.

The Cromwellians had hoped that, as with earlier plantation projects, new settlers would come to Ireland to avail themselves of the opportunities opened up by Catholic dispossession and internal exile and thus promote anglicisation; but few newcomers arrived. At most 15,000 out of the anticipated 35,000, divided between ex-soldiers and adventurers, took up the lands allocated to them. The speculators quickly merged their interests with the Old Protestants, while the servitors, surprisingly, soon revealed a marked propensity to wed Irish papists. No distinctive Cromwellian interest ever formed, and in the end, it was to be the pre-1641 Protestant settler population that proved to be the major beneficiary of the Cromwellian confiscations.

It was the existing Protestant population too that derived most advantage from the Cromwellian onslaught on Catholic power in the towns and boroughs, and on the Catholic religion itself. Cromwell had already announced that he would not permit the saying of the mass, and a vigorous persecution of Catholic clergy, especially Jesuits and friars, was undertaken. Earlier laws against them were revived, and there were many executions, expulsions to the continent and transportations to the West Indies. In theory, this ought to have left the way open for a concerted campaign of conversion, but in practice this did not happen. Lack of money, divisions among Protestants themselves as to the 'redeemability' of Irish papists, or indeed about the desirability of converting them at all, along with a lack of qualified preachers, all meant that no sustained conversion impulse emanated from the Cromwellians. By contrast, there was a firm determination to destroy Carholic economic and political authority.

In pursuit of these objectives Catholics were ordered out of the towns and barred from the corporations and the trade guilds, on the grounds that they posed a threat to security. This policy was enforced. Cork Catholics probably fared worst, for they had already been expelled from their city, once before, in 1646; this time the expulsion was done with greater severity. Over the coming years, Catholics were to filter back into the towns, but it is from the 1650s that urban Ireland, and especially Dublin and Cork, became a Protestant bastion, and it was to remain so until the 1840s. Other towns in which Catholics had held a commanding interest, such as Galway and Waterford, went into prolonged decline with the collapse of Catholic economic clout.

The expulsion of Catholics from the towns and boroughs and the destruction of their economic power had important political consequences. The Irish Parliament, with its members drawn disproportionately from the boroughs, now

passed completely into Protestant hands. In 1660 only one Catholic – Geoffrey Browne of Tuam, county Galway – was elected, but he did not take his seat. He was to be the last Catholic elected to a regular Parliament until Daniel O'Connell's triumph in the Clare election in 1828. In the literature, both historical and creative, as well as lurid and sensational, that purports to describe the iniquities of Cromwellian rule in Ireland, the themes of persecution, confiscation and transplantation bulk large; but arguably of more transcending significance for the future was the emergence of the Irish Parliament as a wholly Protestant institution. Irish Protestants' monopoly of political power, a direct product of their domination of urban life and of their ownership of over 80 per cent of the land of Ireland, was to be the central foundation of their ascendancy for nearly two hundred years.

With the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658 Cromwellian rule began to unravel, first in England and then in Ireland. There was a real danger of a further civil war in 1659, as rival army commanders manoeuvred for position, but this prospect was averted, at least for the time being, with the return of Charles II as king. In retrospect the Cromwellians, for all their ringing declarations of reform and their determination that only the godly would rule, fitted into a well-established pattern of English government in Ireland, in which high-flying aspirations were brought crashing down to earth by Irish realities. The Old Protestants had been able to shape the settlement of Ireland in ways that suited their interests, for Ireland, despite the destruction of the Cromwellian war, and contrary to Cromwellian forecasts, lay open to reform. The zealously reforming government of Charles Fleetwood, ultimately gave way after 1655 to the more pragmatic, less programmatic, administration of Henry Cromwell, Oliver's son. Persecution of Catholic clerics slackened off, military government was scaled down and grandiose plans for large-scale population transfers were shelved. The Old Protestants took back Dublin Castle and took control of the Irish Parliament. Whether they would retain their gains on the return of Charles II had yet to be determined.

Restoration Ireland

In April 1660, in an obvious propaganda exercise, Charles II issued the Declaration of Breda to his soon-to-be subjects in the three kingdoms.[9] In effect, he promised that, on his return to his kingdoms, he would behave himself. Retribution would be minimal, pardon would be given to those who had backed the parliamentary cause and, famously, liberty would be offered to those of tender consciences. On 29 May 1660 Charles made his triumphant formal entry