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Rebels, settlers and violence: rebellion in western Munster 1641-2

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REBELS, SETTLERS AND VIOLENCE: REBELLION IN WESTERN MUNSTER, 1641-2

A Thesis

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Louisiana State University and
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by

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ABSTRACT

This study challenges current historical assumptions about the nature, scope, and timeframe of the 1641 Irish Rebellion in Kerry, Clare, and Limerick counties in western Munster. Placing the start of the popular rebellion in these counties around 1 January 1642, the beginning of unrest is set several months further back. In the process of analyzing the actions of popular and organized rebels alike, the motivations for rebellion are characterized as political and social rather than religious. In turn, seventeenth-century Irish society was transformed from the traditional narrative of a rigid, religiously-divided society into something far more complex and amorphous, with emphasis placed on the importance of local situations, in particular the successes or failures of plantation policy and the existence of substantial Protestant populations. Though the rebellion would later coalesce along confessional lines after the October 1642 Confederation of Kilkenny, the initial period of rebellion demonstrates that certain areas of Ireland by 1641 had produced religiously heterogeneous societies that served to slightly soften attitudes between rebels and their Protestant neighbors.

INTRODUCTION

15 January 1642. Near the small town of Glanaroughty, in county Kerry, William Seames was having a bad week. An English Protestant, Seames was an enterprising yeoman farmer in the region; he loaned out cows, heifers, horses and cash to his neighbors – English and Irish, Catholic and Protestant – as he and others had done for years in both the settler and native communities. He had a wife, several children, and an extra lease outside of Glanaroughty which he farmed apart from his own.¹ By the night of the fifteenth that life, which Seames had hewn for himself in the isolated southwest of Ireland, had been turned on its head by the rebellion which would eventually affect the entire island, culminating in the Confederation of Kilkenny, Catholic Ireland's most formidable attempt at an independent government under the auspices of the British monarch.

The trouble for Seames started three days prior on 12 January, when a small band of rebels led by Fynnen McDermod and Donogh McFynnen, both native Irishmen, rose up in rebellion in county Kerry, riding through the countryside and stealing whatever they could find; they took cows, horses, and money from Seames and his debtors – even hides, hats, hat-bands, and a book of accounts from Robert Sharde.² Within the next few days—perhaps even hours—news began reaching Seames from his neighbors and fellow farmers of the robberies that were devastating the countryside. The cows and horses that had remained at his lease outside of Glanaroughty had been taken. The goods and belongings of many Protestant settlers such as the Burrell family, the local merchant Henry Coply, and the gentleman Thomas Dight had all been pilfered by the McDermod and McFynnen gang. The economic relationships interwoven within

¹ Deposition of William Seames, (Trinity College of Dublin, Manuscript Series MS 828, fol. 198r-v).

² William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198r). Deposition of Robarte Sharde, (TCD, MS 828, 248r).

the isolated community crumbled as a result. When William Seames was asked in September 1643 by Phillip Bisse's traveling commissioners to put down in writing his experience during the rebellion, the first thing he recounted was the debts lost to him as a result of these robberies: James and Samuel Burrell owed him £100; the merchant Henry Coply and John Bartholomew were indebted to Seames; even the two principal rebels named by Seames were defaulting on some sort of debt incurred to him. All of those named by Seames, owing by his estimation a total of £487, were either "out in actual rebellion [or] utterly disenabled by means of this rebellion. Therefore, this deponent can get no satisfaction from them."³

Things took a decided turn for the worse for Seames on the fifteenth when McFynnen and McDermod returned to the Glanaroughty area with a larger band of men, either in concert with, or as a part of, Captain Sugan's (Florence McFynnen MacCarthy) larger rebel force. Early in the day, an errant shot was fired into James Burrell's house by an unknown rebel, striking Burrell's wife Katherine and killing her. Later Seames, his wife, their children, and others totaling what Seames estimated at 140 Protestants of all ages were stripped naked by the rebels. When Seames demanded to know why he and British Protestant settlers in general were being treated so roughly, Fynnen McDermod replied "that what they did they had the King's hand and seal for it."⁴

The Wars of the Three Kingdoms, the British Civil Wars, or whichever way one typifies the unrest of the late 1630s and 1640s in Britain was undoubtedly the "greatest concentration of armed violence to take place in the recorded history of the islands of Britain and Ireland."⁵

William Seames' experience was not atypical of what many English Protestant settlers

³ William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198r).

⁴ William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198v).

⁵ John Morrill, "Introduction," in *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland, and Ireland 1638-1660*, edited by John Kenyon and Jane H. Ohlmeyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xix.

experienced during the early period of the rebellion in Ireland in late 1641 and through 1642.

Robberies and violence like those related by Seames led to a general, island-wide breakdown in social order as Irish Catholics revolted against all people, places, and things English and Protestant.

This breakdown, however, was by no means universal or uniform in the way it manifested itself. With the original rising in Ulster, authority there was the first to erode; popular unrest quickly spread to western Leinster as local Catholic lords gathered arms and men to join the rebellion and the crown's Protestant officials such as the Marquis of Ormond tried to counter its spread. By spring 1642, in part due to the stalemate between Charles I and the English Parliament, the rebellion had quickly reached every corner of the island and Catholics—both Old English and Irish—were attacking English Protestant institutions and Protestants themselves.

This initial period of the rebellion, from its outbreak on 22 October 1641 until the Confederation of Kilkenny united the island's Catholics under an alternative government in October 1642, is commonly passed over in histories of the period with ominous allusions to the “initial period of confusion and chaos.”⁶ Rebel forces in this period working toward the creation of a Catholic Ireland are hard to define and even harder to differentiate from opportunistic individuals interested only in robbing Protestants; rebel armies appropriating goods for the war effort and bands of thieves are virtually indistinguishable in the historical record. This disorderly period will be the focus of this study, primarily in the three westernmost counties of Munster: Clare, Limerick, and Kerry. These were chosen for several reasons. First, western Munster is understandably left out of most studies of the period. Most of the rebellion's action takes place

⁶ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649*, (Portland: Four Courts Press, Ltd., 1999), 11.

in Ulster and Leinster; even the majority of important events in Munster occur in the east near Leinster or around Waterford and Cork. The lack of focus on the area has led to its events being described in sweeping generalizations, if mentioned at all. Furthermore, the depositions in Munster are unique, as they were taken by a traveling commission headed by Phillip Bisse. Henry Jones, the commission's head, remained in Dublin where the depositions of the other three Irish provinces were compiled from refugees who had entered Dublin hoping to find safe passage back to England.⁷ The Bisse depositions examined here are the only accounts taken from British settlers who remained in their local areas, and therefore have fewer embellishments than those taken by Jones for the other three counties and the information the deponents give is more credible. Finally, although Nicholas Canny has recently studied Tipperary, Waterford, and Cork exhaustively, eastern Munster has largely been avoided.⁸

This study attempts to answer two questions; first, what happened in these counties during this initial period of rebellion? While the rebellion's most important events took place in Ulster, Kilkenny and Dublin, conflicts occurred island-wide. Forces were raised in the name of the rebellion by Catholic landowners and peasants alike and English Protestants were robbed and murdered in every single county. Learning what occurred will not only add to the local histories of western Munster, but by examining its farthest fringe in its earliest stage will also portray the rebellion's impressive reach and organization. The second question is broader and harder to answer: What was Irish society like in the seventeenth century, and how was it affected by the rebellion? Indeed, our only first-hand accounts of the rebellion, depositions from ordinary

⁷ Joseph Cope, *England and the 1641 Irish Rebellion*, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2009), 34-36.

⁸ Canny's article ("Religion, Politics, and the Irish Rising of 1641," in Judith Devlin and Ronan Fanning, ed., *Religion and Rebellion*, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997), 40-70) specifically covers western Leinster and Waterford, and the Youghal area in particular depth. He also covers Tipperary extensively and Cork as well in his eighth chapter of *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). He touches on Limerick and draws only partial from Kerry and Clare. This study is largely designed to fill the gap he has left.

British Protestants, portray not only the events which occurred, but also give us clues about the heterogeneous communities that resulted from approximately sixty years of active English colonization and the nuanced relationships and attitudes which developed therein.

It is perhaps important now to also explain what this study is not designed to do. As the three counties in Munster examined here are more isolated (Kerry and Clare, especially) and less planted than their eastern counterparts, the conclusions drawn in this study should not necessarily be extrapolated to Cork, Tipperary, or Waterford – much less the entire island. While recent historical trends have shown that the political motivations and events of all of Charles I's dominions are interrelated and should be considered holistically (e.g., the conflict is increasingly called the 'Wars of the Three British Kingdoms' rather than the 'English Civil War'), to assume, in such a localized study as this one concerning interactions between individual settlers and rebels, that what happened to William Seames or Robert Sharde in county Kerry could be related to events in Oxford or London would be foolhardy. Furthermore, Munster had been experiencing British plantation since the 1580s; the settler/native communities developed there were unique even within Ireland: plantations were far younger and Catholics and Protestants more divided elsewhere. While certain aspects of the rebellion and community interaction are shared (indeed, these similarities are often the only evidence we have of a rebel force's connections with the wider rebellion), the conclusions drawn here are often specific to Munster or even to the individual counties themselves; inferences to other areas should be made with caution.

Due in large part to these differences in local conditions in Ireland, even within a small area like western Munster, this study is organized regionally. The first chapter provides the broader political and historical background for the events of the next three chapters. Included is

the general narrative of British hegemony in Ireland up to the rebellion, and its major events until the 1643 one-year cessation of hostilities signed between the Marquis of Ormond and the Confederation of Kilkenny. The discussion is necessarily focused mainly on the history and events of Munster. Chapters two, three, and four relate the events of Kerry, Limerick, and Clare, respectively. The actions of rebel forces and the popular violence (if any) in each county are detailed and, perhaps more meaningfully, important aspects of seventeenth-century Irish society such as Irish Catholic attitudes in 1641 and Munster's religious awareness in general are inferred from the language and actions of both the rebels and the Protestant deponents who gave the accounts.

What emerges from this analysis is a rich, complex society which, while classified along confessional lines, did not always adhere to these simplistic categorizations. Radical stereotypes of Catholics painted by Protestants and the reverse had long outstripped the realities in both England and Ireland. Stories of barbaric and bloodthirsty Catholics had circulated for decades in England; they became the quintessential monster in any good Protestant's closet. Catholics were, by the 1640s, the proverbial "other" in Protestant British society. Irish and Old English Catholics were considered complicit in the rebellion and guilty of the acts of their fellow Catholics based on confessional affinity alone. Interestingly, religion was used far less as an excuse for violence and robbery than ethnicity or nationality; even in cases in which the category was deployed, it is clear that there was no demarcation made between the settlers' religious persuasion and his or her ethnic background. Protestant religion and English birth had collapsed into one encompassing classification. The political disenfranchisement and the confiscation of land that had been owned by Gaelic Irish landowners as little as fifty years ago was what the Irish rebels—especially the Irish participating in popular violence—were rebelling against.

It was only after the Confederation defined itself in October 1642 as characteristically Catholic that the rebellion attained its distinctly religious flavor. Although religious practices and symbols were what various Catholic priests attempted to direct popular violence toward, this type of confessional-based violence was rare amongst rebels acting of their own accord in the first year. As can be seen in William Seames' account given at the beginning of this chapter, it was not his family's Protestant prayer books that the McFynnens took, but their horses and clothes; it was not Robert Sharde's Anglican Bible that the rebels stole, but his book of accounts. Rather than the religiously-driven wanton destruction of Protestantism that John Temple described, what the Irish were actually attempting to achieve was a reversal of English interests in Ireland, and a return to a traditionally Irish way of life. That Catholicism was a necessary part of this proposed new Ireland was a result of the conjunction of religious and ethnic classifications into two disparate groups, one English and Protestant, the other Irish and Catholic. In contrast to the strictly political conflict in England, where neutrality was possible, the pervasive nature of religion in seventeenth-century Britain (and Europe in general) meant that any conflict between the two sides would necessarily be placed in a religious context. Indeed, the Old English Catholics, who balked when rebellion first broke out, were forced to join the rebellion in response to it being couched by Parliament and Protestants as a religious conflict, when in fact the rebellion was an uprising by Irish Catholics against the political disenfranchisement and property confiscations of the last century. The sectarian nature of the initial conflict was due to common seventeenth-century classification methods, not to legitimate grievances of a religious nature.

Finally, this study will also strike down some of the generalizations made about the rebellion's events in these remote areas. The date of the beginning of unrest will be pushed

farther back. Whereas spring and summer are often the vague dates given for the beginning of unrest and hostilities in Munster, this study will conclusively show that by 1 January 1642 the rebellion had reached these three counties and affected the residents sufficiently that authority had essentially dissolved. Secondly, the commonly held notion that popular violence was somehow absent in Munster will be challenged. While Kerry follows this rule, Clare and Limerick experienced popular violence and robberies not directed by the “official” rebel forces in those counties. Though these counties certainly did not see the same level of violence as Ulster or Leinster, they experienced enough to be considered an important aspect of these counties’ rebellion experience.

This study will portray—be it through local Irishmen and women sheltering their Protestant neighbors from attack, Protestant settlers freely converting to Catholicism, or simply the conduct of rebels upon capturing British strongholds or robbing British households—that the settler societies which evolved in Munster were far more complex and amorphous than is generally considered. However, to better understand the popular violence experienced in Munster and Ireland in general, we must first examine the situations and relationships from which the rebellion, begun on 22 October 1641 when Sir Phelim O’Neill took Charlemont and Dungannon castles in Ulster, sprang forth.

1 BACKGROUND AND EVENTS

At the beginning of the twelfth century Ireland was a largely homogenous, Gaelic population that lived primarily as nomadic herdsmen.⁹ The Norman invasion of Ireland in the 1170s established the entire island as a possession of the English Crown by the end of the century. This slowly gave way to a policy of feudal colonization through the granting of land titles to Norman lords and barons.¹⁰ As the decades passed, these Norman lords governed their fiefs in Ireland independently of the English kings, despite still technically owing allegiance to the English monarchy. In reality, the English Crown had very little say in what happened in Ireland outside of the area immediately around Dublin. Furthermore, the imposition of an English ruling class gave Ireland a new, multiethnic edge which was unlike any other societal dynamic in the British Isles.

The next and perhaps most important addition to the socio-religious dynamics in early modern Irish history had its origins in England. The first important event, Henry VIII's insistence upon the whole of England breaking with Rome to satisfy his need for divorce, created a religious divide between the English king and the Old English lords who ruled Ireland in his name. Secondly, Henry's 1541 assumption of the throne of Ireland, making Ireland a *kingdom* rather than a *lordship*, indirectly announced his intention to rule Ireland more directly. Although these events were not the genesis of many of the actions which shaped Ireland from the mid-sixteenth through the seventeenth century, they created both the religious dichotomy and the political impetus which often influenced English policies and attitudes in Ireland for several hundred years.

⁹ For a more in-depth view of Ireland and Irish society in the Middle Ages see: Michael Richter, *Medieval Ireland: The Enduring Tradition*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1988).

¹⁰ Karl S. Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 4.

One such policy, created by Henry VIII as a result of his need to not only have a stronger hand but a more legitimate rule in Ireland, is commonly referred to as surrender and regrant. Surrender and regrant was the English monarchy's attempt to reinforce the feudal relationships between English king and Irish or Old English lords which had been ignored for centuries.¹¹ Through this policy, Irish and Old English lords who often claimed to be the sole proprietors of their Irish lands were allowed to keep their possessions unmolested if they first symbolically surrendered that land to the English monarchy. In return, these nobles had their land granted back to them at the king's courtesy along with a new, English title. This subtle change was part of the attempted anglicization of the Irish ruling class. As Brendan Kane has recently pointed out, this move to appropriate the Irish and Old English ruling classes was due to the "significant points of social and cultural contact between England and Gaelic and Gaelicized Ireland."¹² These cultural similarities (e.g., Gaelic family names are remarkably similar in both form and function to English titles) were, according to Kane, the entire reason surrender and regrant was viewed as viable in place of an economically debilitating conquest. Indeed, Kane states that Anthony St. Leger, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the 1540s and key English proponent of the policy, "looked upon the Irish nobility as a co-optable one."¹³

This policy worked with varying degrees of success in Ireland, with some Old English and/or Irish families eager to end their ambiguous relationship with the English monarchy, while others looked at it as an encroachment on their sovereignty. In Munster, for example, two families that are integral to the story of the rebellion took advantage of this opportunity. The Old English Boyle family surrendered their claims to sole possession of their south Munster lands

¹¹ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 6.

¹² Brendan Kane, *The Politics of Honour in Britain and Ireland, 1541-1641*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 21.

¹³ Kane, *The Politics of Honour*, 27, 3-27.

and Richard Boyle became the Earl of Cork. The Gaelic Irish O'Brien family, ancestral rulers of the isolated province of Thomond (modern Clare), also accepted fealty under the English monarch and received the Earldom of Thomond. These families would also, though not immediately, eventually convert to Protestantism in an attempt to curry even more favor with the English court.

While surrender and regrant, as Kane has shown, was based upon reasonable premises, its weakness came in its failure to recognize the recalcitrant nature of Old English and Gaelic Irish nobles and their fiercely independent past. The failure of the policy led to numerous rebellions (the Desmond rebellions of the 1570s and 80s in Munster being perhaps the best example of reaction against the imposition of English rule) and demonstrated that Gaels could not be coerced into surrendering their independence. It also showed that the Old English, despite identifying with England as their ancestral homeland, maintained major differences of opinion with the Crown's policies, most notably in the monarchy's intolerance of the Catholic faith.

After the Desmond rebellions and the realization of Surrender and Regrant's inability to bring Ireland to heel inexpensively, the English crown decided if it could not coopt or create a docile and prosperous Ireland, it would simply import one. England now considered the best way of avoiding further rebellion, which would have to be crushed militarily, was colonization.¹⁴ The "policy of plantation" borne from this realization became the most lasting and important Tudor policy with respect to seventeenth-century events.¹⁵ The vast, confiscated lands of the Earl of Desmond presented the English crown with the opportunity to settle parts of Ireland with an industrious and obedient English population, and throughout the 1580s the monarchy began

¹⁴ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 10-11.

¹⁵ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 9.

leasing the fertile Munster farmland to lords, commercial groups, and other adventurers under the pretense that the land would be settled strictly with English settlers, and all Catholics—be they Irish or Old English—would be forced off the land.

The machinations of the Munster plantation have been detailed by Michael MacCarthy-Morrogh, but perhaps the most important lesson that can be gleaned from the experiment is that it largely failed. The potential rewards and promised lands advertised across England were not enough to entice settlers to the often tumultuous island that was full—as many English had been taught for years—of barbaric Papists and Gaels eager to taste English blood.¹⁶ Furthermore, the forcing of Irish tenants off their land by plantation created a vast pool of laborers and potential tenants who did not have to be moved from England. The more unscrupulous adventurers were willing to take advantage of this, often renting their land back to the same Irish families they had forced off at rents three or four times higher. By 1592, nearly a decade after the initial plans of plantation had been put forth, these developments forced the English crown to decrease its goal of planted English tenants in Munster from 577,645 to 202,099.¹⁷ This number also proved far too unreasonable, as historians' best estimates suggest that perhaps a tenth of that number of Protestants resided in Munster at the beginning of the rebellion in 1641. However, it is harder to estimate how many settlers had reached Munster by the end of the sixteenth century, as the entire settlement and its infrastructure was nearly completely destroyed by the rebellions which struck the province in October 1598.¹⁸

¹⁶ Michael MacCarthy-Morrogh, *The Munster Plantation: English Migration to Southern Ireland 1583-1641*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Most pamphlets which circulated in England about Irish and Catholics in general were little more than hysterical propaganda. Joseph Cope, *England and the 1641 Irish Rebellion*, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 12.

¹⁸ Toby Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760* (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, 2004), 3. Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 13.

While the haphazard enterprise failed for various reasons, some in Munster found ways to profit.¹⁹ The Earl of Cork, who became one of most important actors in Irish politics in the first half of the seventeenth century (up to his embarrassment at the hands of Lord Deputy Wentworth), created most of what would become his Munster-based empire by shrewdly acquiring the confiscated lands piecemeal.²⁰ After gaining the lease on 20,000 acres in the original Munster plantation, Cork spent the last decade of the sixteenth century securing numerous unsuccessful plantations that were originally granted to adventurers and nobles who had either managed the land poorly or did not have the resources to complete their own objectives.²¹ This period culminated in his purchase of Sir Walter Raleigh's 42,000 acres in 1602, the largest original grant of land over which Raleigh had been an exceptionally poor steward.²² Through Cork's shrewd buys and exploitation of Irish land, labor, and resources, he developed a large economic base from which he launched his political career. Cork's personal finances were in such good order that when the rebellion began in 1641, he immediately spent vast quantities of money to restock and rework the local defenses of the settlements and cities under his purview.²³

While the failure of the Munster plantation, in part due to planter incompetence and in part due to open rebellion, allowed men like Cork to amass vast tracts of land at considerable discounts, for the English Crown it provided lessons. The crown now realized the immense

¹⁹ While the reasons above are what most historians have pointed to as the causes for failure, including MacCarthy-Morrogh (*The Munster Plantation*) and Nicholas Canny (*Making Ireland British*), most contemporary commentators claimed—perhaps most vociferously Edmund Spenser—that failure was ultimately due to the English's failure to first clear out the Irish, whether by deportation or annihilation (Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 13).

²⁰ Hugh F. Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland 1633-41: a Study in Absolutism*, (Manchester: The University Press, 1959). Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 11-12.

²¹ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 313-327.

²² Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 12.

²³ Jane Ohlmeyer, "The Civil Wars in Ireland," in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *The Civil Wars: a Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 75.

amount of time, money, and manpower necessary if plantation—or any other English settlement of Ireland—was to be successful.²⁴ These hard-learned lessons would be applied in later plantations, because although the plantation of the Desmond lands was one of the first attempted English colonizations of Ireland, it was certainly not the last.²⁵ The 1607 Flight of the Earls, where several Ulster lords (including the patriarchs of the O'Neill and O'Donnell clans) fled to the continent for fear of being arrested by English authorities, opened up vast stretches of territory in Ulster which could be leased to adventurers. Thomas Wentworth attempted in the 1630s to confiscate and plant the lands of the Earl of Clanricard in Connacht despite the Earl being an obedient subject of the Crown and having ironclad titles to his lands.

Plantation was increasingly seen by the English crown as a way of preventing further rebellion by marginalizing and removing the economic base of past and potentially future enemies. Settlement itself was not limited strictly to English Protestants; many leading Scottish families took advantage of plantation lands offered by the crown and settled on the coast of Ulster in lands that had been confiscated after the Tyrone Rebellion ended in 1603 or abandoned in the Flight of the Earls. The Scots in general settled the Irish land better than their English counterparts, largely due to the good relations and contact that had been kept up for centuries between the MacDonnells of Ulster and the MacDonalds of western Scotland.²⁶ Though the Scots are relatively inconsequential to our story in western Munster, they become an important piece in the story of the rebellion, as Robert Monro's disciplined Covenanter army scored

²⁴ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 22.

²⁵ Leix and Offaly (renamed King's County and Queen's County, respectively) were partially planted during the mid-sixteenth century, though not to the extent that Desmond's former lands in Munster were. G.A. Hayes-McCoy, "Conciliation, Coercion, and the Protestant Reformation, 1547-71," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, ed., *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 77-79.

²⁶ David Stevenson, *Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates: Scottish-Irish Relations in the mid-Seventeenth Century*, (Antrim: W & G Baird Ltd., 1981), 8-11.

significant victories against the Confederates while the English were concerned primarily with their own civil war.

Politically, the first half of the seventeenth century created most of the disenfranchisement of Catholics that helped spur the rebellion. With the accession of James I in 1603, both Catholics and Protestants in Ireland felt they had reason to rejoice. Protestants assumed that James, a Protestant from birth, would consolidate what late sixteenth-century plantation and conquest had begun. Catholics, meanwhile, assumed that the son of Mary Stuart would be more sympathetic to the interests of a religion his mother had openly practiced. In reality, James' policies and attitude toward Ireland were similar to Elizabeth's; Ireland was a nuisance at its worst, a source of revenue at its best. The major changes of the first half of the seventeenth century came from inside Ireland itself. Districts were packed and rearranged by Sir Arthur Chichester and the Irish Privy Council to create the first Protestant majority in the Irish House of Commons in the landmark 1613-15 parliamentary sessions.²⁷ Catholics, both Old English and Irish, despite still owning the majority of land in Ireland, would never again have control of the Irish Parliament as it existed under the English Crown.

When Charles I succeeded to the throne in 1625, Catholics in Ireland again felt they had reason to be optimistic, but results proved ambiguous. Though the Graces of 1628 which “articulated [Catholic] concerns for the security of land tenure and requested that the crown not only guarantee existing rights of ownership but end its policy of plantation” were requested by the Old English in Ireland and initially promised by Charles, their implementation was never

²⁷ Aidan Clarke with R. Dudley Edwards, “Pacification, Plantation, and the Catholic Question, 1603-23,” in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, ed., *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 214-217.

realized.²⁸ Blocked both by the Irish Privy Council and the Irish Parliament itself, Charles' conviction on the issue diminished significantly once peace was made with Spain and his need for Irish money dissipated. Regardless of the concessions Charles made at times when it was politically and financially advantageous, Catholics in Ireland and Britain were still, as a general rule, discriminated against; Charles himself described them as "half-subjects."²⁹

Catholics again were thrown into a state of uncertainty when in 1632 Viscount Thomas Wentworth, elevated as the first Earl of Strafford in January 1640, became Lord Deputy of Ireland and ruled, in his own words, "thoroughly." Though he personally abhorred Catholicism, Wentworth was a servant of Charles first. He refused to favor Protestant policies and goals explicitly unless it supported the aims of the English crown.³⁰ Instead, he favored a sophisticated and initially successful approach of playing factions—Old English and New English, both and the Irish, Catholic and Protestant—off one another in order to gain the largest advantage both for the English crown and for his own person as Charles' deputy in Ireland. While Wentworth's strategies turned Ireland, for the first time ever, into a revenue source rather than an economic drain for the English Crown, he did it at the expense of public favor.³¹

In March 1640 Wentworth, still very much in control of parliamentary events in Ireland, attempted to secure from the Irish Parliament grants to pay for a 9,000-man army and an additional six subsidies to be paid to the King over a three-year span. The House of Commons,

²⁸ John Kenyon with Jane Ohlmeyer, "The Background to the Civil Wars in the Stuart Kingdoms," in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *The Civil Wars: a Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland 1638-1660*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14.

²⁹ Patrick J. Corish, "The Rising of 1641 and the Catholic Confederacy, 1641-5," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, ed., *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 298.

³⁰ Kenyon with Ohlmeyer, "The Background," in *The Civil Wars*, 14.

³¹ For a more extensive view into Wentworth himself and his rule as Lord Deputy in Ireland, see: Kearney, *Strafford in Ireland*; J.F. Merritt ed. *The Political World of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, 1621-1641*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

after some debate (Old English members vehemently opposed any subsidies without the implementation of the Graces), granted four subsidies while also drafting a letter professing endless loyalty on behalf of all of Ireland for Charles I. Indeed, when Strafford left later in 1640 for England, the only news from Ireland was peaceful: the Protestant clergy who sat in the upper house had approved Strafford's original six subsidies plan, and the arrangements he had made to raise new troops were going smoothly.³²

This apparent placidity, however, was short-lived. Wentworth, before his departure, had initiated the collection of the first subsidy without the Commons' approval, causing uproar. Sir Christopher Wandesford, Wentworth's deputy whom he left in charge, was forced to prorogue Parliament until 10 October 1640 to avoid the ratification of a petition demanding the government's attention to forty-four grievances against Wentworth and his policies. When Parliament did reconvene, tempers were no cooler and no official business was transacted, as the Commons demanded a reduction in the amount of each subsidy and the reinstatement of boroughs which Wentworth had gerrymandered away to ensure a parliamentary majority in the government's favor. Wentworth's skillful manipulation of Ireland's fractious ethno-religious groups was breaking down. New English and Old English, at odds in the Irish Parliament since the Protestant settlers had first arrived, were briefly united, and only in their universal opposition to Strafford's policies.³³ Strafford had few friends in England, and the personal empire he had built in the Crown's name in Ireland was used against him. The 9,000-man army he had commissioned in Ireland became a symbol of what Charles' opponents saw as the Crown's increasingly Catholic leanings and its designs against the English Parliament. Strafford was put

³² Aidan Clarke, "The Breakdown of Authority, 1640-41," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and F.J. Byrne, ed., *A New History of Ireland: Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 271-5.

³³ Martyn Bennett, *The Civil Wars in Britain & Ireland 1638-1651*, (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing Inc., 1997), 82-83.

on trial for treason, and was later executed in May 1641 via a bill of attainder. Charles, eager to have Irish money and troops, sacrificed Strafford and made further concessions to the Irish Parliament, including several which would guarantee Catholic land titles.³⁴ The only grievance that Charles outright refused to consider was the Irish Parliament's assertion of its right to determine the laws of Ireland with Charles' assent, independent of the English Parliament.³⁵

Ironically, despite the ascendancy of the Protestant New English population in both political power and land ownership, only about 10% of the population was of English Protestant stock. In Munster in particular, there were only approximately 22,000 first or second generation New English settlers in Munster. These settlers tended to cluster around the major cities of Cork, Youghal, Tallow, Bandon, Kinsale, and to a lesser extent, Limerick, whose urban and outlying rural land was still dominated by primarily Catholic, Old English citizens.³⁶ Despite the confiscations, Catholics still owned approximately 59% of Irish land at 1641. Considering that by 1688 Catholics had only retained 22% and that that number was further reduced to 14% by 1691, it is clear that the attempted coup by Irish and Old English Catholics in the 1640s represents a pivotal moment in Irish political and religious history.³⁷

³⁴ By all accounts Strafford acquitted himself well in the trial, revealing the flimsiness of his enemies' claims. Detailed accounts of his trial and the end of his life can be found in: John H. Timmis, *Thine is the Kingdom: the Trial for Treason of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, First Minister of King Charles I and Last Hope of the English Crown*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1976).

³⁵ Clarke, "The Breakdown...", in *A New History*, 277-86.

³⁶ Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland*, 3. Aidan Clarke (*The Old English in Ireland 1625-42* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), 16) claims the Old English still dominated most inland towns by 1642, including Limerick, despite its location at the mouth of the Shannon estuary and its importance as a port city. Nicholas Canny (*Making Ireland British*, 336) disputes this, claiming Limerick was just as dominated by New English settlers as the towns along the Bandon, Blackwater, and Youghal rivers in Cork and Waterford counties. Most likely, although New English settlers may have held the upper hand politically in the Limerick area, Catholic landowners still maintained a considerable foothold in and around the town, especially when considering the alacrity with which Catholic troops were raised in the Limerick area as the rebellion spread into Munster.

³⁷ Toby Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland*, 4. Also, Jane Ohlmeyer, "Introduction: A Failed Revolution?" in *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641-1660*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22. Because of a general lack of surviving evidence about Gaelic land distribution it is hard to come up with a definitive assessment of Irish land redistribution at any point in the seventeenth century. Estimates often range depending on the time of

The lack of any real political power for the majority of the population was the proverbial powder keg which required a match. This was provided by a group of heavily indebted Gaelic Catholic nobles and lords in Ulster. The story of the conspirators of the Ulster rebellion has been told numerous times, and consists of two parts.³⁸ After a spring and summer of covert planning, Phelim O'Neill and a group of co-conspirators decided to rise in Ulster, taking as many English-controlled fortresses and towns as possible. Simultaneously, a group led by Conor Maguire would take Dublin Castle and the stores of arms and powder within, holding out until reinforcements could arrive from Ulster. Though one bold historian has claimed this second part of the plot was fabricated after the fact, it is generally accepted this was the plan.³⁹ Unfortunately, due to an inebriated co-conspirator who got cold feet the night before the intended storming of the Castle, the local magistrates were notified of the plot and the conspirators in Dublin were foiled.

The failure in Dublin is perhaps the most important reason why the plot escalated into a full-blown rebellion and island-wide breakdown in authority; the original plan of the conspirators was not to create the quasi-independent Irish state that the rebellion later became. As several historians have noted, the O'Neill and Maguire conspirators were originally attempting to use the Anglo-Scottish crisis: an uncharacteristic weakness in the English political and military machine which the Covenanters had astutely exploited, and which these disenfranchised Irish noblemen

the study; for instance, Karl S. Bottigheimer (*English Money*, 3) claimed vaguely that English and Protestant land “doubled” from 1640 to 1688. Regardless, Barnard’s estimates are probably the most accurate we have to date.

³⁸ Perhaps the best accounts are given by: Corish, “The Rising,” in *A New History*, 290-292; Brendan Bradshaw and Peter Roberts, *British Consciousness and Identity: the Making of Britain, 1533-1707*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637-1642*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 373-399.

³⁹ Brendan Bradshaw has claimed, through a close reading of the trials of the original conspirators, that the portion of the plot to take Dublin Castle never actually existed and was fabricated after the fact.

saw as a chance to bolster their negotiating position.⁴⁰ In essence, the taking of Dublin Castle and the Ulster strongholds was supposed to be the Irish Catholics' Newcastle.

Despite the failure in Dublin, O'Neill's Ulster rebels were experiencing far greater success. On 22 October 1641, soon after dark, Phelim O'Neill and a small band of Irish Catholics took Dungannon and Charlemont castles to the southwest of Lough Neagh through various forms of deception. At Charlemont, for instance, O'Neill pretended to be a dinner guest and upon entering overtook the guards and proceeded with his band of men to take over the castle.⁴¹ Within three days the rebels had captured enough castles and towns to mount a serious threat to British authority in Ulster.⁴² For the first three weeks of the rebellion O'Neill's forces remained smaller bands taking English castles and settlements until 10 November, when he assembled his first sizeable force, possibly as large as 3,000 men and horses, at Lisburn.⁴³ On 24 November 1641, the rebels scored their first major military victory against English governmental forces at Julianstown.⁴⁴

For the understanding of events in Munster it is important to note that the rebellion spread to Tipperary and Waterford by December 1641, and, most historians claim, reached Clare, Cork, and Limerick by spring 1642, though when it did it broke in isolated instances.⁴⁵ There are, however, depositions which maintain that acts of violence and rebellion were seen in Clare and Limerick as early as Christmas 1641, and it would seem from the evidence that these

⁴⁰ Padraig Lenihan, *Consolidating Conquest: Ireland 1603-1727*, (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2008), 91. Also, Corish, "The Rising," in *A New History*, 291.

⁴¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 469.

⁴² M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion in 1641*, (Quebec City: McGill University Press, 1994), 213-15.

⁴³ Lenihan, *Consolidating Conquest*, 95.

⁴⁴ Canny, *Religion and Rebellion*, 44.

⁴⁵ Jane Ohlmeyer, "The Civil Wars in Ireland," in *The Civil Wars*, 73-102, 73-4. Martyn Bennett, *The Civil Wars Experienced: Britain and Ireland, 1638-1661*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 57.

reported attacks are symptomatic of an earlier start to the rebellion in these areas rather than isolated incidents.⁴⁶

As haphazard forces sprang up across Munster, disarray and confusion became the order of the day. In the last few months of 1641, before the rebellion had even reached Munster proper, simply the fear of the rebellion was disrupting trade in the province. Later in 1642, war and unrest in England further dislocated the Irish economy, as it not only eliminated the possibility of tangible aid but also halted demand for Irish goods in Ireland's main export market. This maelstrom of economic bad fortune helped to spur, according to Gillespie, the one year cessation of hostilities signed between English forces and the rebels in 1643.⁴⁷

Adding to the confusion, in July 1642, 1000 men sent by the English Parliament under the Scottish commander Lord Forbes landed west of Cork in Munster and plunged into the countryside, pillaging and plundering Catholic settlements without apprising Lord Inchiquin, the Crown's commander of forces in Munster. This loud and bumbling enterprise was not hard to catch up with, and Forbes was ambushed at Clonakilty by rebel forces, after which he retreated to Kinsale and sailed first west and then north where he ravaged coastal settlements in Clare and Galway before returning to England.⁴⁸

As the Crown amassed what troops it could, in eastern Munster the rebels massed their largest force under Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarrett, who joined the rebellion on 30 November 1640. The uncle of the Protestant Marquis of Ormond, James Butler, Mountgarrett's forces had effective control of all of county Tipperary within two days. From there they continued into the heart of Munster, into north county Cork, where they overran several

⁴⁶ Martyn Bennett is the first to have noted this in *The Civil Wars Experienced*, 57.

⁴⁷ Gillespie, "The Irish Economy," in *Independence*, 165.

⁴⁸ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 81-2.

settlements, the largest being Mallow. This force, however, disbanded soon after this victory due to bickering between Mountgarrett's commanders over objectives.⁴⁹ Military units in Munster on both sides of the conflict seem often to have disassembled as quickly as they mustered. This is in part due to the amorphous nature of both the rebellion proper and popular rebellion, but was also caused by the severe lack of funds officials of the English government in Ireland received as the lines of communication and allegiance in England got considerably more tangled. Lord Inchiquin continually complained to the Marquis of Ormond of a lack of resources necessary to maintain a substantial force. This forced Inchiquin into a conciliatory position with the rebels, causing him to remain in castles or fortress towns.⁵⁰ He repeatedly reported to Ormond of unrest among his troops concerning back pay and poor supplies throughout the early stages of the rebellion, and in January 1643 he wrote that he feared his troops would disband themselves, irrespective of his orders or those from the Crown.⁵¹ By June 1643 there were only 6,000 troops paid by Parliament in Munster, and only part of this force was under Inchiquin's command. This number pales in comparison with Ulster and Leinster, where the English government had 20,000 and 15,000 troops respectively.⁵² In July 1644, Inchiquin would defect from the crown to Parliament and renew his fight with the rebels, but even then he received only meager funds.⁵³

The Irish rebels were more organized than their opponents, and soon after the Irish Confederacy was instituted at Kilkenny in October 1642, Garrett Barry was given control of the 6,000-strong rebel army in Munster. Inchiquin, despite having a force of roughly half that number, defeated Barry's forces outside of Liscarroll in the Blackwater Valley. However,

⁴⁹ Lenihan, *Consolidating Conquest*, 95.

⁵⁰ Scott Wheeler, "Four Armies in Ireland," in Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *From Independence to Occupation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 45. Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 85.

⁵¹ Wheeler, "Four Armies," in *Independence*, 46.

⁵² Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 84.

⁵³ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 85-89. Also, Wheeler, *Independence*, 45-46.

strapped for supplies and resources, he could not press his advantage. The weakness of Protestant forces in Ireland—and Munster especially—presented the Catholic rebels with easy opportunities to score victories and gain important strongholds while armies like Inchiquin’s were stalled, waiting for supplies and direction.⁵⁴ By December 1642, the rebels controlled nearly every castle and city in Munster outside of Cork.⁵⁵ Coupled with the landing of more siege guns from the continent in April 1643, adding to the few they had gleaned from towns and English fortifications, the Irish conquest of Munster rapidly sped up and further disadvantaged Inchiquin.⁵⁶ Eventually, Inchiquin reluctantly signed the one-year truce Ormond negotiated with the rebel forces in September 1643, but only because he had little choice at the time. The September 1643 truce brought an end to most of the fighting in Munster.⁵⁷

These are the important actors and events in Munster leading up to and during the first stage (from breakout to 1643 cessation) of the Irish rebellion. What has not yet been explored is how anger at the political disenfranchisement and property confiscation manifested itself at the community level. Indeed most historians, it seems, would rather “explain why 1641 occurred rather than to consider what happened.”⁵⁸ The popular revolt that took place concurrently in the majority of the country has received far less attention. While we owe a great deal of gratitude to the likes of Aidan Clarke and M. Perceval-Maxwell for their treatment of parliament and the nobility, the revolt is all too often viewed by those focusing on political affairs as a specifically Ulster event; the rebellion, as Canny has stated, must be viewed both as a political coup d’état

⁵⁴ Wheeler, “Four Armies,” in *Independence*, 47.

⁵⁵ Padraig Lenihan, *Confederate Catholics at War* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 44.

⁵⁶ Lenihan, *Consolidating Conquest*, 110-112.

⁵⁷ Bennett, *The Civil Wars Experienced*, 69.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Canny, “What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?” in Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *From Independence to Occupation*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 26.

and a popular insurrection.⁵⁹ Different parts of society—whether Catholic priests, Protestant landowners, or Gaelic chieftains—exploited their local situation to achieve their own objectives.⁶⁰ As the following chapters will demonstrate, it is important for us to examine the reactions—both of the political elite and population in general—in each region.

For example, the Catholic clergy throughout Ireland attempted to focus the energies of the rebellion into religious purposes: be it the destruction of Protestant Bibles, prayer books, or places of worship.⁶¹ Many Catholic priests who had come to Ireland or Irish priests who had returned by 1641 had been trained on the continent, bringing the fervent teachings of counter-Reformation Catholicism with them.⁶² As David Stevenson has noted, Franciscan missionaries from the continent were active as early as 1619 and reporting positive results in all of Ireland and even western Scotland.⁶³ Many Catholic clergy saw the rebellion as their greatest opportunity to practice full, counter-Reformation theology for the first time in Ireland. Perhaps as a result of this feeling, the clergy may have fostered the popular rebellion in places. However, these militant clergymen were often unable to keep the rebellion purely religious in its objectives, with violence often being perpetrated against English and Protestants themselves, rather than simply their religious objects and practices.⁶⁴ Surprisingly, some Catholic priests adopted a charitable attitude toward their previous oppressors; many were responsible for aiding and abetting escapes of Protestant residents who became the targets of such attacks.⁶⁵ This supports the idea that

⁵⁹ Specifically, Clarke's *Old English in Ireland* and Corish's and Clarke's articles covering the same period in *A New History of Ireland*. Also, Perceval-Maxwell's *The Outbreak of the 1641 Irish Rebellion*.

⁶⁰ Nicholas Canny, "Religion, Politics and the Irish Rising of 1641," in Judith Devlin and Ronan Fanning, ed., *Religion and Rebellion*, (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997), 44-46.

⁶¹ Canny, "Religion," in *Religion and Rebellion*, 56-7. Also, Canny, "What Really Happened," in *Independence*, 39.

⁶² Toby Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland*, 16.

⁶³ Stevenson, *Scottish Covenanters*, 6.

⁶⁴ Canny, "Religion," in *Religion and Rebellion*, 61-62.

⁶⁵ Canny, "Religion," in *Religion and Rebellion*, 59.

although the Catholic clergy supported the rebellion, most, if not all, did not support the individual acts of violence against Englishmen or Protestants.⁶⁶

This example alone is proof of the diverse and nuanced aims of different groups who took part in the popular rebellion. The relative neglect the popular rebellion has received in historical study is in response to the credibility of sources for which nearly all of the observations of the period at the community level must be derived: the 1641 depositions. Most of the depositions cannot be assumed to be entirely truthful. Indeed, the depositions “[are] often inaccurate, biased, and misleading.”⁶⁷ For example, the claims made by deponent Robert Maxwell of county Armagh that 154,000 Protestants were killed in Ulster are definitively false.⁶⁸ Our best estimates today are that by 1641, only 15,000 British Protestants were even settled in Ulster, rendering Maxwell’s figure impossible.⁶⁹ Even more prevalent in the depositions than outright fiction is hearsay. The standards of taking eyewitness testimony were not the same as they are today. During the first round of depositions taken in 1642 and 1643, the witnesses were encouraged by the recorders to repeat not just everything that had happened to them, but any act of the rebellion or Protestant human suffering they had heard of.⁷⁰ For instance, several deponents report that at Newry an unborn baby was ripped from the womb of its Protestant mother and tossed into a ditch.⁷¹ Despite this story appearing numerous times in depositions from various counties, not a single deponent witnessed the act or could name its perpetrator or

⁶⁶ Canny, “What Really Happened,” in *Independence*, 38.

⁶⁷ Jane Ohlmeyer, “The Civil Wars in Ireland,” in *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* ed. by John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 74.

⁶⁸ Deposition of Robert Maxwell, (Trinity College of Dublin, Manuscript Series 809, fol. 8r).

⁶⁹ Toby Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760* (Palgrave MacMillan: New York, 2004), 3.

⁷⁰ Hilary Sims, “Violence in County Armagh, 1641,” in *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising*, ed. Brian Mac Cuarta, (Antrim: W&G Baird Ltd, 1997), 123.

⁷¹ Deposition of Phillip Taylor, (TCD, MS 836, 007r-007v) 7r.

victim. It is unlikely then that this grisly event actually took place; it was simply one of the numerous rumors about the rebellion and Catholic bloodlust which proliferated at this time.

The depositions transcribed by Henry Jones and his officials in Dublin are rife with these inaccurate, second-hand stories; the account related by Ellen Matchett in county Armagh provides an excellent example of what pertinent information can be taken from the depositions and what cannot be used. Of use is Matchett's account of how she and her husband had been expelled from their house by a small band of rebels and robbed of most of their household goods, horses, and livestock. Although some were strangers, she named the attackers she recognized: the O'Hanlons and O'Hagans of county Armagh. She continued, relating her and her daughter's harrowing escape to Michael Dunn's house in Hockley, whose wife "being an English gentlewoman" offered them shelter where they hid for some time, forced to survive on whatever they could forage: "they could get a few nettles & course weeds to eat & sometimes when they got but the brains of a Cow dead of diseases: boiled with Nettles they accounted that good fare."⁷² While Matchett's experience is most likely true, the rest of her deposition relating events she did not witness in person are suspect, and at times definitively false. For example, her account of the massacre of Protestants in a house in Shewis is almost entirely inaccurate. The details of the deposition of Ann Smith and Margret Clark, who were lucky enough to be only "knocked in the head"⁷³ by the Irish rebels as they fled the burning house, contradicts the story told by Matchett. Where Matchett claims that 110 English Protestants had crept into an outhouse for safety, Smith and Clark tell how they were driven into a thatched-roof home by the rebels, and estimated only that forty English Protestants filled the house. Matchett further states that the rebels continued to force fleeing Protestants back into the fire until "they were all burned to

⁷² Deposition of Ellen Matchett, (TCD, MS 836, 058r), 484.

⁷³ Deposition of Ann Smith & Margret Clark (TCD, MS 836, 073r), 569.

death & consumed.”⁷⁴ Smith and Clark’s very survival long enough to give a deposition contradicts Matchett’s story. Even more so than just relating incorrect details, the end of Matchett’s deposition is full of rumor and fabrication. Manus O’Cahan, an Irishman from Loughgall, supposedly “begged for his breakfast the heads of all the protestants of Sir Phelim Roe O’Neill” and that later “his request was granted.”⁷⁵ While this is certainly one of the more outlandish claims made by anyone in the depositions, it exemplifies the biases present in portions of the accounts. Embellishment beyond one’s own personal experience was encouraged, and it manifested itself often in the secondary and tertiary accounts of Irish Catholic atrocities.

Even though the depositions of the survivors forms “a body of material which is emotional and which seeks to represent Irish Catholics in the worst possible light, ... this Protestant testimony cannot be ignored,” if only because they provide our only insights into the direct effects of the insurrection on the population.⁷⁶ If John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer are correct it was not only political issues, but also widespread “rural unrest and urban misery [which] created conditions that were ripe for revolt.”⁷⁷ In order to understand the rebellion in its entirety, we must look not only at the political wrangling and major events described above, but also grasp what occurred in Ireland’s communities to comprehend the motivations for Irish Catholics to join the rebellion proper or engage in popular violence.

⁷⁴ Deposition of Ellen Matchett (TCD, MS 836, 058r), 485.

⁷⁵ Deposition of Ellen Matchett, (TCD, MS 836, 058r), 485.

⁷⁶ Nicholas Canny, “What Really Happened in 1641?” in *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660*, ed. by Jane Ohlmeyer, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27.

⁷⁷ Kenyon with Ohlmeyer, “Background,” in *Independence*, 12.

2 COUNTY KERRY

County Kerry, like its counterpart across the Shannon county Clare, is an isolated province. Composed largely of two peninsulas which jut out into the Atlantic, most of the county is made up of hilly, rocky terrain, suitable mainly for animal husbandry rather than agriculture. This fact most likely kept Kerry sparsely settled—by either English or Irish—in 1641. Even today, Kerry only boasts a population of 140,000, and its largest town, Tralee, a mere 20,000. Given the paucity of records which survive for Kerry, it is impossible to estimate the seventeenth-century population of Kerry, though not its composition. The vast majority of Kerry was native Irish. What few British settlers there were tended to reside in urban centers, like Tralee.⁷⁸

Most historians have largely approximated the beginning of the rebellion in county Kerry. While some have claimed rebellion first spread to Kerry in the spring of 1642 or even late in the summer, most Protestant deponents report their first encounter with rebels being far earlier in 1642. Thomas Turner, Moses Dowdall, and William Love all reported having their goods taken from them around Candlemas, in the first few days of February.⁷⁹ William Seames, whose personal story was related in the introduction, first encountered violence in mid-January.⁸⁰ In addition, William Hayles, had his cows and horses taken by Captain Sukan and a company of approximately 100 men on 14 January.⁸¹ Still earlier, William Lascells, John Newman, Henry Copley, and several others report first encountering rebels in the first week of 1642.⁸² Richard

⁷⁸ Nicholas Canny, has created an excellent map using the depositions to show the dispersal of British settlers in Munster in *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 337.

⁷⁹ Deposition of Thomas Turner, (Trinity College of Dublin. Manuscript Series 828, 253r).

⁸⁰ Deposition of William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198r).

⁸¹ Deposition of William Hayles, (TCD, MS 828, 273r).

⁸² Deposition of William Lascells (TCD, MS 828, 276r), Deposition of John Newman (TCD, MS 828, 277r), Deposition of Henry Copley (TCD, MS 828, 280r).

Taylor claims his goods were taken from him “around Christmas,” 1641.⁸³ Many of these reports are not simply isolated attacks; the siege of Tralee Castle, Stephen Love described, began on 14 February 1642.⁸⁴

Furthermore, the robberies and violence that these settlers encountered in early 1642 was both from larger bands and from opportunistic individuals. Both the McFynnens and Capt. Sukan already had large forces in the county in January. When Seames was taken prisoner by Charles MacCarthy and Capt. Sukan, he estimated their force to be 300 strong.⁸⁵ That number is corroborated by several witnesses, including Michael Vine who witnessed the forces in mid-February after he took refuge in Tralee Castle.⁸⁶ The independence of the force is blurred; despite multiple deponents mentioning the armies of the McFynnens and Capt. Sukan independently, they were more than likely one and the same. Which family—McFynnens or MacCarthys—initially raised the force is unclear from depositional evidence alone, but by February Sukan was clearly the leader, and there was most likely one principal band of rebels in the county.

While Sukan’s force appears to be the only thing resembling an operational army in county Kerry, it is hard to be certain if he was in contact with members of O’Neill’s Ulster rising; Sukan was killed in August 1643 and left no writings. The only evidence of any contact between Sukan and the rebellion proper in Ulster and elsewhere is circumstantial. For example, many members of Sukan’s forces, when asked to justify their actions by Protestant deponents, gave a response similar to that of their northern counterparts: they were rebelling in the king’s name and against the English hegemony in Ireland and the Protestantism that came with it.

⁸³ Deposition of Richard Taylor, (TCD, MS 828, 267r).

⁸⁴ Deposition of Stephen Love, (TCD, MS 828, 124r).

⁸⁵ Deposition of William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198r).

⁸⁶ Deposition of Michael Vine, (TCD, MS 828, 207r).

Charles, in most rebels' eyes, was not only complicit in the rebellion but openly supportive. The second, and perhaps most convincing piece of evidence, is Sугan's coordinated sieges of two castles in county Kerry. Fortified positions most likely would not have been attacked unless Sугan had an interest in clearing out English-controlled strongholds; this was something the peasant rebellion in Leinster lacked and was prevalent among the rebellion proper only after the confederacy was established in October 1642 and a formal attempt at a legitimate, separate government of Ireland was made. As Rolf Loeber and Geoffrey Parker have pointed out, Irish troops had traditionally excelled in skirmishes and ambushes while the English often attempted to control the countryside from urban fortresses or stand-alone castles; for either of the sides venturing far into each other's domain was a foolhardy risk.⁸⁷ This is in part why we see so many Protestants in all of Ireland fleeing to castles or cities after either being attacked or upon hearing of unrest nearby.

While the majority of the reports come from deponents claiming harassment by Sугan or forces under his command, there are multiple depositions which report isolated attacks by minor, most likely independent rebels. Many of these attacks seem personal in nature; the English deponent often knew his attacker well enough to be able to give their name, occupation, and sometimes even residence in the deposition. Gilbert Harvey, for example, was stripped of his clothes by Art O'Leary, a neighbor he apparently knew well.⁸⁸ Despite these incidents, it should be noted there was no widespread peasant uprising as took place in Ulster and in western

⁸⁷ Rolf Loeber and Geoffrey Parker, "The Military Revolution in Seventeenth-Century Ireland," in *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641-1660*, edited by Jane H. Ohlmeyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 67. Oddly enough, this contrasts the assertion made in Ohlmeyer's article in her and Kenyon's edited work *The Civil Wars*, where she says the Confederates favored siege warfare (Jane Ohlmeyer, "The Civil Wars in Ireland," in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer, ed., *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 86).

⁸⁸ Deposition of Gilbert Harvey (TCD, MS 828, 251r) .

Leinster.⁸⁹ Most of the robberies and violence which took place in county Kerry can be traced back to agents or forces commanded by Capt. Sugan or the McFynnens. For example, though men like Owen O’Sullivan or Walter Hussey are named several times as the only perpetrator, they are mentioned enough times in the company of Sugan, or other MacCarthys, McFynnens, and McDermods that it can reasonably be assumed that even if they were acting independently, they were doing so in an effort to gather supplies and arms for Sugan’s larger force.

If Sugan had the only large force in the county and there are no reports of Protestant troops ever entering Kerry, the question remains, what were these forces gathering supplies for? The answer is perhaps our best proof of a link between Sugan’s forces in the county and the rebellion proper: the systematic siege of Protestant castles and strongholds within the county. The Irish typically did not conduct sieges in the early-modern sense; their arms and tactics were better suited to open-field skirmishes. Indeed, as Loeber and Parker have shown, Ireland came into contact with the continental military revolution through its returning officers, as many had been formally trained in Flanders and/or Spain in the latest military tactics and weaponry. Men like Owen Roe O’Neill and Thomas Preston returned to their ancestral homeland and would come to form the base from which the Confederate military would be created.⁹⁰ Before their arrival, siege warfare would be haphazard at best, and enticing only if the force’s motive was to root out all English and Protestant authority. Sieges occurred—in county Kerry and the island in general—at castles, towns, or even churches when the group of Protestants taking shelter inside were perceived as a potential threat to the future of the rebellion.⁹¹ Castles, after all, were often of extreme importance to the English settlers both as safe garrisons and outposts which could

⁸⁹ A good portrayal of this comes from Nicholas Canny, in *Making Ireland British*, pp 524-550.

⁹⁰ Loeber and Parker, *Independence to Occupation*, 72.

⁹¹ Nicholas Canny, “What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?” in *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641-1660*, edited by Jane H. Ohlmeyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 35.

provide advanced warning for nearby residents.⁹² Furthermore, at the beginning of the rebellion, before the continental officers had returned to Ireland with both men and supplies, the rebel forces in general lacked any sort of artillery; the cannons and siege equipment located in Munster were brought over by English adventurers and settlers to protect their land and towns in the late sixteenth century. The artillery they did have was procured in the taking of English fortresses and castles. For example, when Limerick Castle fell to the rebels in June 1642, the rebels captured three large cannon, one that commentators reported weighed over 800 standard pounds and fired thirty-two pound shot. So rare was artillery in seventeenth-century Ireland that there are several reports during the rebellion of castles surrendering to rebels who had siege equipment, the warders merely terrified by the sight of such destructive pieces.⁹³ Regardless, the steps and munitions necessary for the siege of a castle full of Protestants means it was highly unlikely that a few bands of opportunistic rebels would have endeavored something as lengthy and costly as a castle siege if their only objective was loot and wanton violence against vulnerable Protestants.

Documentation of two such sieges remains from the depositions of county Kerry. The first and best documented was the siege at Tralee Castle. Tralee Castle, according to Stephen Love, was under siege from 14 February 1642 until sometime in August.⁹⁴ Other deponents place the beginning slightly earlier in February.⁹⁵ It appears the entire force Sугan had organized as of February was present at the siege. While certain deponents estimate his forces at 600, 700, or even 3,000-strong (this estimate also says Sугan commanded a cavalry of 100 horses, which is almost surely untrue; while horses were certainly present, it is doubtful any

⁹² Loeber and Parker, *Independence to Occupation*, 78-9.

⁹³ Loeber and Parker, *Independence to Occupation*, 67, 72-74.

⁹⁴ Stephen Love, (TCD, MS 828, 124r).

⁹⁵ Deposition of Teige McMahony, (TCD, MS 828, 249r).

rebel forces this early in the rebellion included any company of trained cavalry), the force was most likely around 300 men, especially at the beginning of the siege.⁹⁶ Soon after the siege began, Tralee itself was plundered by the rebels, most likely in search of supplies and arms. One deponent claims the siege was conducted by “freeholders and gentlemen.”⁹⁷ This speaks not only to the impromptu nature of the force at Tralee, but the likely composition of Sугan’s forces in general. Sугan’s force in Kerry—at least at this stage in the rebellion—was certainly haphazardly assembled, led and organized by his kinsmen and local gentry. More evidence of this comes from Stephen Love, who tells us that Edmund Hussey rode into Love’s hometown of Killarney as early as 15 November 1641 and exhorted the residents to convert to Catholicism and gather arms in order to join him in open rebellion.⁹⁸

While we know accurately when the siege began and ended, what occurred during the siege of Tralee itself is somewhat unclear. Most of the accounts we have of what went on inside the castle are second-hand extrapolations by deponents and therefore suspect at best. Due to the absence of any reports of violence or other settler-rebel encounters during the rebel plundering of the town of Tralee, most residents had likely either taken refuge in one of two local castles (Ballycarty Castle being the other) or fled the city. With the approach of the rebel army, most denizens would have stopped all activities and fled to the castle out of terror of Catholics or rebel forces in general. With news of the rising in Ulster spreading quickly, several dozen had most likely taken refuge before Sугan or other Kerry Catholics had risen up themselves. Estimates of the number of English Protestant settlers who had taken refuge in Tralee Castle vary wildly, but a rough approximation of 300-500 refugees most likely resided in the castle when the siege

⁹⁶Deposition of John Abraham and others, (TCD, MS 828, 211r), William Hayles, (TCD, MS 828, 273r), William Seames, (TCD, MS 828, 198r) are just a few who provide this estimate.

⁹⁷ Teige McMahony, (TCD, MS 828, 249r).

⁹⁸ Stephen Love, (TCD, MS 828, 124r).

began. With that number warded up in a small castle, supplies surely ran out quickly. The best—and probably most accurate—account of the conditions inside Tralee Castle comes to us from Michael Vine. Driven from his house in the town of Tralee by the approaching rebels, he describes the conditions thus:

he [the deponent] saith that they were forced to eat raw salt hides that did stink and drink some water that was as black as ink and as thick as if it were thicked with flower and other water as if it were thicked with yellow clay and he saith that died for want and killed by the enemy there at least two hundred of the men, women and children during the siege of said castle.⁹⁹

This is a typical account of what occurred inside most castles under siege during the early rebellion. The Protestant settlers, startled and exposed by the unexpected uprising, likely had little time to gather their belongings, let alone prepare supplies for a protracted siege in an overcrowded castle. Vine's account of hunger and want inside the besieged castle is further corroborated by fellow warder Teige MacMahowny, who claims that by August the refugees were forced to begin eating the neighborhood cats and dogs.¹⁰⁰ The number of Protestants who died of dearth within the castle is accurate as well; all other first-hand accounts of the siege estimate the number of dead within the castle in the 150-200 range. So dire did the situation become near the end of the siege that soon upon being released and driven away from Tralee Castle by the rebels, Elizabeth Harris' husband drank water from the first puddle he saw, contracted an illness (probably dysentery) and died within days.¹⁰¹

The siege itself seems to have been more of a smoke and mirrors effort than anything else. Given the lack of artillery controlled by rebel forces, especially in such a remote county

⁹⁹ Michael Vine, (TCD, MS 828, 207r).

¹⁰⁰ Teige MacMahowny, (TCD, MS 828, 249r).

¹⁰¹ Deposition of Elizabeth Harris, (TCD, MS 828, 255r).

as Kerry, this is not surprising. Furthermore, what artillery and cannon shot the rebels did possess was likely not enough—both in size and in number—to bring down the walls or battlements of a castle. Furthermore, as the rebels were without the direction of the continental-trained Catholic rebels who would arrive later in the year, their attempts at even using the artillery they did have competently was most likely primitive at best. For example, at Tralee the rebels brought newly acquired cannon to the castle near the end of April and shot thirteen or fourteen times against the walls.¹⁰² Having little effect (and possibly having run out of ammunition and gunpowder), the rebels’ heavy fire lasted only one day, and soon after they may have begun mining operations against the castle walls, though reports of this activity—and the subsequent Protestant countermining which purportedly killed “many rebels”—are uncorroborated and suspect at best.¹⁰³ With few resources with which to strong-arm their way into the castle and little threat from a relieving English Protestant force, the rebel army seemed content to wait out the Protestants within.

The time at which the castle was given up to the rebels—August 1642—seems to be the only thing about the surrender the deponents agree on. Some claim that the castle could have held out far longer and did not need to be given up when it did.¹⁰⁴ By most accounts however, Tralee Castle was surrendered upon terms agreed upon by the Protestants within and the rebel leaders. The warders, driven by the extreme conditions inside the castle walls, probably concluded terms more out of necessity than any desire to settle with their attackers. The rebels, if they indeed were acting in concert with the rebellion proper, were probably more than willing to settle with the besieged as their objective was to eliminate an English

¹⁰² Michael Vine, (TCD, MS 828, 207r).

¹⁰³ Deposition of William Dethick (TCD, MS 828, 236r).

¹⁰⁴ Deposition of Daniel Spratt (TCD, MS 828, 205r).

stronghold in the countryside, not the wholesale murder of British Protestants. The agreement purportedly guaranteed the safety of the Protestant warders and what few of their goods remained. The quarter given, however, was far less generous. Most deponents report that upon Tralee Castle being surrendered, most English deponents who had survived the siege were robbed of their belongings and stripped of their clothing. With the exception of a few reported isolated incidents of warders being hanged upon leaving the castle by Sугan's men, the warders were generally unharmed; that is, if one can consider being left naked and penniless in the Irish winter unmolested.

The experience at the other Protestant stronghold in Kerry is depicted in only one deposition, but it is a unique one: the deposition, titled "Deposition of John Abraham & others," is one of the few that credits multiple authors. John Abraham gave the principal account, which was then corroborated, revised, and added to by several other warders of Ballycarty Castle. Ballycarty Castle was located just two miles outside of Tralee, and it is where most of the farmers of the surrounding area took refuge when Sугan's army appeared in the area. According to the account, nearly 300 men, women and children sought refuge in the castle. The piecemeal nature of warders assembling in castles and local strongholds is displayed best in this deposition: Nicholas Roberts said he first sent his two daughters and wife to take refuge in Ballycarty Castle in the middle of December 1641 when he first heard news of unrest. He joined them two weeks later.¹⁰⁵

Ballycarty Castle's experience was characteristically different in that the Protestant warders did not put up a fight. According to Abraham, the castle was surrendered to forces loyal to Capt. Sугan on 20 November 1642, who had most likely made their natural

¹⁰⁵ John Abraham and others, (TCD, MS 828, 211r).

progression to the next Protestant stronghold after eliminating the English threat at Tralee Castle. Though the details are murky, it would appear that with the agreement of the deponents the castle was given up by the local constable Robert Blenerhasset and the castle's owner, Sir Edward Denny. Under the agreement made between these leaders and the rebel forces, the castle was surrendered with the condition that the English Protestants who had taken refuge there and their belongings would be given quarter and safe passage to an English garrison in Cork, where all those who would not submit to an Irish Catholic government would be sent back to England. The deponents, though told this before the surrender by Robert Blenerhasset, claim that no such deal ever actually existed, and as at Tralee three months prior the warders were stripped and robbed and forced to depart the castle unprotected from either rogue rebels or the weather.¹⁰⁶

These are the two principal accounts we have of castle sieges which took place in Kerry. The prolonged siege Tralee Castle experienced and the similar treatment at the hands of the conquerors of both castles mean that not only was Sugeen's force largely unopposed in the county (probably due to Inchiquin's lack of resources and his preoccupation with larger forces in more populated parts of Munster in Cork, Limerick, and Waterford) but that it was also almost certainly working in concert with the wider, island-wide rebellion; this was no band of marauding Catholics seeking wanton violence and destruction of Protestant property and persons. Indeed, in respect to other counties in Ireland, Kerry is relatively bereft of accounts of rebels acting alone. The accounts of the two castles above are the most recurrent events related in the Kerry depositions, and those that relate to other sieges are generally from residents of county Kerry who migrated during the unrest and confusion, encountering

¹⁰⁶ John Abraham and others, (TCD, MS 828, 211r).

violence in Limerick or Cork.¹⁰⁷ What accounts of rogue rebels that exist are far too brief and extraordinary to make any widespread conclusions about popular violence in the county; it cannot be considered a substantial phenomenon at all.

Perhaps predictably, the violence experienced by the settlers in county Kerry, whether occurring around castles or on the deponent's own property, which best reveal seventeenth-century Irish society are most suggestive of the underlying motives of the Catholic rebels. One of the most prevalent acts in the encounters between English Protestant settlers in county Kerry and hostile rebels is the stripping of Protestants. Almost all of the deponents who provide credible accounts of the violence describe some type of forcible removal of clothing. John Abraham and his fellow deponents claim that all three hundred men, women and children who had taken refuge inside Ballycarty Castle had the clothes literally taken off their backs when the castle was peacefully surrendered to Sugaun's men.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the most interesting part of William Seames' story, whose personal account was told at the beginning of this study, is that when the "seven score" Protestant settlers who had resided near Glanaroughty were rounded up, they appear to only have been stripped of their clothing and nothing else. Cathy Cox, a resident of county Kerry who had fled to Cork soon after her family was robbed in January, heart-wrenchingly described watching her two children die of exposure after their clothes were taken by a small band of rebels.¹⁰⁹ Phineas Lascells was stripped by the Donnell McFynnen's servants, and Margaret Percy was stripped by Catholic strangers.¹¹⁰ John Johnson, likely one of the approximately 140 Protestants described by

¹⁰⁷ William Freeman, for instance, after being robbed by his neighbor, John McKellicot, fled to Newcastle in Limerick where he encountered Garret Barry's and Lord Muskerry's large force. (Deposition of William Freeman, TCD, MS 828, 282r).

¹⁰⁸ John Abraham and others, (TCD, MS 828, 211r).

¹⁰⁹ Deposition of Cathy Cox (TCD, MS 828, 259r).

¹¹⁰ Deposition of Phineas Lascells (TCD, 828, 275r). Deposition of Margaret Percy (TCD, MS 828, 265r).

Seames, even reported hearing Donogh McFynnen instruct all of the Irish around Glanaroughty to rob and strip all Protestants they came in contact with.¹¹¹

The ritualized stripping appears to have served only a symbolic purpose; at this point in the rebellion there was no regular army which needed to be clothed and/or uniformed. It should also be noted that there are only a tiny amount of credible accounts—absolutely zero in the three counties in this study—of this indiscriminate stripping of victims ever becoming sexual. As stripping and robbing was often accompanied by minimal violent interaction, the raping of Protestant victims may have worked against the Catholic rebels in a number of ways. First, with some robberies being physically non-violent, the rape of the victims would have crossed a threshold of sorts, adding an unrestrained level of debasement to an otherwise orderly process. Second, rape and defilement of the settlers would have only served to enrage local Protestant populations and provide a rallying cry and a tangible reason to organize and counter the rebellion. After all, as the accounts at Tralee and Ballycarty Castle convey, the English Protestant settlers had little impetus to openly oppose the rebel forces as long as they could guarantee the safety of their families and livelihoods. Though the second of these priorities was often lost (though, it should be noted, most pre-surrender arrangements, like that of Tralee and Ballycarty Castles, attempted to protect Protestant goods, whether or not they were adhered to by the conquering rebels) the raw debasement of Protestant bodies—a fate often seen as worse than death in early-modern Christendom—would certainly have raised the ire of settlers who without it were disposed to accept their fates as Protestants at the mercy of rebelling Irish Catholics. Furthermore, stripped and being left both literally and symbolically exposed, Canny has suggested, may have been considered more degrading than

¹¹¹ Deposition of John Johnson (TCD, MS 828, 286r).

rape.¹¹² In addition, most credible accounts that depict the Catholic clergy maintain that most clergymen attempted to direct the violence toward Protestant symbols, not Protestants themselves. If the clergy was as influential in rebel policy in the early stages of the rebellion as they were once the Confederation of Kilkenny was solidified, this may have also dampened the level of physical violence perpetrated by Catholic rebels. While it may be reading too much into the situation to contend that individual rebels and their leaders were acting with these nuanced assumptions in mind, the absence of rape in accompaniment with the stripping of settlers means there was little urge among the rebels to exact physical harm upon the Protestant settlers whose clothes they were taking.

On a deeper level, the stripping of Protestant settlers inverted the shifting political and social situation in Ireland. Since Henry VIII's decision to take a stronger role in Ireland's governance, power and influence in Irish policy increasingly became concentrated in Dublin and the executive at the expense of Irish and Old English Catholic landowners. As more Protestant settlers entered the region, any power which migrated back into the provinces was allocated in their hands. This is best represented in the 1613-15 Irish Parliament, which, despite the island's population still being overwhelmingly Catholic, had a majority Protestant makeup during all of its sessions.¹¹³ In less than a century, Catholics had gone from being technically outlawed but essentially untouchable, to a persecuted political minority. The stripping of Protestants, though most likely not on a conscious level for the rebels, symbolically and violently returned Catholic landowners to the position of power which had, historically speaking, abruptly been taken from them. The humiliation of Protestant settlers

¹¹² Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 545.

¹¹³ See Michael Perceval-Maxwell, *The Outbreak of Irish Rebellion of 1641*, (Montreal: Queen's University Press, 1994), and Aidan Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland 1625-42*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966).

through stripping, placing them in the helpless and powerless state which Ireland's Catholics had increasingly found themselves in during the seventeenth century, symbolically satisfied rebel inclinations to return to the political and social climates of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

While the stripping of Protestants after capture, robbery, or the surrendering of a stronghold is the most prevalent encounter between rebels and Protestant settlers, any history of the rebellion could be considered whitewashed without discussion of the murders that took place. The frequency of murders during the rebellion is surely the hardest thing to gauge in the entire episode and probably why many historians have skirted the issue. Murders of Protestants by Catholics, often graphically depicted, were the chief tool used by English commentators to paint the Catholic rebels as little more than bloodthirsty religious warriors. Most of the literature which circulated in England in 1642-3 portrayed the rebellion as an extension of the continental Thirty Years' War, with the rebels' chief goal being the extermination of Protestantism – both in Ireland and the British Isles in general.¹¹⁴ Most English readers believed these accounts of the rebellion—the vast majority of which were written by Englishmen who had not even been to Ireland—confirming to many Englishmen that the Irish, and Catholics in general, massacred Protestants out of an innate bloodlust.¹¹⁵ This general paranoia, as Joseph Cope has shown, manifested itself in all sorts of ways in England. Certain stories told in pamphlets were consistent with—at times even borrowed directly from—reports from France and the German states of massacres of Protestants. The rebellion was often seen by Englishmen as part of a wider, Catholic-engineered plot against Protestantism and England; even MPs in the House of Commons wondered aloud from where

¹¹⁴ Joseph Cope, *England and the 1641 Irish Rebellion*, (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2009), 6.

¹¹⁵ Cope, *England*, 83.

the next step in the great “Papist offensive” against England would come. Coastal cities like Bristol, where the majority of Protestant refugees from Munster landed, were legitimately worried over the impending Catholic invasion from Ireland which would be aided by the local Catholic recusants. So prevalent was hysterical paranoia in these cities that the refugees were held in suspicion; denizens feared the sheer number of refugees arriving from Ireland would not only overwhelm the local economy, but mask Catholic agents who purportedly blended in in an attempt to infiltrate England.¹¹⁶

With fears of Catholics so rampant in England, at levels higher than even the usual hysterical responses by seventeenth-century English Protestants, it comes as little surprise that the authenticity of estimates like Robert Maxwell’s 154,000 Protestant civilian casualties were readily accepted. Furthermore, these attitudes among English Protestants are the reason why murder numbers during the rebellion are nearly impossible to calculate; any murder by Catholics would have been reported by a deponent as a fact whether they witnessed it or not. Second-hand accounts of murders, however, cannot be immediately disregarded. Sometimes these reported murders are corroborated in other depositions by eyewitnesses, while others are surely invented, the result of a deponent relaying one or more of the wild rumors which circulated in the countryside during the chaos of the early rebellion. A good example of this in county Kerry is the deposition of William Dethick. It is clear, from the scope and nature of the deposition, that most of Dethick’s account is pieced together from secondary and tertiary sources; Dethick himself admits at one point “this the deponent saw not with his own eyes, but he dares vouch truth for it, because he has heard it most confidently from the many mouths of Protestants, which

¹¹⁶ Cope, *England*, 89-114.

are of good credit.”¹¹⁷ According to Dethick, Thomas Stack, a Protestant freeholder, was working in his potato field around Christmas 1642, when he was accosted by four or five rebels who brutally murdered him and threw his body into the river. Earlier in 1642, Dethick claims that after the battle of Newtown, the McCartys rode into Killarney and rounded up sixteen “many old and decrepit” Protestant men, women and children. These unfortunate souls were stripped, “whipped up and down the town from one end to the other,” then promptly marched to a large hole where all sixteen were buried alive.¹¹⁸ Neither of these stories is corroborated anywhere else in the Kerry depositions and both are prime examples of not just the false rumor common in Ireland at the time, but also the type of stories which fueled the pamphlets that circulating England. Despite these radical (and to be frank, rather ridiculous) stories, Dethick does provide a seemingly otherwise accurate account of the events at the siege of Tralee Castle.

Herein lies the paradox of attempting to estimate the number of murders that took place anywhere in Ireland during the rebellion; the willingness of some Protestant deponents to report any incident which came to mind, while serving its purpose in the contemporary literature, undermines any attempt at estimation by modern historians. This is why even the most learned historians can only make guesses based loosely on population estimates and why attempts to garner exact numbers are misguided.¹¹⁹

For these reasons, both here and later for counties Clare and Limerick, I will not attempt to ascertain any figures of the dead. When considering how little we know of the populations of these remote counties, any attempts at a scholarly estimate would be little more than a guess.

¹¹⁷ William Dethick (TCD, MS 828, 236r).

¹¹⁸ William Dethick (TCD, MS 828, 236r).

¹¹⁹ Ohlmeyer estimate 4-6,000 (Ohlmeyer, “The Civil wars in Ireland,” 74). Sims attempts to pinpoint the numbers of dead in Armagh (Hilary Sims, “Violence in County Armagh, in Brian Mac Cuarta, ed., *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising*, (Antrim: W & G Baird Ltd., 1993).

What then, can we discover from the murders recorded by the Kerry deponents? First, contrary to the contemporary literature of the time, murder was generally avoided by Sугan's force and the rebels in general. Murder was often the result of clashes between rebels and Protestant settlers who were not willing to surrender their possessions and property peacefully. We have accounts of several, perhaps as many as a dozen, Protestants who were murdered outside of Tralee Castle during the siege. Little is known about these murders other than that they occurred. These may have been the result of Protestants attempting to escape the siege who were caught, or men who were attempting to break the siege.¹²⁰ Margaret Percy's husband and two sons were murdered by Sугan's men when they resisted the robbery of their cattle and goods on their farm.¹²¹ The most detailed stories and estimates of murders come from deponents whose information, as explained above, can be largely discounted. When considering only the accounts of murder in county Kerry that are either corroborated, related by eyewitnesses, or simply described in a less sensationalist manner, it is clear that the wanton murder of Protestants was not the goal of Capt. Sугan's rebel forces in Kerry. This does not mean that the rebels were opposed to murder like it appears most Catholic priests were; if Protestant resistance, especially armed resistance, was encountered by rebel forces then murder was the most often used recourse. Indeed, if Protestants were willing to surrender their property, strongholds, goods, and often their clothes, then they were generally allowed to remain physically unharmed, though often encouraged to seek passage back to England where Protestantism could not influence the new, Catholic Ireland.

The other major occurrence, which has already been discussed in passing as a part of the stripping and murders, is robbery. Indeed, the robbery of deponents is universal; every single

¹²⁰ Though one deponent claims this happened, it is unlikely any sallying forth occurred.

¹²¹ Margaret Percy (TCD, MS 828, 265r).

deponent in county Kerry relates what they were robbed of. Not only were all of the deponents robbed, but nearly all of them were robbed of just about everything they possessed. Cattle, horses, and other livestock were the most common items taken, most likely used to either feed or arm the rebel forces. Many deponents also provide long lists of the goods and other sources of wealth that were either physically or figuratively taken from them. A long account was provided by Henry Gibbon:

Henry Gibbon...since or about, the tenth day of December last past, he was lost and forcibly despoiled of his goods and chattels to the several values following, 603 pounds, 17 shillings. Of his horses, mares, colts, and one ox...of merchantable wares, tobacco, hides, tallow and beef...of his book of accounts, bills bonds and other writings were taken away by McFynnen and his brother Florence [Capt. Sугan]...of his building, an iron works, in the river of Kenmare...of his interest in his part of the lease of the iron works...of debt due to the deponent for overseeing the ironworks. The sum of thirty pounds being due upon McFynnen, and Daniel O'Sullivan Esquires both now in actual rebellion.¹²²

Gibbon's account is typical. Most deponents, even before recounting their own personal experiences or the rumors they have heard about Catholic atrocities, are quick to enumerate—down to the shilling—the exact amount of economic losses they incurred because of the rebellion. Robberies, as can be seen in the list provided by Gibbon, were not restricted to the items the rebels could use. “Merchantable wares” were also taken, presumably for either resale by whichever rebel pillaged the goods or for personal use. Many deponents report having their personal goods taken by both rebels acting individually and as part of Sугan's larger band of men. Robert Sharde had his hats and hatbands taken, along with his book of accounts.¹²³ John Loe's boat and fishing nets were taken from him by rebels as well as all of his “household

¹²² Deposition of Henry Gibbon (TCD, MS 828, 201r).

¹²³ Examination of Robert Sharde (TCD, MS 828, 248r).

stuff.”¹²⁴ Elizabeth Harris complained of having her family’s expensive plates and jewels taken by the rebels, and Margery Blackwell told the deposition takers that all of her linen, woolen, brass and pewter household wares were stolen.¹²⁵ Robberies, much like the stripping of the Protestant settlers, were ubiquitous. The settlers had all of their goods taken, whether they could be feasibly used in the war effort or not. Many of the robberies, it seems, while originally intending to gather supplies and arms for Sugan’s army, quickly deteriorated into indiscriminate pillaging.

Most deponents were also quick to point out the land or leases they lost. Often, the Protestant settlers were not physically forced off their land. As was the case with Henry Gibbon’s iron works on the Kenmare River in southern Kerry, most deponents considered the loss of the usage and/or profit from a lease or farm considerable enough to be delineated and its potential revenue estimated and included in the list of the deponent’s losses. Many of these lost properties were abandoned by settlers fleeing local rebel forces to take refuge in castles or seek passage to England in port cities.

One of the more perplexing developments prevalent in county Kerry is the considerable evidence of Protestant turncoats. John Abraham and his fellow deponents from Ballycarty Castle claimed to have been told incorrectly by Robert Blenerhassett that a deal for the safety and livelihood of the castle’s Protestant warders had been struck and that John Blenerhasset repeatedly aided the rebels in their attempts to gain control of the countryside:¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Examination of John Loe (TCD, MS 828, 247r).

¹²⁵ Deposition of Elizabeth Harris (TCD, MS 828, 255r), Examination of Margery Blackwell (TCD, MS 828, 245r).

¹²⁶ Please note that the last name “Hassett” and “Blenerhasset” are referring to the same family. It is often shortened in the depositions, though several deponents make a point to note that Capt. John Hassett and John Blenerhasset are the same person (Michael Vine, TCD, MS 828, 207r).

for *that* the said Robert Hasset, confessed to one of these deponents, Nicholas Roberts, and others, that the truth was that he had made no quarter at all, but referred him and all the English ward to Mr. Florence MacCarty's [Capt. Sugan] own breast. They also say that without any consent or fore knowledge of any of the warders, when the castle was to be yielded up the said Robert Hasset called up unto him all the warders, and caused them all to be disarmed, of those arms, who were of their own proper goods, and so they were delivered up to the Irish ward, himself being permitted to live within the Castle among the Irish...also they say that in Captain John Hasset's house that was situated within the Barn of the said Castle, they have often served dinners of the prime Rebellers of that country to come in and out, and eat and drink and be merry; also Florence MacCarty about the latter end of August *last* Came to Captain John Hasset's house within the said Barn and Lay there one night and so went away again [the] next morning, the said Florence being then a prime man at the siege of Tralee the said *Capt* John Hasset was often seen to parlay with divers of the rebels, and letters past to and fro betwixt them.¹²⁷

Indeed, the Blenerhassetts, though being English Protestant settlers, were often implicated as acting in concert with Sugan's rebel force in county Kerry. Josias White, who was robbed and driven from his house near Ballycarty, claimed that he often saw Robert Blenerhasset grinding corn for the rebels.¹²⁸ Oddly enough, we do have a deposition from a member of the Blenerhasset family: Arthur. The account, however, is entirely second-hand stories of the siege at Tralee Castle and clashes between English forces and Lord Muskerry's force in county Cork. It seems likely that despite leaving a deposition, Arthur participated in his brothers' duplicity. Perhaps most damning is that the deposition is the *only* account from county Kerry which does not list the goods and animals the deponent lost during the rebellion.

It was not only the Blenerhasset family that aided the rebels and/or switched allegiances entirely; Abraham alone names more than a dozen men and families of county Kerry that had become Catholic. John Williams, a Protestant warder of Tralee Castle, joined Sugan's rebel

¹²⁷ John Abraham and others, (TCD, MS 828, 211r).

¹²⁸ Deposition of Josias White (TCD, MS 828, 217r).

force soon after the castle was given up.¹²⁹ Gregory Dickeson names five Protestant men who had “turned papist” since the beginning of the rebellion, forcing conversion upon their wives and families as well. John Crosby, a gentleman freeholder, talked openly with the rebels and gave food and drink to any rebels who “came within a bow shot of [his] land.”¹³⁰ Perhaps the most astonishing of these is John O’Connor who, despite having a typically Irish last name, was purportedly a Protestant minister prior to the outbreak of rebellion.¹³¹ The list of men and women who reportedly converted or reverted to Catholicism is surprisingly long in a sparsely populated county like Kerry; nearly thirty individuals in all are documented in the depositions, and several deponents claim in addition to those they named that many more in the county also converted.

Perhaps the most interesting case comes from Edward Vaucier, a self-proclaimed British Protestant gentleman from Tralee. Vaucier provides a harrowing account of his experience. After being driven from his home in Tralee, he took refuge in Tralee Castle, where he assumed a leadership role amongst the Protestant warders. Later, he and two others attempted to escape in the summer of 1642. In doing so, he received fourteen wounds from rebel swords, and was shot once in the right shoulder. He saved himself by jumping from a nearby rock into the river and swimming a mile downstream.¹³²

However, Daniel Spratt, a fellow warder of Tralee Castle, gives a very different account of Vaucier’s actions. Vaucier, Spratt claims, was a rebel double agent of sorts. Vaucier, as a principal gentleman of the town of Tralee, was well-respected by the local community and subsequently the warders of the castle. In February, according to Spratt, before the castle had

¹²⁹ Michael Vine, (TCD, MS 828, 207r).

¹³⁰ Daniell Spratt, (TCD, MS 828, 210r).

¹³¹ Deposition of Gregory Dickeson, (TCD, MS 828, 272r).

¹³² Deposition of Edward Vaucier (TCD, MS 828, 284r).

been besieged for a month, Vauclier rode to the gate of the castle and unsuccessfully attempted to convince the warders to give themselves over to the rebel forces. Afterwards, rather than taking up in the castle with the other warders as Vauclier claimed, Vauclier instead sent for his wife, who herself was taking refuge in Tralee Castle, and led her out. Furthermore, Spratt claimed that by the end of the siege when all of the deponents had “only quarter for life and one suit of clothes a piece...Mr. Vauclier had no less than about eleven horse loads of goods.”¹³³ In 1642, most Protestants who encountered rebels were robbed of everything; Spratt’s emphasis on the sheer volume of goods Vauclier retained serves as yet another implication that he was working for the rebels. Furthermore, Vauclier’s story of harrowing escape seems far-fetched at best. It is far more likely that Vauclier had struck a deal for his family’s and his own livelihood, probably under the condition that he attempt to persuade the warders of Tralee Castle to surrender; alternatively, as a well-off gentleman, he may have paid the rebels off. Regardless of how Vauclier secured his good standing with the rebels, it is yet another account of Protestants in county Kerry joining, or acting in concert with, the Catholic rebel forces. This suggests that in the dynamic landscape of Protestants and Catholics, English and Irish, confessional allegiance or ethnic identity may have become more muddled by the beginning of the rebellion than has been previously assumed. At the very least, it shows the opportunistic nature of most settlers. Vauclier, after all, was an English Protestant of good standing in Tralee; his willingness to work with the rebels whose goal was the creation of an officially Catholic state apparatus in Ireland is surprising. As the Blenerhassets and other stories show, Protestants were not only willing to work with the rebels, but convert or revert to Catholicism. This suggests several things about the nature of seventeenth-century Irish society, and perhaps British religious awareness as well.

¹³³ Daniell Spratt, (TCD, MS 828, 210r).

First, it suggests that that Irish society, at the community level, was less intensely religious, or, at the very least, less fervent in the adherence to the differences of Catholicism and Anglican beliefs. At this point in Ireland, where Catholics and Protestants had coexisted for nearly a century, confessional identification may have been merely a classification, a way to identify one's political allegiances instead of a matter of faith. Rather than caring about whether one's neighbor believed in transubstantiation, identifying someone as Catholic meant that they recognized the Pope's political authority—and likewise the right to determine religious doctrine—rather than the King's. Political, temporal allegiances are notoriously far more flexible than religious and spiritual convictions. The plentiful evidence of Protestants willing to change sides suggests that, in county Kerry at least, matters of religious doctrine were most likely relatively unimportant; if converting—or pretending to convert—was what saved a British settler's family and livelihood, then they could live with consuming a few transubstantiated Eucharists.

County Kerry was, in many ways, a unique province. One of the more isolated provinces, with very few British settlers, it may be most surprising that even sixty some odd depositions survive at all. The evidence that we do have portrays a dynamic relationship between settler and native Irish Catholic. The fact that very few British Protestant settlers lived in the county may have provided the impetus for so many to be willing to work with the marauding Irishmen. Unlike in Ulster and eastern Leinster, the Irish rebels operated in a somewhat orderly and humane fashion. Most of the robberies and both castle sieges were conducted by Capt. Sugan or members of his force. It comes as no surprise then, that Stephen Love tells us that it was Sugan who brought the laws from the Confederation of Kilkenny to Kerry in November 1642, enacted a county council, and provided instructions for Kerry's

gentleman and clergy to send men to the National Assembly.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Sugan and other Irish rebels began their operations far sooner than other historians have surmised. By December, Kerry experienced its first robberies and attacks, and by January Sugan had assembled a rude force with which he began to quell what few Protestant strongholds existed in the county. The differences between county Kerry and its neighboring counties' experience will become evident as we turn to a far more Protestant-populated and violent account of the rebellion in county Limerick.

¹³⁴ Stephen Love, (TCD, MS 828, 124r).

3 COUNTY CLARE

The only county in Munster west of the river Shannon, Clare is bordered by Limerick to the south and east across the river and its only landed connection to the Irish isle is along its northern border with Galway. In the northeast Lough Derg marks Clare's boundary, before the Shannon continues, headed south along Clare's eastern border. As the Shannon divides both the city and county of Limerick from Clare in the southeastern corner, it widens into a broad estuary, which separates central and western Clare from counties Limerick and Kerry, respectively. Surrounded by water on three sides, county Clare was and continues to be one of Ireland's most isolated areas. Edward MacLysaght, in his 1950 history of seventeenth-century Irish culture, remarked that Clare was "admittedly an inaccessible region" and that "in the first decade of the twentieth [century], many people...had never seen a motor car or even a railway train. There was, in fact, no really essential difference between the daily life which I remember there as a boy and that of the seventeenth century."¹³⁵

It comes as little surprise, then, that Clare's rebellion is unique among the three counties in this study. For starters, Clare was the only of the three counties in this study with a single family who controlled most of the entire county. The O'Briens had been Kings of Thomond (a common name for an area with roughly the same borders as present-day county Clare; in the seventeenth century the two names were used interchangeably) since even before the twelfth-century Norman conquest. Not only were the O'Briens the sole landowners in the county, many family members, especially the patriarch, were converted Protestants. In 1543, Murrough O'Brien was attracted to an alliance with the English crown through the surrender and regrant policy, accepting the title Earl of Thomond, and the family later converted to Protestantism and

¹³⁵ Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century*, (Dublin: Cork University Press, 1950), 5.

adopted Anglicized customs and dress in order to curry even more favor with the English crown's administration in Dublin.¹³⁶

These developments meant that the O'Brien lands in county Clare were largely secured and safe from any proposed plantation of Munster. Donogh O'Brien, the fourth Earl of Thomond, was continually trying to garner more income from his lands in Clare, and early in the seventeenth century he even began purchasing lands across the Shannon in Limerick. In addition, the O'Briens had planted several English and Dutch Protestant farming and artisanal families in the county, forcing off Irish Catholic families who could not afford the higher rents. Furthermore, these settlers the O'Brien family recruited often brought with them other families eager for new farmland in western Ireland.¹³⁷ Despite this, it should be noted, the county was still overwhelmingly Irish and Catholic in its makeup – certainly more so than either Limerick or Kerry.

This unique situation created a distinctive response to, and experience of, the rebellion. Unlike in Kerry or Limerick where local leaders, often Catholic, joined the rebellion, the rebellion was openly resisted by the sole authority in the county, Murrough O'Brien, the sixth Earl of Thomond. O'Brien, who soon became Lord Inchiquin, played a key role as the chief commander of Royalist forces in Munster until he declared for Parliament in 1644. In his own holdings in Clare, Inchiquin did his utmost to protect his settlers and their goods, opening the doors to his own castles for refuge. He often attempted to act as a mediating influence in his lands, rather than being complicit in the violence perpetrated by his kinsmen. When four hundred English and Dutch settlers of the area planned an armed resistance to the insurrection,

¹³⁶ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 330.

¹³⁷ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 430.

Inchiquin enjoined them not to, saying “that course would further provoke and incense the Irish to anger than otherwise.” During the siege of Limerick Castle in May 1642, Inchiquin again endeavored to mollify tensions between the rebels and the besieged Protestants within. Inchiquin attempted to persuade the Protestants within the castle to not attempt any bold, military action against the rebels.¹³⁸ Such action would have been folly, as there were mostly laymen, women and children inside the castle, and by the spring of 1642 the rebel forces in the area had organized themselves. Perhaps the best account of Inchiquin’s actions describes an episode after the fall of Castle Clare, when “the right honorable” Inchiquin confronted his Catholic brother Dermot O’Brien at Bunratty in front of John Smith, asking him “why they did commit such rebellious and outrageous actions against the king’s subjects?”¹³⁹

It is rather surprising that the most common name associated with rebel actions in Clare is O’Brien. Indeed, Inchiquin’s brothers and cousins were undoubtedly leaders of the insurrection in county Clare – Dermot, Daniel, and Turlough being the most commonly named. The McNamara family is accused of perpetrating robberies and violence nearly as much as the non-titled O’Briens, though it is unclear whether they gathered forces with the O’Briens or acted of their own accord. How could it be then, that the rest of the O’Brien clan led a county-wide rebellion that the most powerful member of the family took no part of? This question requires further research into the seventeenth-century O’Brien clan, an area the depositions do not shed much light on, though John Smith and others give evidence of numerous public arguments between the Earl and some his relatives during the rebellion.

¹³⁸ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 031r), 707.

¹³⁹ Deposition of John Smith, (TCD, MS 829, 011r) 670.

This familial division is most likely in part due to the nature of the O'Brien family's anglicization and conversion to Protestantism; it was a political decision, one made to maintain the security of O'Brien land and garner more influence with the English government. However, the political advantages of adopting the reformed faith might not have carried any weight with the personal religious leanings of the O'Briens. Despite their publicly Protestant associations, the O'Briens did not "impose their beliefs upon their tenants, or hinder the missionary endeavors of the Counter-Reformation clergy who worked within their lordship." Indeed, "there was no knowing what the disposition of the family towards Catholicism or Gaelic culture might be in the future."¹⁴⁰ Therefore, other than the British and Dutch settlers that Inchiquin brought into the county, the rest of the population was entirely Irish Catholic. In fact, there is evidence that local proprietors in Clare attempted to remain aloof and protect only their lands from the Irish, similar to the actions taken by many communities after the outbreak of war in England. Unfortunately, those Catholics and Protestants who attempted this were soon swept up in the rebellion, for better or worse respectively, by the sheer number of the county's Irish Catholics committed to the rebel cause.¹⁴¹

Despite concerted efforts made by Inchiquin to protect his Protestant tenants and their goods, several deponents believe the Earl acted subversively. Edmund Mainwaring claimed, admittedly with second-hand evidence, "since taking the castle and before [Inchiquin] entertained with meat, drink, and lodging the said besiegers."¹⁴² At the beginning of the rebellion, according to Mainwaring, Inchiquin appointed Dermot O'Brien, Connor O'Brien, and Donogh McNamara among others to be "Captains and Commanders within the county," adding

¹⁴⁰ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 430.

¹⁴¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 500.

¹⁴² Deposition of Edmund Mainwaring, (TCD, MS 831, 031r), 707.

that he “pretended [it was] for the good of the County.”¹⁴³ Many of these sentiments probably arose because Inchiquin was the only O’Brien who did not revert to Catholicism and rebel. Furthermore, Inchiquin’s own kinsmen most likely used their familial connections to further their own goals. Dermot O’Brien, when disarming and robbing Urias Reade, told him it was “by virtue of a warrant from the Earl of Thomond.”¹⁴⁴ Two other tenants maintain his complicity in the rebellion or, at the very least, his indifference. However, given the Earl’s vast holdings of land in county Clare it seems counterintuitive that he would attack his own tenants. In the shortest of depositions where only a date, a list of the land and goods the deponent was deprived of, and the recognizable attackers are named, Thomond’s name is never included. Furthermore, the evidence given in the depositions claiming Thomond acted in concert with the rebels is either hearsay or based on the judgment of the deponent alone, who himself would most likely have been resentful of his landlord’s untouched belongings while his own were plundered.

The fact that Inchiquin did not convert to Catholicism and eventually became the chief commander of British forces in Munster did not stop the actions of his kinsmen. As the argument witnessed by John Smith suggests, the rest of the O’Brien clan cared little about the allegiances of their patriarch. Indeed, although we know that the Earl and his family had been Protestant since the late sixteenth century, we have no information on the confessional affiliations of any other O’Brien. As even the Earl himself did little to suppress Catholicism in his domains, it is probable that he did not force Protestantism upon his kinsmen. Even if they had outwardly converted, his kinsmen most likely retained Catholic practices and beliefs, and possibly even attended Catholic mass which was still openly held in the county.

¹⁴³ Deposition of Edmund Manwaring, (TCD, MS 829, 070r).

¹⁴⁴ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

Regardless of whether these O'Briens had reverted to Catholicism or remained Catholic all along, they were doubtlessly the leaders of the Catholic rebellion in Clare. Dermot, Turlough, Donnell, Daniel, Connor, Donogh are all named often by deponents as their chief attackers, or the leaders of the agents of rebellion who had accosted them. John McNamara is also frequently named, at times along with a member of the O'Brien clan but also often on his own. John Meale's family, for instance, was stripped and robbed in the middle of the night, 12 December 1641, by an estimated 200 men under the command of McNamara and Jeffrey Burke.¹⁴⁵ Meale's three children later perished due to the cold, and he also names nearly a dozen neighbors who were robbed by McNamara and Burke's force. Juiane Pitch also recounted how her goods and clothes were taken from them by John McNamara; her husband William and her children were physically assaulted in the process. William Pitch died soon after.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of these seemingly isolated attacks, McNamara's forces likely acted in concert with the forces led by the various O'Briens, even if they were originally conceived separately. McNamara is often named as one of the chief attackers at Ballyally, Banck, and Limerick Castles. The individual attacks perpetrated only by the McNamara force were probably either raids foraging for supplies for the larger force or occurred, as in Meale's account, before a larger county-wide force had been consolidated.

As in Kerry, direct connections to the wider rebellion are not present. However, the justification given by various rebels for insurrection and their actual conduct is enough reason to assume that the larger forces of rebels in Clare—the O'Briens especially—had contact and were acting in concert with the wider, Ulster-begun rebellion. Despite their claims of Irish atrocities, many Protestants personally were often unharmed if they were lucky enough to be attacked by

¹⁴⁵ He was most likely related to the Burkes active in Galway, Earls of Clanricard.

¹⁴⁶ Deposition of Juiane Pitch (TCD, MS 829, 033r).

rebel forces led by the O'Briens. Mary Young, for instance, admits that when Limerick Castle was surrendered all of the English inside were given quarter.¹⁴⁷ Giving quarter to English Protestants was practiced by Phelim O'Neill's forces in Ulster, and most depositions in Armagh claim Protestants went unharmed, by O'Neill's order, until after the Irish were defeated at Lisnegarvey in late November, 1641. Moreover, as elsewhere in Munster the several hundred rebels led by the O'Briens throughout the county often attacked castles, fortified positions that would have been ignored if their insurrection had simply been a popular revolt. While there is no explicit evidence linking the rebellions in Clare and Ulster, the nature of the rebellious assaults led by the O'Briens in Clare and their motives for rising are indicative of their connections to the wider rebellion, begun in Ulster.

In addition to their actions, the sentiments and statements of Clare's most important rebels echo those of O'Neill's Ulster rising. Similar cries of rebelling in the King's name or with his commission are recounted by all the deponents who encounter rebels affiliated with the O'Briens' larger army: William Chambers who was held captive for eight days with the Graneere family by a group of rebels was told by Teige O'Brien that the rebels had the King's seal to approve any rebellious actions; Dermod O'Brien reportedly told Inchiquin that the rebels did not have to justify themselves as their actions were by the King's direction; even Mary Danter was told by the rebels who accosted her family that the King was a frequent mass-goer.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, near the beginning of the siege at Ballyally Castle, one of the rebels approached the castle walls, telling the Protestants within that "[for] what they did they had a

¹⁴⁷ Deposition of Mary Young, (TCD, MS 829, 060r).

¹⁴⁸ Deposition of Mary Danter (TCD, MS 829, 047r), Deposition of William Chambers (TCD, MS 829, 013r), Deposition of John Smith (TCD, MS 829, 011r).

warrant from Sir Phelim O'Neill & likewise to banish all the Protestants out of the kingdom."¹⁴⁹

Though they most likely did not have any such document, for Sir Phelim O'Neill's original intentions were not to harm any Protestants within the country, it shows that even a minor rebel in the O'Briens' force was cognizant of the Ulster rising and later, once Ballyally was surrendered to the rebels, Dermot O'Brien exclaimed to the defeated refugees that "what they did was *by directions from his majesty*."¹⁵⁰ Perhaps the most representative of the rebels' own belief in these justifications comes from Urias Reade, who was told by Christopher O'Brien that the rebels had Charles I's commission for the insurrection "which if I had not certainly known (quote he) I would never join with them."¹⁵¹

That these justifications were often connected to the King's fraudulent seal (or his direction or actions), which Phelim O'Neill presented in order to legitimize the rebellion, is reason enough to assume the larger forces present in Clare were connected with the rebellion. Though, possibly due to its isolation and certainly due to the rumors present everywhere in Ireland, Clare also exhibited some of the more colorful stories of rebel ideas about the rebellion's designs and its legitimacy. Donnell O'Brien, who imprisoned the Graneere family, was apparently unaware of Irish claims for legitimacy under the British monarch when he cut a deal with the family concerning their livestock:

Sir Donnell replying...my command was not to sell them or to make them away & adding further quote he if ever the King of England recover the kingdom of Ireland, the Englishman [Graneere] will have his cows again by law but if *the king of Ireland* & the gentry of this *same* kingdom maintain the same, *keep the kingdom*, be sure you will be answerable for the said cows towards the maintenance of the Irish, *our* army.

¹⁴⁹ Deposition of John Hawkins, (TCD, 829, 066r).

¹⁵⁰ Deposition of John Hawkins, (TCD, 829, 066r).

¹⁵¹ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

Obviously, Donnell O'Brien's account is rife with factual and theoretical inaccuracies which make his own personal view of the rebellion's legitimacy hard to grasp: is he speaking of only Charles I or is he insinuating Ireland has an altogether different King? Has Charles shed his title of King of England to become the Catholic King of Ireland? A definite understanding from this short account is impossible, but it is indicative of the complicated—and at times perverse—justification which had permeated the ranks of the rebel forces. Others blamed Charles I rather than claiming his approval; the rebels who robbed Francis Haselope told him that the rebellion was the King's fault, by “setting such mean & base governors to rule over” the Irish, naming specifically Sir William Parsons and Sir Richard Bolton.¹⁵² Thomas Rountree had perhaps the least substantiated story explained to him by John McNamara: the Queen had come to Ireland with Charles I's second son James, Duke of York, , in order to crown him as the Catholic King of Ireland, and it was for their cause that the rebels had risen.¹⁵³ While this array of reasons given by lesser rebels portrays how disorganized the countryside became (something that will be addressed later), the more common reasons given by forces led by the O'Briens—and their targeting of castles and other Protestant strongholds—is reason enough to assume their affiliation with the wider rebellion.

The size of O'Brien's force itself is harder to grasp than forces in other counties. Unlike in Kerry or Limerick, few deponents encountered the main rebel force as a whole; most encountered bands of 60-100 men led by the various members of the O'Briens who robbed and stripped the deponents. Indeed, the only time the force seems to have been together during the early stages of the rebellion was at the siege of Ballyally Castle, and even then a large amount of the rebel force dispersed in the middle of the siege, moving to Limerick where the siege of

¹⁵² Deposition of Francis Haselope, (TCD, MS 829, 039r).

¹⁵³ Deposition of Thomas Rountree, (TCD, MS 829, 002r).

Limerick Castle was having greater success.¹⁵⁴ Those few depositions that do provide an estimate put the rebel numbers around 1,000. This is probably an overestimate, a benchmark number serving to portray that the O'Briens commanded far more than 100 or 200 soldiers. The actual force was probably closer to 600-700. Despite Clare's isolation and low population density, this force—more than double what Sungan commanded in Kerry—is not all that surprising; aside from what few settlers the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Earls of Thomond had enticed to settle in Clare, the county was still overwhelmingly Irish Catholic.

The lone siege in the county that is detailed well and by multiple deponents took place at Ballyally Castle. Many of the deponents in the Clare depositions were some of the 100-150 men, women, and children who took shelter in the castle and were subsequently besieged for several months.¹⁵⁵ All of the major members of the O'Brien family mentioned above are named as the chief attackers, along with several members of the McNamara family and other lesser rebels.¹⁵⁶ Many Protestants fled to the castle after order in the county had broken down and after many had been robbed—whether by O'Brien-led forces or individual Irishmen—of their household goods and animals. They were besieged soon after, and by 4 February the main force of rebels arrived, “with colors flying in a hostile & rebellious manner.”¹⁵⁷ The siege proceeded in multiple stages. Near the end of February a group of thirty Protestants armed themselves and attempted to break the siege. Sallying forth from the front gates, the much smaller force of Protestants attacked the rebel camp while the vast majority of the Irish force was observing Catholic mass, killing approximately thirty rebels while only losing a handful of their own.¹⁵⁸ However, the guerilla

¹⁵⁴ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066r).

¹⁵⁵ Most deponents say 100, but Urias Reade (TCD, MS 829, 028r), who provides the most detailed account, claims 150.

¹⁵⁶ Deposition of Francis Bridgman, (TCD, MS 829, 017r).

¹⁵⁷ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

¹⁵⁸ Deposition of Francis Bridgman, (TCD, MS 829, 017r).

operation was doomed to failure, and the Protestants retreated back inside the castle once the alarm had been raised in the rebel camp.

After that incident, a large portion of the rebel force departed to aid in the siege at Limerick.¹⁵⁹ The smaller remaining force “built a fort and divers trenches” and prepared to continue the siege indefinitely.¹⁶⁰ After Castle Limerick fell in early June 1642, the force that had left after the Protestant sallying force returned, with cannon from the siege at Limerick in tow. With this they fired multiple shots against the castle walls. The rude cannon had little effect on the sturdy walls of the castle, and, as at Tralee in Kerry, they only fired perhaps a dozen shots.¹⁶¹ The “second siege,” as most of the deponents term the return of the large O’Brien-led force, continued for several weeks after the Irish artillery fire.¹⁶²

As spring and summer wore on, the situation for the Protestants inside the castle became dire. Unable to leave the castle to collect fresh water or firewood, the Protestants “were driven to that extremity and want of victuals that they were glad to eat the flesh of horses, dogs and also to feed upon nettles docks & other weeds.”¹⁶³ Indeed, at least thirty of the original refugees perished during the siege, mainly the elderly and small children.¹⁶⁴ Several, like Beatrice Hepditch, left their remaining belongings in the castle and escaped through breaks in the siege lines to look for shelter in the Irish countryside.¹⁶⁵ When the castle finally did surrender around the middle of September 1642, the Protestants were treated by the O’Brien-led army in similar

¹⁵⁹ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066r).

¹⁶⁰ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

¹⁶¹ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

¹⁶² Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

¹⁶³ Deposition of Beatrice Hepditch, (TCD, MS 829, 073r).

¹⁶⁴ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066r).

¹⁶⁵ Deposition of Beatrice Hepditch (TCD, MS 829, 073r).

fashion to those who surrendered to Sugan in Kerry.¹⁶⁶ Their goods were stolen from them, but no additional harm came to any of the Protestants who had managed to survive the siege.

The siege at Ballyally Castle and its result reveal just how organized the rebellious O'Briens were; they managed to control a large force of approximately 700 Irish rebels. Though the makeup of this army is not revealed by the depositions, as elsewhere the rebels likely had little regular, martial experience. Moreover, the O'Briens' forces were sustaining multiple sieges at the same time. Their ability to leave a minor force at the siege at Ballyally and go with the majority of their troops to aid the siege at Limerick for an extended period of time, without lifting the first siege, speaks to a well-organized and disciplined militia – something not often attributed to rebel forces early in the rebellion outside of those organized by Phelim O'Neill in Ulster. The artillery, if only a couple of rude and ill-equipped cannon that were moved around the countryside by O'Briens' forces, indicate that the rebel forces under the control of the O'Briens resembled an army more than a rag-tag group of rebels.

Furthermore, the treatment of the Protestants by O'Brien-led forces was not necessarily violent. This was not always the case, for some Protestants died at the hands of the O'Brien force; Urias Reade recounts how at the siege of Ballyally on 6 August 1642 several of the castle's caretakers who had fallen into rebel hands were barbarously murdered and their bodies were "never suffered to be buried until the dogs & crows did pick & eat up their carcasses."¹⁶⁷ Despite these isolated incidents, the attacks on Protestants by the O'Briens and their forces were not intended to be violent, whether or not they became so. All of the rebels in the depositions were robbing Protestants; the difference in Clare lies in that the O'Briens' rebels appropriated

¹⁶⁶ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066r).

¹⁶⁷ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

Protestant goods for the use of their army.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, as Beatrice Hepditch's account hints at, the entire reason the Protestants were besieged at Ballyally Castle was because they were not willing to give up their goods. Once she and several others resolved to leave their things behind, her account suggests it took little effort to leave the castle without interference from the besieging rebels.¹⁶⁹ John Hawkins was told by Thomas Chamberlain, a corporal in the rebel army, "that they (meaning the English) should carry no part of their goods away but must be seized upon & kept for the maintenance of the kings army (meaning themselves)."¹⁷⁰ While resistance to these seizures resulted in minor skirmishes and at times the deaths of Protestants, it was not the intention of these forces to kill English Protestants. Appropriation of goods for the use of the rebel forces, not wanton killing of Protestants, was the reason the O'Brien armies accosted the inhabitants.

Every accosted Protestant in the depositions begins his or her account by listing the items that the rebels stole from them, usually including livestock, crops, household wares, clothing, and at times arms and ammunition. Most deponents also include their land, which they were either forced off or fled from, and the debts owed to them, whether by Irishmen who had joined the rebellion or by men who had lost their lives in the unrest. Maximillian Graneere, for example, claimed to be "desperate by reason that the debtors partly are murdered by the Rebels."¹⁷¹

Many of the deponents' debtors were Irishmen. This was due in large part to the plantation schemes which had supplanted many Irish farmers. Many were forced to migrate to cities and become wage laborers or participate in various proto-industries, such as the ironworks

¹⁶⁸ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066r).

¹⁶⁹ Deposition of Beatrice Hepditch, (TCD, MS 829, 073r).

¹⁷⁰ Deposition of John Hawkins (TCD, MS 829, 066v).

¹⁷¹ Deposition of Maximillian Graneere (TCD, MS 829, 036r).

owned by Henry Gibbon related in the second chapter. Those who remained in their local area were forced to become tenant farmers to the new, English landowners, paying rents that were often double or triple what they had paid previously. These farmers would have also been affected by the bad harvests that struck all of Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century. As rents rose and yields diminished, farmers were forced to borrow not only money to buy necessities like food and clothing, but draught animals to complete their harvests. Even Irish Catholic nobles had become increasingly impoverished. In 1637, Dermot McFyneen Carty was forced to mortgage his vast properties to the Earl of Cork in exchange for a cash loan. When it became evident that Carty had no intention of paying Cork back, he rented the property out exclusively to Protestants rather than the Irish tenants Carty had maintained.¹⁷² While this heavy indebtedness among the Irish population did not spark the rebellion per se, it certainly created a disgruntled, underprivileged majority with an interest in upending the establishment. Irishmen had been increasingly disinherited as the English had begun planting Protestants more directly; they had no vested interest in maintaining any semblance of authority. Furthermore, as plantation policies had created a much larger indigent population than had previously existed in Ireland, there were more men available who would have been willing to rebel. These factors certainly swelled the ranks of rebel forces, and may account for the large force that quickly assembled in a county as sparsely populated as Clare.

It should be noted that the picture painted of the rebels in Clare so far is strictly in reference to those under the command of the main rebellious force led by the O'Brien clan. Indeed, the popular insurrection against Protestants, apart from the main rebel force, was far more violent and destructive in Clare than in either Kerry or Limerick. Looting by individuals or

¹⁷² Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 327.

small bands of Irish often turned violent. Peeter Belson recounts how members of the O'Flaherty family from Connacht stole all his goods and those of Peter Ward, before killing Ward, his wife and his son.¹⁷³ Thomas Mayden, himself stripped and robbed by rebels under Daniel O'Brien's agency, could not name any of the various men who had murdered his English neighbors though they must surely have been common Irish Catholics.¹⁷⁴ William Culliver's mother and daughter were beaten by several local rebels, and later died from their injuries.¹⁷⁵ John Cookesson named several of his Protestant neighbors who were murdered by John McThomas, whose name appears in Cookesson's deposition alone. The dichotomy between the popular rebellion and the O'Briens' organized rebellion is best displayed in the deposition of Neptune Blood. Blood himself had his cattle and some of his household goods and arms stolen by a band of men led by Hugh O'Hagan and Teige O'Brien. No physical harm came to him but Blood recounts a bevy of murders and their common Irish perpetrators from his surrounding area. The entire Steele family was killed "in a most cruel & barbarous manner" by William oge Nellane and James oge Cashy. Blood's friends Margery Owens and Michael Hunt were likewise killed by other individual Irishmen.¹⁷⁶

The reasons given by the unorganized rebels for rebellion and robbery are also far more base and hostile than those given by rebels affiliated with the O'Briens' force. Redmond Nollane, who appears sparingly in the Clare depositions, claimed "it will never be [again] that any Englishmen (meaning the Protestants) shall enjoy a foot of land in this kingdom."¹⁷⁷ Rebels such as Nollane and the O'Flahertys were not acting as part of the wider rebellion and they were

¹⁷³ Deposition of Peeter Belson (TCD, MS 829, 058r).

¹⁷⁴ Deposition of Thomas Mayden (TCD, MS 829, 054r).

¹⁷⁵ Deposition of William Culliver (TCD, MS 829, 059v).

¹⁷⁶ Deposition of Neptune Blood (TCD, MS 829, 026r).

¹⁷⁷ Deposition of Urias Reade, (TCD, MS 829, 028r).

probably not even interested in the establishment of a Catholic kingdom under the British monarch; theirs were simply acts of opportunistic self-interest.

The frequency of popular violence in Clare is surprising: Munster is generally believed to have experienced relatively little popular violence – at least in comparison to Ulster or Leinster. Regardless, its occurrence is most likely due to an important societal dynamic present elsewhere in Munster that Clare lacked: the presence of a substantial ethnically and religiously mixed community. Though the Earls of Thomond had imported English and Dutch settlers to the county, there had been no confiscation and redistribution of Irish Catholic land; indeed, since the Irish Earls of Thomond had participated in the Surrender and Regrant program, as well as outwardly converting to Protestantism, Clare remained outside the boundaries of the Munster Plantation. Plantation in Clare was more of a rhetorical possibility than an actual threat, used to ensure its principal lord continued to tow the government line.¹⁷⁸ This meant that most Irishmen of Clare were ignorant of Protestants or English in general. The opposite was true in Kerry and Limerick; where plantation had created significant heterogeneous communities—or, at the very least, created common contact between homogenous enclaves—Clare had none. The softening of confessional lines and fervor associated with confessional identification never had the chance to take place in Clare.

What news that reached them of political developments in the previous half-century was most likely the product of rumor and hearsay. While it has been noted how prevalent rumor was among the Protestant deponents and how it manifested itself in the accounts of the rebellion they have given, it should also be stressed that spurious information and stories were just as prevalent on the Irish Catholic side of the conflict. Moreover, stories of Protestant atrocities during the

¹⁷⁸ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 495.

unrest or English Protestant usurpation of traditionally Irish land and power would have been more readily believed in a county like Clare where few Irish dealt with Protestants on a daily basis, if ever.

Like the images of bloodthirsty Irish Catholics drummed up in England by the likes of Temple and others, the rumors spread about the Protestant counterattacks throughout Ireland were largely fictional. They created an ugly caricature of Protestants. This image could be more readily accepted by Irish Catholics in counties like Clare that had little or no interaction with actual settlers. These readily believed stereotypes not only reinforced the residual resentment toward English Protestants felt by the Irish Catholics in Clare, it also gave local Catholics in the area a symbolic—though distorted—face of Ireland's Protestant community and concrete examples of aggression against the Irish Catholics that needed to be avenged.

Furthermore, as was evident in the examples of popular violence above, many of these encounters were bloody. If someone in the deponent's family did not lose their life to an opportunistic, lone rebel, then their neighbor or neighbor's spouse was often brutally beaten or hanged. This wanton violence is in stark contrast to the conduct of the larger force led by the O'Briens. Violence, rather than part and parcel of their attacks on local Protestants, was only a threat; it was a tool the rebels could use to extort what they wanted, not an end goal. This is best illustrated during the siege of Ballyally when the leaders of the refugee group within the castle walked out to the rebel camp, presumably in an attempt to negotiate an end to the siege. Instead of negotiations, the men were seized and imprisoned. Gallows were erected within sight of the castle walls and rebels threatened to hang the men if Ballyally did not surrender. When it became evident that not only were its warders not going to surrender the castle but that they also were not willing to negotiate for the men's lives, the refugee leaders were simply freed and

returned to the castle.¹⁷⁹ The violence perpetrated by rebels operating outside the larger rebellion occurred not just because they had the opportunity—indeed, the O'Briens could easily have executed Ballyally's best men—but because the widespread caricatures of Protestant settlers had dehumanized the Protestants in the county. In Clare, it was far too easy to murder someone who was usurping your father's and kinsmen's land, political power, and natural rights; in Kerry, murder was more difficult because you were often killing a neighbor, a business partner, or perhaps even a friend.

Therefore in Clare, far more than in Kerry or Limerick, we see a marked disconnect between the popular rebellion and the rebellion proper. While Kerry's experience agrees with commonly held notions that Munster saw little or no popular rebellion, as Catholic leaders like Sugan, Muskerry, and Barry gained control of the province relatively quickly, Clare presents a far different case. Though certainly not to the same extent as Ulster or eastern Leinster, county Clare experienced a popular rebellion which has previously been undocumented. This popular uprising occurred in part due to sheer opportunism among a poor, greatly indebted Irish Catholic populace to be sure, but also because Clare lacked the interpersonal, interconfessional relationships which grew out of the heterogeneous communities created by the Munster plantation.

¹⁷⁹ Deposition of Beatrice Hepditch, (TCD, MS 829, 073r).

4 COUNTY LIMERICK

The third and final county in this study, Limerick, is farther inland than the truly littoral counties, Kerry and Clare. The river Shannon runs through the city of Limerick from east to west, opening into a broad estuary west of the city, forming Limerick's border with Clare before emptying into the Atlantic. Although Kerry borders Limerick to the west, the county is centrally located in Munster with Tipperary to the east and Cork to the south. The county more closely resembled its inland neighbors than it did either Kerry or Clare; its farmland was more suitable to sustainable agriculture, and its denizens were not subjected to the same harsh weather prevalent on the Irish Atlantic coast.

Ethnically and religiously, Limerick was in a far different situation than Kerry or Clare when rebellion broke out in October 1641. Limerick had a significantly higher concentration of residual Protestants left over from the plantation era than either Kerry or Clare. Large tracts of land were owned by the Earl of Cork, some of which he had planted with Protestants. These inland lands were harder to attract settlers to than the coastal south, causing Limerick, despite being well-settled with Protestants, to pale in comparison to the heavy settlements around Cork, Youghal, Kinsale, and Waterford. The city of Limerick itself was heavily Protestant, though many Old English Catholics still held considerable political sway; the mayor of Limerick was either a Catholic or quickly converted to Catholicism after the outbreak of rebellion.¹⁸⁰ In addition, as in Cork where Protestant settlers tended to cluster around the most fertile farmland along the Blackwater, Lee, and Bandon rivers, the densest Protestant settlement occurred along the Maguire, west of Limerick itself. Throughout the rest of the county, British settlement was

¹⁸⁰ Many deponents state that Dominick Fanning, the mayor of Limerick, was an active participant in Muskerry's force in the county, though we have no information as to his confessional allegiance prior to the conflict. Deposition of John Lilles (TCD, MS 829, 132r), Deposition of Thomas Mallowe (TCD, MS 829, 160r).

sparse at best, and Old English Catholics still controlled most of the land directly surrounding Limerick itself: “there was a sequence of settler communities dominating particular localities rather than a broad-spectrum settler society.”¹⁸¹

Limerick was still largely Irish Catholic, though it contained a larger population of Old English Catholics than Kerry or Clare. This is most likely how the rebellion was able to spread so quickly throughout Munster; the leadership of Old English Catholics had not been sufficiently broken by the Munster plantation. When Catholic leaders in Limerick and Munster in general first heard of a Catholic uprising they rose as well, often being able to gather large Catholic forces ready to join the cause. The force these leaders amassed in Limerick was not only the largest of the three counties in this study, but most likely the largest of the province.

The force, formally led by Colonel Garrett Barry and Donogh MacCarthy, Lord Muskerry, was roughly 6,000 strong by August 1642, with some estimates placing it as high as 7,000. Garrett Barry was later appointed by the Confederacy as the commander of all Munster forces.¹⁸² The large number of troops raised in such a short period of time is the result of two factors. First, a radical proclamation by Munster’s ailing Lord President, William St. Leger, that all Catholics were rebels, regardless of their actions, caused many Irish and Old English Catholics to take up arms for the rebel cause. Furthermore, not long after St. Leger’s announcement, the Catholic clergy in Ireland made a similarly polarizing statement: the rebellion was, essentially, a conflict for the very souls of Catholics in Ireland; any Catholics who did not actively help the cause—let alone assist the opposition—were excommunicated. Second, Barry, a colonel in the Irish army that Wentworth had raised prior to his impeachment, was the

¹⁸¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 340. Also, consult the map and description provided 336-7.

¹⁸² Lenihan, *Consolidating Conquest*, 110-111.

commander of a force lodged on the southern coast at Kinsale, awaiting transportation to the continent where they were to be dispatched for Spanish service.¹⁸³ Soon after the rebellion broke out, Barry received terse orders from St. Leger to disband his force.¹⁸⁴ Instead, Barry led his force inland, soon joining the rude forces raised by various Catholic leaders in Limerick and Cork.

Barry's force is not only exceptional in its size but also its makeup. In contrast to the rebel forces raised in Kerry or Clare, it contained a large number of men who had formal military training. Ireland, after all, really only came into contact with the continental military revolution through its returning officers, as many had been formally trained in Flanders and/or Spain in the latest military tactics and weaponry. In the north and east, men like Owen Roe O'Neill and Thomas Preston returned to their ancestral homeland and formed the base from which the Confederate military would be created.¹⁸⁵ Through Barry, a professional soldier like those on the continent, Munster was given a head start in this process. For instance, Barry introduced Swedish battle formations to the Confederate army.¹⁸⁶

The troop estimation given above of 6-7,000 is corroborated by most deponents and contemporary observers of the force. Just less than half of this force was professional soldiers who were under Barry's command at Kinsale; there were originally 3,000 soldiers slated to leave for Spain, and a small number deserted when they marched inland. The force's burgeoning numbers shortly after arriving in Limerick are testament to both the willingness of local Irish Catholics to rebel, but also the fear of the consequences attempted neutrality would bear after the statements made by both St. Leger and Irish Catholic priests. Furthermore, they may have been

¹⁸³ Corish, "Breakdown," in *A New History*, 294.

¹⁸⁴ Clarke, *Old English*, 195.

¹⁸⁵ Loeber and Parker, "The Military Revolution," in *Independence*, 72.

¹⁸⁶ Ohlmeyer, "Ireland," in *The Civil Wars*, 82.

coerced to join by local Catholic leaders who themselves figure prominently in deponents' accounts of this force in Munster.

Further evidence that over half of Barry's force was an amalgamation of troops raised locally in Limerick by Catholic leaders is that, until he was appointed by the Confederacy later in 1642 as chief commander of Irish forces in Munster, his troops could hardly be considered solely under his control. Patrick Purcell, Oliver Stephenson, Viscount Muskerry, Lord Roch, and various Fitzgeralds and Fitzedmonds are named as leaders of this force by deponents just as often as Barry is. Despite Barry's history as a professional soldier, these local magnates had raised their own forces; while they were willing to work with other Irish Catholics with similar goals, at this early, chaotic period in the rebellion with no firm central authority or leadership apparatus established, they were likely unwilling to remit control entirely of the forces they had raised. For example, long before Barry's force made its way to Limerick, Oliver Stephenson had raised 400-500 men and taken William Jarrett's cattle around Christmas 1641.¹⁸⁷ While understandable, the presence of possibly up to a dozen leaders with their own objectives was surely the cause of some headache as even after the consolidation of the Confederacy, confederate commanders often bickered amongst themselves.¹⁸⁸ This may have contributed to the rebels' defeat at the hands of Inchiquin's royal forces in the only pre-confederation open field battle in Munster, at Liscarroll, 25 August 1642.¹⁸⁹

Nevertheless, the large force eliminated nearly every Protestant stronghold in county Limerick, and by the end of summer 1642, the county was effectively under complete Catholic control. As opposed to Kerry and Limerick, where we only have accounts of a small handful of

¹⁸⁷ Deposition of William Jarrett, (TCD, MS 829, 205r).

¹⁸⁸ Ohlmeyer, "Ireland," in *The Civil Wars*, 86.

¹⁸⁹ Wheeler, "Four Armies," in *Independence*, 46.

castle sieges, in Limerick there are dozens. Most of these castles have similar experiences as those we have already seen in Kerry and Clare: many Protestants left the countryside to take refuge in the castle, the castle was besieged by an organized band of rebels working in concert with the wider rebellion, and after a period of time the warders come to terms of surrender with the besieging force. These durations varied: for example, castle Cullen withstood six months of siege before it eventually surrendered, while Newcastle was given up by its chief warder Anthony Hawkins after only three days.¹⁹⁰ The results were often similar when the sieges ended: terms were decided that guaranteed the Protestant warders their lives and their goods should they promise to disperse and either seek passage back to England or not oppose the rebels militarily. These agreements, as in Clare and Kerry, were often complied with in part by the rebels who let the Protestant warders leave unharmed – but only after robbing them of all their goods, often including stripping the clothes off their backs.

Where the castle sieges in Limerick differ from those we have already discussed is that they were characteristically bloodier than in Clare or Kerry. John Stone was “barbarously murdered” outside of Newcastle soon after the warders surrendered.¹⁹¹ After Kilfeyney Castle was surrendered, three Irishmen and one Irish woman were hung by Edward Lacy, purportedly because they had betrayed their people by converting to Protestantism.¹⁹² Two Protestants were murdered as a warning outside of Castle Limerick, and the same tactic was used within sight of Castle Pallis in early August, 1642.¹⁹³ During the siege at Castle Limerick, an unlucky Protestant lookout was shot out of the steeple in mid-May, dead before he hit the ground.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Deposition of Thomas Brown, (TCD, MS 829, 131r), Deposition of Richard Lacky, (TCD, MS 829, 136r).

¹⁹¹ Deposition of George Winter, (TCD, MS 829, 140r).

¹⁹² Deposition of Elizabeth Dowdall, (TCD, MS 829, 138r).

¹⁹³ Deposition of Ursula Lory, (TCD, MS 829, 180r), Deposition of Donnell Thorpe, (TCD, MS 829, 155r).

¹⁹⁴ Deposition of John Lilles (TCD, MS 829, 132r).

Perhaps the bloodiest scene that took place during a castle siege in Limerick was at Castle Cullen. Besieged for several months by Barry's main army, the situation within the castle was dire: with many of the original 200 men, women and children dying of starvation and dehydration, the warders had been forced to kill the horses in the castle's stable and parse the meat out among the remaining refugees. When these makeshift foodstuffs ran out, a company of men took it upon themselves to organize a party to sally forth from the castle gates and forage the crops from a nearby field that was ripe for harvest. How the rebel forces learned of the excursion is unclear, but regardless of whether it was by a Protestant informant or simply that the rebels expected a foraging expedition to the nearby field at some point, they were ready. The rebels laid in wait in the fields and ambushed the party of Protestants who fled to the castle as quickly as possible, though by the end of the attack twenty-nine Protestant men, women and children laid dead outside the castle walls. They were left there by the rebels to rot, and entreaties by the warders asking the rebels for permission to allow them to give their compatriots a Christian burial were denied.¹⁹⁵

Scenes such as this were not uncommon in Limerick while the rebels were clearing out Protestant castles and strongholds. Irish Catholic rebels in Limerick showed a much higher level of animosity toward the Protestant refugees; the nature of its rebellion—both proper and popular—was far more consistent with the rest Ireland than with either Clare or Kerry. This may be partially accounted for by the simple fact that in Limerick, unlike to the west and north, Protestants were fighting back. Indeed, in Limerick we have this study's only occurrences of local Protestants banding together and creating counter-rebellious forces. John Cottrell, for example, had his house near Newcastle burned down by the rebels in early April, and shortly

¹⁹⁵ Deposition of Richard Winter (TCD, MS 829, 172r).

thereafter he joined a small Protestant militia of one hundred men and forty horses. Led by the Protestant landowner John Southwell, they encountered a rebel force on 12 April and, after an initial exchange of volleys, pursued them a few miles to the local grange where Southwell was killed by a rebel salvo.¹⁹⁶

An incredibly harrowing account of a Protestant company is given by James Keene and Thomas Dayly. In early March, Keene and Dayly had joined a local company of Protestant musketeers led by a professional soldier, Captain Charles Price. After journeying south to an army garrison in Mallow in county Cork to resupply, the musketeers were ambushed by a rebel force as they returned to their station north of Limerick. The company was annihilated by the rebel fire, with only a handful of Protestant soldiers escaping into a nearby abandoned house. The rebels initially attempted to burn the house down, but the Protestant volleys from inside cut down so many that the Irish settled with firing on the house from afar. Keene and Dayly maintained a firing position in the loft of the house for over two hours, exchanging shots with the rebels before they tired of the attack and left. The ambushes portrayed in these attacks were characteristic of rebel and seventeenth-century Irish tactics in general. They occurred everywhere; a little more than a week after Keene and Dayly's perilous experience at the house in between Limerick and Mallow, they attacked a company of Irishmen who were hiding in the tall grass outside of Mitchelstowne Castle, presumably lying in wait to ambush any Protestant warders attempting an escape.¹⁹⁷

These proactive Protestant assaults on rebels in county Limerick would surely have raised the ire of Catholic rebels; soldiers and commanders alike would have been less inclined to offer

¹⁹⁶ Deposition of John Cottrell, (TCD, MS 829, 202r).

¹⁹⁷ Deposition of James Keene & Thomas Dayly, (TCD, MS 829, 168r).

sanctuary to Protestant refugees leaving a surrendered castle after they had just been attacked by the refugees' kinsmen. English policy did not help matters. Possibly spurring the popular violence against common English and Protestants alike, English army forces like those joined by Dayly and Keene adopted a strict stance against the insurrectionaries. Seen by the English Crown and Parliament as treasonous rebels, no prisoners were taken; "all Irish [were] put to the sword."¹⁹⁸ Regardless of the charters signed between Barry's force and surrendering Protestants, the warders were often treated roughly—certainly rougher than in Kerry—and most surrenders were accompanied by a handful of Protestants being hanged by the soldiers.

The larger population—both Protestant and Catholic—of Limerick in comparison to Kerry and Clare not only meant there were more castles for the rebels to attack, but also that there were more forces, and the chaotic story of Limerick the depositions tell is far more similar to Ulster than to Limerick's western neighbors. Unlike in Kerry, where Sugan's force was the only large band present, Limerick had at least one other large force roaming the countryside during the initial period of rebellion. Edward Lacy, a local Catholic landowner, raised and directed as many as 1,000 men and it is unclear whether he acted in concert with the large force nominally led by Barry or even with the wider rebellion itself. Though Richard Harte heard Lacy claim to have the King's commission and declare that it was the Lord Justices (Borlase and Parsons) and the Lord President of Munster (St. Leger) who were the actual rebels, Lacy's actions were far more violent and destructive than the other rebel forces in the area.¹⁹⁹ Lacy and his brother John were far more likely to pillage and murder indiscriminately than other rebels, though this may just be a reflection of the county in general. For example, in March 1642 Lacy hung two of William Weekes' neighbors without claiming to have any justification. Lacy

¹⁹⁸ Ohlmeyer, *The Civil Wars*, 78.

¹⁹⁹ Deposition of Richard Harte (TCD, MS 829, 156r).

returned multiple times to rob Elizabeth Dowdall's house; the final time he approached with all 1000 of his men and laid siege to her house. After she surrendered they pillaged everything they could find before burning it to the ground.²⁰⁰ When John Arthur heard Lacy had hanged the man whom he had loaned out several milking cows to, Arthur approached Lacy in the hope of having his cows returned. Lacy—portraying some uncharacteristic restraint—gruffly told Arthur to leave and never approach Lacy again if he did not wish his children to become orphans.²⁰¹

Though Lacy was most likely acting in the name of the rebellion proper, he is perhaps best viewed as an example of the differences between county Limerick and county Kerry. Whereas Kerry experienced very little popular violence, the Limerick depositions are rife with individuals acts of robbery and violence perpetrated against Protestants. For example, William Ridgley encountered a band of about forty local Irishmen on 8 December 1641. He recognized his neighbor Art McCahir as the leader of the band, and having already been robbed once on All Saints' Day (1 November), Ridgley fled. He watched from afar as McCahir and the local rebels stole everything of value from Ridgley's house while shooting at it indiscriminately.²⁰² A member of the O'Kelly family from Clare crossed the Shannon in the summer of 1642 and stole Symon Colston's boats.²⁰³ Richard Winter, on his way to his fields, was approached by four strangers who assaulted him and took his clothes.²⁰⁴ Thomas MacGibbon entered the city of Limerick in mid-February and hung four Protestants as a warning to those who remained.²⁰⁵ In mid-April MacGibbon burned Richard Baxenden's mill in Mohowny and many of the houses in

²⁰⁰ Deposition of Elizabeth Dowdall, (TCD, MS 829, 138r).

²⁰¹ Deposition of John Arthur (TCD, MS 829, 125r).

²⁰² Deposition of William Ridgley (TCD, MS 829, 165r).

²⁰³ Deposition of Symon Colston, (TCD, MS 829, 167r).

²⁰⁴ Deposition of Richard Winter (TCD, MS 829, 172r).

²⁰⁵ Deposition of George Peters, (TCD, MS 829, 042r).

that settlement.²⁰⁶ Nicholas O'Helahan justified robbing Ann Eaton's family by telling her that he had been ordered by both the Pope and the Queen to rob all Englishmen he could find. Her mother died five weeks later from wounds after being hit with a rock in the altercation.²⁰⁷ These occurrences are just a few of the numerous accounts in Limerick of individual Irishmen acting of their own accord, using the rebellion as justification to rob and kill Protestants. The prevalence of popular unrest in Limerick tends to be understated. While it surely did not experience the same, horrific levels of atrocities as Ulster or Leinster (the forced drowning of 100-plus Protestants at the River Bann, for instance), these examples show clearly that robberies and acts of violence apart from those perpetrated by rebel forces occurred with some frequency in Limerick.

This can be accounted for through the nature of seventeenth-century society in Limerick. Limerick had large settlements of Protestants. While areas around Cork, Youghal, and Waterford were certainly more populated with Protestants than Limerick, its neighbors Kerry and Clare paled in comparison.²⁰⁸ Settlement was particularly large in the city of Limerick itself, though, it should be mentioned, its mayor Dominick Fanning joined forces with Barry and the other Catholic nobles in the county soon after the rebellion began.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the settlements in Limerick adhered more strictly to guidelines and goals of plantation policy. Most of the lands that were planted in Limerick were bought by the Earl of Cork when the original adventurer defaulted. Under Cork's stewardship, these settlements became the closest example of the homogenous, Protestant-only communities the Crown had intended them to be. Through making contact with English and Dutch artisans and farmers, often at the port of Limerick, Cork

²⁰⁶ Deposition of Richard Baxenden, (TCD, MS 829, 144r).

²⁰⁷ Deposition of Ann Eaton, (TCD, MS 829, 159r).

²⁰⁸ For approximations of settlements created from the depositions, see: Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 337.

²⁰⁹ Deposition of Nathaniel Wood, (TCD, MS 829, 193r).

actively recruited Protestant families to settle on his plantation land outside of Limerick. Cork influenced the city of Limerick as well, as he encouraged urban development in order to foster public order and create a safe environment that would entice more English to settle in the area. Moreover, as Lord Inchiquin, the Irish Protestant Earl of Thomond in Clare, expanded his landholdings across the Shannon and into Clare, he imitated Cork's successful practices.²¹⁰

While these policies created the homogenous Protestant communities that the Crown had originally intended when it began the plantation policy, their existence adversely affected Protestant well-being during the uprising. Without the commingling of Protestant and Catholic enclaves as there had been in Kerry, the rigid, religious-based classifications did not have the same opportunity to soften. Furthermore, an increased level of plantation in Munster would have forced a larger percentage of Irishmen—in an already well-populated county—off their land in place of those Protestant communities. These Irishmen would have rightfully characterized their ancestral land's usurpers by their Protestantism, fostering sectarian animosity already prevalent in European society that had no chance of being quelled by the bonds of personal relationships due to the replacing community's closed nature.

In this light, it is perhaps most surprising that here we also find many conversions to Catholicism amongst the Protestant population. The evidence suggests, however, that these may have been less willing converts than those found in county Kerry. Unlike the accounts given of the Blenerhassets or Edward Vauclier, there are no accounts of Protestants converting and then actively aiding the rebel forces. Some deponents are able to give names of those who had converted: John Massey claims his neighbor William Langford was now Catholic; Henry Briggs asserted that the Evans family of Ballingarry freely converted; Faith Grady even mentioned that

²¹⁰ Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 310-330.

her local Justice of the Peace converted.²¹¹ Many of the conversions noted in Limerick, however, are non-descript, such as Elizabeth Lodge who simply relates that “divers other” Protestants have converted to Catholicism.²¹² Limerick is unique in that, rather than a series of willing Protestants becoming Catholic being related, many of the conversions in Limerick seem to have been forced. John Cooke was robbed shortly after the rebellion began in late October by a company of seventy-five rebels under the command of Conn O’Rourke. O’Rourke offered to return Cooke’s goods if he promised to start going to mass with his fellow Catholics. When Cooke questioned O’Rourke on the alternatives, O’Rourke threatened to kill Cooke if he refused the offer. Excusing his actions to the record taker by citing his children, Cooke admitted to converting to Catholicism on the spot, though he later regretted the decision.²¹³ Ann Eaton, who was accused by a separate deponent of converting, admitted that the same O’Helahan who stole her goods and struck her mother with the eventually fatal blow told her that if she went to mass with him no harm would come to her. Eaton converted, staking her very survival on her willingness to comply with the request.²¹⁴

Many of these coerced conversions were perpetrated by common Irishmen unassociated with the rebellion proper or any of the larger forces in the county. While the disenfranchisement and loss of political authority was what Irish Catholic landowners were rising against, common rebels likely viewed the rebellion in a more confessional light; popular rebels characterized themselves and the purposes of the rebellion as both Catholic and Irish. The sought-after reorientation of the social order meant that the newcomers—Protestant settlers—were fair game. Their being the object of attack had little to do with their religious practices and more to do with

²¹¹ Deposition of John Massey, (TCD, MS 829, 200r), Deposition of Henry Briggs, (TCD, MS 829, 129r), Deposition of Faith Grady, (TCD, MS 829, 209r).

²¹² Deposition of Elizabeth Lodge, (TCD, MS 829, 201r).

²¹³ Deposition of John Cooke, (TCD, MS 829, 077r).

²¹⁴ Deposition of Ann Eaton, (TCD, MS 829, 159r).

the political and social authority they had usurped. Furthermore, as societal lines became more “religious confession was becoming the easiest way to sort the population” for both the English and Irish governments and the Irish population in general.²¹⁵ This classification system, solidified after Confederation in 1642, is perhaps best exemplified by the murder of Irish Protestants by Irish Catholics at Kilfeyney. In turn, English Protestants often viewed Catholics as guilty simply by being Catholic, regardless of whether they personally committed any acts of violence or robbery.²¹⁶ These views, coupled with the Protestant counter-rebellion and the lack of heterogeneous societies, likely spurred the violence and vitriol present in Limerick’s rebellion. Kerry and Clare are largely the exceptions to the rule; the chaotic, bloody rebellion in county Limerick is far more consistent with the rest of the island’s experience.

²¹⁵ Barnard, *The Kingdom of Ireland*, 14.

²¹⁶ Bottigheimer, *English Money*, 49.

EPILOGUE

By September 1642, Ormond controlled a large army of approximately 35,000 troops in Ireland. Considering these figures and the relative disarray that still existed in the countryside, Scott Wheeler has posited that had civil war not broken out in England, the insurrection in Ireland could have been easily suppressed as rebellions often had in the last century.²¹⁷ While this supposition is accurate when considering Ireland as a whole, the nuanced situation in western Munster—which this study has shown often shifted even town to town—shows the unique experience of each region during the opening periods of rebellion. While its uniqueness has been acknowledged by modern scholars, too often generalizations about the area have been made using information from (admittedly much more vibrant) counties near the Munster-Leinster border like Tipperary, and especially Waterford. Though it is certainly important to understand the rebellion in western Munster as part of a general insurrection that quickly enveloped the entire island, recognizing sieges and robberies as essentially local events—inherently subject to local history and personal attitudes—enriches not only the story of the rebellion, but our understanding of how Irish society functioned directly prior to this tumultuous period.

The importance of understanding each locality on its own terms is certainly more crucial for Clare and Kerry than it is for Limerick. Though certain similarities between the three counties exist (e.g., the conduct of rebel leaders after a castle siege had been broken, the haphazard movements and conduct of most rebel forces, Clare and Limerick both saw considerable popular violence), the nature of Limerick's rebellion more closely resembles its eastern neighbors than it does Clare or Kerry. In this study Limerick has largely been presented

²¹⁷ Wheeler, *Independence*, 45.

not only as a counterweight to the other two counties, but as a representation of the rebellion in Munster as it is often portrayed. Clare and Kerry both present special cases which have been routinely ignored in rebellion studies. While this may be because of a general paucity of sources (Clare and Kerry combined produced fewer depositions than Limerick, and barely one-fifth what Cork produced), they have also been ignored because they generally do not fit the same mold as other counties in Munster.

Kerry especially seems to have had a very different experience altogether; popular violence in the county was virtually non-existent. Even the sieges of Protestant castles were more orderly than anywhere else in Munster or Ireland. This is perhaps best exemplified at Tralee when Suga's rebels built gallows, and threatened to hang the Protestant men who had left the castle intending to negotiate. When the Protestant warders refused to negotiate for the men's lives, the rebels released the leaders, allowing them to rejoin their compatriots inside the castle walls. In contrast, there are numerous accounts of Lacy in Limerick attempting the same leverage-wielding tactics, and being even happier to hang the warders afterwards. Clare also presents its own special situation. Although the insurrection was led by Gaelic Irishmen as in other counties, its chief Gaelic Irishman, Lord Inchiquin not only attempted to mollify Protestant-Catholic tensions in the county but commanded most of Munster's troops who were fighting the very rebellion his kinsmen were propagating. Furthermore, Clare, which had by far the smallest population of Protestants of any of the three counties in this study, actually showed a higher incidence of popular violence than Kerry. The individual differences between all three counties exemplify—in a time when historians are continually finding new ways to weave the English, Scottish, and Irish experiences together—the importance of not losing an emphasis on localism. Local conditions often drove seventeenth-century events: whether it was Edmund

Mainwaring fabricating stories of the Earl of Thomond's collusion with the rebels, or Daniel Spratt correctly accusing Edward Vauclier of the same thing.

The stripping of Protestants by Irish rebels exhibited everywhere in Ireland was a symbolic inversion of the Protestant hierarchy which, while only nominally observed since plantation began, was more rigidly implemented in the 1630s by Charles I and the Protestant-controlled Irish Parliament. These deep-seated resentments at the quickly consolidated usurpation of traditionally Catholic authority in Ireland were what fueled the popular rebellion of Clare and Limerick, and its absence in Kerry speaks to the heterogeneous societies that the county developed. Indeed, in Kerry where Protestants and Catholics commingled on a regular basis, previous relationships built between neighbors likely curbed Irish Catholic urges for vengeance.

The very existence of these relationships fundamentally changes some of the basic assumptions historians have made when approaching the period. Petty loans of cash, draught animals, and livestock between neighboring Protestants and Catholics suggest a certain level of trust across confessional and ethnic boundaries. Economic relationships like these were vital to Irish commerce, whether it was between artisans and merchants in the cities or farmers in the countryside. Plantation policy intended to create closed Protestant communities failed due to basic economic needs and planters' willingness to utilize the Irish Catholic tenant pool cheaply available. In effect, this failing forced the two confessional communities to interact, in the process humanizing Protestants in the eyes of Catholics and vice versa.

This study has also attempted to liberate the rebellion from its place in the religiously-based propaganda of both the seventeenth century and today. The actions of Irish Catholic

rebels and Protestant refugees in Clare, Limerick, and above all, Kerry support Canny's assertions that practical, political reasons, such as patronage and privilege, more than religious ideology, spurred the rebellion.²¹⁸ The rebellion, in its very essence, was a clash of cultures; that religion, be it Protestant or Catholic, was considered by contemporaries and later historians alike as the foundation of the two disparate societies is inconsequential to the aims of the partisans.²¹⁹ These common assumptions and classifications are the result of both Protestant commentators and twentieth-century Irish politics; after the 1641 rebellion, specifically because of John Temple's *The Irish Rebellion* (1646) which for centuries was accepted as the official account of the insurrection, differentiations were no longer made between ethnic and religious groups. Religious and ethnic classifications in British and Irish society collapsed: Irishness was inherently Catholic, Britishness inherently Protestant. It was not William Seames' Anglicanism which was attacked in mid-January 1642, but the totality of his colonizing British identity.

²¹⁸ Canny, "Religion," in *Religion and Rebellion*, 43.

²¹⁹ Canny, "Religion," in *Religion and Rebellion*, 65.

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