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Politics, 1641-1660

Cunningham, J. (2018). Politics, 1641-1660. In J. Ohlmeyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge History of Ireland: ii, early modern Ireland, 1550-1730* (Vol. II, pp. 72-95). Cambridge University Press .
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-ireland/29FE325B8ECEB67F23BDABF22BA8B7D5>

Published in:

The Cambridge History of Ireland: ii, early modern Ireland, 1550-1730

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:

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Politics, 1641-1660 - John Cunningham

The fractured political landscape that resulted from the disaggregation of Irish society in 1641 cannot be adequately surveyed as a whole from any single viewing point. It is necessary to pursue instead a blend of differing perspectives, while grappling also with the increased multi-centring of elite politics that resulted from the outbreak of war across the three Stuart kingdoms. The recent and remarkable flourishing of scholarship on the history of Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century has gone some way towards meeting these considerable historiographical challenges, while the enhanced accessibility of key sources via digitisation seems set to underpin further worthwhile endeavour. The task of this chapter is necessarily more modest: to provide a coherent account of the key content and contexts of Irish politics between the 1641 rebellion and the Restoration.

Rebellion and Reaction

By 1641, recent political and military developments in the three Stuart kingdoms had served both to weaken the authority of the crown and to create a rich breeding ground for plotting and intrigue. Ireland's Catholic elite faced the challenges of exploiting the king's weakness so as to extract concessions, while also helping him to recover sufficient strength to make good on his promises. The first of these challenges could be pursued with some confidence via existing political means, but the second one presented enormous difficulties. In this context, the example of successful military action offered by the Scottish Covenanters proved alluring to some. The plot that led eventually to rebellion

can be traced to February 1641, when Rory O'More met Lord Maguire in Dublin and sought to persuade him that the Anglo-Scottish conflict had created a suitable opening for armed resistance in Ireland. Other leading men of the Ulster Irish became involved thereafter, and contact was maintained with Irish forces on the continent. O'More, his fellow MP Sir Phelim O'Neill and other future rebel leaders had lived through a period of rapid social and economic change and O'Neill himself was heavily in debt by 1641. They also feared the prospect of religious repression at the same time that a revitalised Irish Catholic church harboured ambitions for something more than mere and uncertain toleration.¹

In October 1641 the failure of the Ulster-led plot to capture Dublin Castle gave rise to a complex and unplanned scenario. The rebels had intended to overthrow the government and to secure a strong position from which to negotiate with the king, while blocking any intervention by the English parliament or from Scotland. They hoped too that other Catholic elites across the island would lend their support in the aftermath of a successful coup. Instead the survival of the government allowed it to remain the crucial arbiter of political initiative in the short term. Led by Sir William Parsons and Sir John Borlase, it was well positioned to shape external perceptions of the rebellion and to obstruct various Catholic attempts to establish contact with the king. In the opening weeks of the conflict, Sir Phelim O'Neill in Tyrone and rebel groups in several other counties drew up sets of objectives and grievances, encompassing issues such as Catholic religious freedom, the protection of their estates and

¹ M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion of 1641* (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1994), pp 192-212.

defence of the king's prerogative.² The capture of a large swathe of south Ulster and north Leinster was, however, an insufficient basis upon which to go about enforcing compliance from Dublin or extracting meaningful concessions from Charles I.

In the capital cities of the three Stuart kingdoms, the immediate focus was on organising an appropriate military response. With the king present in Edinburgh, the Scottish parliament professed itself willing to send forces to Ireland, but only in co-operation with the English parliament. The latter body showed little hesitation about assuming novel authority over Irish matters. Significantly, it also shared the Scottish assumption that military assistance was to be traded for possession of Irish land. The displaced Irish Protestants who flocked to London no doubt helped to foster an emphasis on revenge and on the prize of confiscated Catholic estates. Yet deep political divisions and uncertainties in Britain would ultimately help to retard the military response to rebellion in Ireland. The king's enemies refused to entrust him with control of newly raised forces, but the English parliament's authority in this matter was also open to question. The inevitable issue of finance also presented difficulties.³

Back in Ireland, fears and expectations of rapid and substantial military intervention from Britain exercised a key influence on political developments amidst widespread mistrust on all sides. The Dublin government's already strained relationship with the traditionally loyal Old English Catholics of the Pale was further undermined by its reluctance either to furnish them with arms against the Ulster rebels or to allow them to pursue a political solution to the

² Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion*, pp 213-84; N. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp 461-550.

³ Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion*, pp 261-84.

crisis via the Irish parliament. Baulking at local Catholic offers of mediation and assistance, it prorogued the parliament on 17 November and instead looked hopefully across the Irish Sea. Cut off from the king and unwanted in Dublin, many influential Catholics now began to consider an accommodation with the advancing northern rebels. At a series of meetings in Co. Meath, Rory O'More took the lead in rehearsing rebel grievances and in asserting their continued loyalty to the king. By 7 December the lords of the Pale had decided to make common cause with the rebel movement.⁴ At the same time, Catholics in many parts of the country were organising themselves at the county level to control and to defend their regions. These developments provided a basis for the subsequent establishment of wider co-ordinated Catholic political structures.

The Catholic Confederation

In the first half of 1642, the impetus for such national structures came from several directions. From Connacht, the earl of Clanricarde dispatched an envoy, his chaplain Oliver Burke, to consult with the Palesmen. While Clanricarde was anxious to quell the growing violence and to engineer a settlement between the Catholics and the king, the proposals carried by his chaplain included a plan for a provisional civil government in rebel-controlled areas. Shortly thereafter, in March 1642, a meeting of senior churchmen at Kells, Co. Meath declared the Catholic effort to be a just war and pronounced the excommunication of Catholics who declined to support it. The meeting also called for the establishment of a central authority. Further consultations took place in

⁴ Ibid., pp 240-60; A. Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland, 1625-1642* (Macgibbon and Kee, London, 1966), pp 171-92.

Kilkenny in May and June, where, a group of clergy and laity endorsed an oath of association intended to bind Ireland's Catholics together in defence of 'God, king and country'. A provisional executive council was also set up, and preparations were made towards elections for a representative assembly.⁵ The 'confederate Catholics' were to govern much of the kingdom until 1649, while also conducting peace negotiations and maintaining a diplomatic presence at various European courts.

The Catholics made significant progress in relation to political structures by the summer of 1642, but other developments severely curtailed their grounds for optimism. Early in the year their professions of loyalty to the Stuart monarchy had been met with a proclamation in which the king called on the Catholics to surrender. By April the arrival of substantial military detachments from Scotland and England also threatened to overwhelm the various Catholic forces. The ruthless character of the conflict in its early stages, encompassing massacres of Protestant settlers and vicious reprisals by government forces, reduced the possibility of any speedy political compromise.⁶ In London the proliferation of pamphlets that exaggerated the scale of Irish atrocities and linked them to alleged plots to root out Protestantism served to harden attitudes even further.⁷ Such literature helped to inform the political context in which the Adventurers' Act was passed by the English parliament in March 1642. This legislation offered 2,500,000 acres of Irish Catholic land for sale to investors, with the resulting monies being earmarked to finance the suppression of the

⁵ M. Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649: a political and constitutional analysis* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 1999), pp 27-42.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 27-9.

⁷ Perceval-Maxwell, *The outbreak of the Irish rebellion*, pp 269-74; E. Darcy, *The Irish rebellion of 1641 and the wars of the three kingdoms* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2013), pp 77-101.

rebellion. The Adventurers' Act was a telling statement of intent, as the English parliament intruded further into Irish affairs and committed itself firmly to an aggressive policy of mass confiscation.⁸

The arrival of Dr Henry Jones in London around this time seemed likely to reinforce this legislative initiative. He carried the damning evidence of depositions recently collected from Protestant refugees by a team of commissioners in Dublin.⁹ Despite the high hopes entertained by Jones and other Irish Protestants, the outbreak of civil war in England from August 1642 meant that the resources intended for Ireland were instead diverted towards domestic conflict. For the confederate Catholics, the king's decision to raise his standard against the English parliament lent greater credibility to their claims to be acting in defence of the royal prerogative. While the return home of Irish *émigrés* in the summer of 1642 boosted the Catholics' military capabilities, the first meeting of the confederate general assembly in Kilkenny in October presented a key opportunity to progress their political agenda. With representation from all four provinces, the confederates devised structures that Micheál Ó Siochrú has described as 'a fascinating mixture of conservatism and innovation'.¹⁰ This 'model of government' included a supreme council, which combined executive, judicial and administrative functions. This body was also to be accountable to the legislative general assembly. The intended roles of provincial and county councils were also set out. Among the key objectives formulated at Kilkenny was

⁸ K. Bottigheimer, *English money and Irish land: the adventurers in the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971), pp 30-114.

⁹ A. Clarke, 'The commission for the despoiled subject, 1641-7', in Brian MacCuarta (ed.), *Reshaping Ireland, 1550-1700* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2011), pp 241-60; H. Jones, *A remonstrance of divers remarkable passages concerning the church and kingdome of Ireland* (London, 1642). The 1641 depositions can be viewed at <http://www.1641.tcd.ie>.

¹⁰ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 44-50.

the restoration of the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic church before the Henrician Reformation. This issue would loom large in subsequent negotiations with Charles I, to whom the confederates at Kilkenny reaffirmed their 'true allegiance'.¹¹ They would spend the following six years trying to negotiate a peace settlement that could surmount not only the tensions that existed around loyalty to church and crown, but also the conflicts that raged within and between various parties of clergy and laity.

Towards a Truce

As turmoil engulfed the three Stuart kingdoms, political division and factionalism was far from unique to Kilkenny. Key members of the Dublin administration quickly adopted differing positions on a range of issues, not least the terms on which a settlement should be reached in Ireland. From late 1642 efforts made by both the king and the English parliament to secure political and military support in Dublin caused further difficulties within the Irish council. Sir William Parsons and others who opposed any compromise with Irish Catholics tended towards sympathy with the English parliament, which was committed to a hard line against the confederates.¹² The royalist position, personified in the Irish context by the earl of Ormond, was more pragmatic. As the three kingdoms continued in a state of flux throughout the mid-1640s, Ormond explored a range of political options, seeking an alliance that would best protect the interests both of Ireland's Protestants and of the crown. This complex process encompassed his negotiations with the confederate Catholics. Ormond was closely related to many

¹¹ Ibid., pp 44-54.

¹² R. Armstrong, *Protestant war: the 'British' of Ireland and the wars of the three kingdoms* (Manchester University Press, 2005), pp 43-83.

leading confederates and his master was keen to strike a deal with the Catholics that would allow him to withdraw forces from Dublin to England. In January 1643 Charles authorised Ormond and Clanricarde to meet with the confederates and to hear their grievances. At this point, the king also set out his position on what were likely to be the key issues. While he showed some understanding of Catholic discontent at the English parliament presuming to legislate for Ireland, he was unwilling to make religious concessions or to make changes around Poyning's Law, a statute that limited the independence of the Irish parliament. Charles was also determined to block any reversal of land transfers pre-dating 1625 and to retain his control over appointments to office in Ireland.¹³ While the king's stance would prove unsatisfactory to many confederates, a more conciliatory approach would have cost him much support both in Britain and among the Protestants of Ireland.

The confederates in turn set out their position in a remonstrance presented at Trim on 17 March 1643. In this document, they complained of the various legal disabilities under which Irish Catholics laboured and denounced the Adventurers' Act. In return for concessions from the king on Poyning's Law and other matters, they held out the prospect of substantial financial and military assistance. The confederates also directed fierce criticism at the lords justice, and especially Parsons, accusing them of goading Catholics into rebellion.¹⁴ Charles had already been preparing to remove Parsons from office and he issued the relevant order in early April. The Dublin government's ability to resist compromise was further curtailed a few months later when the king

¹³ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 61-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 62-3.

ordered that Parsons and three of his colleagues be removed from the Irish council altogether.¹⁵ In the mean time, the collapse of English peace negotiations at Oxford had increased the king's need for support from Ireland. The confederates' willingness to provide this support was further signalled in May 1643 when the general assembly appointed a delegation to negotiate a truce. Although a newly arrived papal envoy, Pier Francesco Scarampi, voiced objections, by 15 September a twelve-month armistice had been agreed. For the confederates, this appeared to create the space needed for meaningful negotiations.¹⁶

For Ormond, the truce was a mixed blessing. While Charles promoted him to the office of lord lieutenant shortly afterwards, the English parliament threatened to impeach him as a traitor. In the short term, the truce created unrest among substantial sections of the Irish Protestant community, including Lord Inchiquin and his forces in Munster. Its political impact was also felt in London, where it reinforced the parliament's efforts to undermine the king by associating him with the Irish Catholic cause. Because the Irish truce created the prospect of strengthened royalist armies in England, it encouraged the parliament to enter into an alliance with the Scots: the solemn league and covenant. This pact included a commitment to the introduction of Presbyterian church government across the three kingdoms. Subsequent efforts to persuade Protestants in Ireland to support the covenant tied its acceptance to the promise of increased material support from Westminster. These efforts proved most

¹⁵ Armstrong, *Protestant war*, pp 83-5, 92-3.

¹⁶ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 67-8.

successful in the north, where the sizeable Scots and local Protestant forces were gradually detached from the royalist cause.¹⁷

The Quest for Settlement

With sections of the Irish Protestant community agonising over the covenant, the confederates turned their attention to negotiations with the king. In March 1644 a confederate delegation reached the royal court at Oxford. It was led by Ormond's brother-in-law Viscount Muskerry. They were followed shortly afterwards by a group of Dublin-based Protestants who were determined to block any settlement. As before, the confederates offered military support to the king in exchange for a range of political, religious and legal concessions, including an act of oblivion for all offences committed since 1641. In response, the Irish Protestant agents sought reparation for their losses in the rebellion, the suppression of Catholicism and various other measures. The proceedings at Oxford highlighted some of the key obstacles that existed to a negotiated settlement, and led the king to refer the whole business back to Ormond in Ireland.¹⁸

By the time that fresh negotiations got underway in the autumn, Ormond had lost the support of further sections of the Protestant community, most notably in Munster. His determination to avoid major concessions on religion and other vital matters helped to ensure that no breakthrough was achieved. Ormond was not helped by the lack of clear instructions from the king. This factor, along with his need to protect his narrowing Protestant support base

¹⁷ Armstrong, *Protestant war*, pp 92-118.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 119-20; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 70-3.

placed Ormond in an extremely difficult position; Barry Robertson has suggested that his task 'probably bordered on the impossible'.¹⁹ The differing expectations of the three main groupings within the confederate movement, characterised by O'Siochru as the clerical, the moderate and the peace factions, were also set to have an increasingly disruptive effect on attempts at settlement.²⁰ By the spring of 1645, with no agreement in sight, the king was privately signalling his willingness to concede to confederate demands. With his prospects in England looking increasingly bleak, he had also grown desperate enough to pursue avenues other than Ormond's peace talks.

Following defeat at the battle of Naseby in June 1645, the possibility of military assistance from Ireland appeared to offer Charles's best hope of continuing the fight. The potential value of such an intervention had recently been demonstrated on a smaller scale in Scotland by an Irish expeditionary force organised by the earl of Antrim.²¹ A few weeks after Naseby the earl of Glamorgan, a Welsh Catholic royalist, arrived in Ireland. With the talks between Ormond and the confederates floundering on the crucial issue of ecclesiastical property, Glamorgan moved to negotiate a separate and comprehensive religious settlement. Agreement was reached by the end of August; in return for an army of 10,000 men, Glamorgan conceded the public exercise of Catholicism and other key points. Controversy surrounded the question of whether or not Charles had authorised the earl to make such far-reaching concessions, and the extent to

¹⁹ B. Robertson, *Royalists at war in Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1650* (Ashgate, Farnham, 2014), pp 99-123; Armstrong, *Protestant war*, pp 121-3.

²⁰ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 73-5, 83-6.

²¹ J. Ohlmeyer, *Civil war and restoration in the three Stuart kingdoms: the political career of Randall McDonnell, marquis of Antrim, 1608-1683* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp 129-51.

which Ormond was privy to Glamorgan's dealings remains unclear.²² In any case, various issues not covered by Glamorgan's secret treaty remained as obstacles to the wider political settlement upon which depended the confederates' speedy dispatch of military aid to the king. Another avenue pursued by the royalists, via the exiled Queen Henrietta Maria and Sir Kenelm Digby, was a direct treaty with Pope Innocent X. In Rome in November, Digby agreed to terms even more favourable than those granted by Glamorgan to the Irish Catholics.²³ By that point, however, a more meaningful papal intervention was already underway.

Rinuccini and the Ormond Peace

On 12 November 1645 Archbishop Giovanni Battista Rinuccini arrived in Kilkenny. As a papal nuncio, he became the most senior member of the *corps diplomatique* at the confederate capital. Rinuccini is the best known and most controversial of the many diplomatic agents who moved between Ireland and the continent in the mid-seventeenth century. The confederate representatives abroad, mostly clerics, sought official recognition and financial backing for their cause. Their main focus was on the major Catholic courts, where they could portray the Irish conflict as a religious war. Yet Ireland's established position as a minor dependent kingdom under the Stuart monarchy helped to ensure that France and Spain, mainly concerned with their own inter-rivalry, would refuse to engage fully with a confederate movement whose legitimacy was very much open to question. While limited supplies and some agents were sent, these

²² Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 87-8, 93-5; P. Corish, 'The rising of 1641 and the Catholic confederacy, 1641-5', in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne (eds.) *A new history of Ireland, iii: early modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976) pp, 314-16; Armstrong, *Protestant war*, pp 139-42.

²³ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 95-6, 99-100.

hesitant allies expected and received payback in the form of military manpower. The papacy was rather more enthusiastic about securing Ireland for Catholicism, but it could not offer the substantial financial or military supplies needed to bring this about.²⁴ Its main representative in Ireland, Rinuccini, would nonetheless exert a major influence on confederate politics after 1645.

Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin has shown how Rinuccini's mission was intended as the culmination of the gradual process whereby a resident and pastorally active Catholic hierarchy was put in place in Ireland after 1618. This influential grouping had been educated on the continent, where they were imbued with the confidence of the Catholic reformation. As a result, their objectives aligned with the main purpose of Rinuccini's mission: to establish the full and free practice of Catholicism in Ireland.²⁵ The nuncio's disruptive presence provided encouragement to those within the confederate movement who had already begun to express their disquiet at the failure to extract firm religious concessions from Ormond. Rinuccini was thus able to exploit existing tensions in pursuit of his own ends. Before long he had extracted further concessions from Glamorgan, including the appointment of a Catholic lord lieutenant and the admittance of Catholic bishops into the Irish house of lords.²⁶ The political fallout from the death of one of these bishops would soon disabuse Rinuccini of the notion that he had swiftly secured the future of Irish Catholicism.

In October 1645 Archbishop Malachy O'Queely of Tuam was killed in a skirmish near Sligo. His copy of the secret terms agreed in August between

²⁴ J. Ohlmeyer, 'Ireland independent: confederate foreign policy and international relations during the mid-seventeenth century, in eadem (ed.), *Ireland from independence to occupation, 1641-1660* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp 89-111.

²⁵ T. Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic reformation in Ireland: the mission of Rinuccini, 1645-1649* (Oxford University Press, 2002), pp 5-6, 39-81.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 123-6; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 83-5, 96-8.

Glamorgan and the confederates was duly discovered and swiftly dispatched to London, where it provided rich pickings for the parliament's propagandists.²⁷ By Christmas Ormond had become aware of the resulting publication. Realising its potential implications both for himself and the wider royalist cause, he had Glamorgan arrested in Dublin and charged with treason. Under Rinuccini's influence, the confederate supreme council reacted by demanding Glamorgan's release and by summoning a general assembly. When it convened early in February 1646, Rinuccini led the opposition to a final agreement with Ormond. Although Glamorgan had been released by this stage, the nuncio insisted that his earlier arrest had destroyed the credibility of his treaty with the confederates. He instead persuaded his audience to await full confirmation of the generous terms agreed between the pope and Sir Kenelm Digby, of which only a coded copy had reached Kilkenny. On this issue, the confederate leadership agreed to wait until 1 May, while pressing ahead at the same time in the long-running negotiations with Ormond.²⁸

The peace treaty that was eventually signed in secret at Dublin on 28 March was the result of a torturous process that had been stretched out over three years. Its terms included promise of a general pardon for all actions since 1641, the reversal of Stafford's plantations and abolition of the court of wards. Catholics were, moreover, to be allowed to occupy public office upon taking an oath of allegiance, as opposed to the oath of supremacy. Rather than providing a basis for settlement, however, the treaty would ultimately cause ructions within the confederate movement. A key point of disagreement subsequently was the

²⁷ *The Irish cabinet, or, His Majesties secret papers, for establishing the papall clergy in Ireland, with other matters of high concernment, taken in the carriages of the Archbishop of Tuam, who was slain in the late fight at Sliggo in that kingdom* (London, 1645).

²⁸ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 98-101; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic reformation*, pp 129-30.

extent to which the text of the treaty agreed in March differed from what had been discussed by the general assembly in the previous month. The further deterioration of the king's position around this time also shaped the political context in which the peace treaty was signed and disseminated. Before agreement was reached in Dublin, Charles had already publicly disowned Glamorgan and his religious treaty with the confederates. Any remaining hope that Charles would instead endorse Digby's treaty with the pope was dashed when the king surrendered himself to the Scots in April 1646. These developments meant that the vague promise in the Ormond peace treaty of 'further concessions' on religion appeared to carry little or no weight.²⁹

The confederate leadership, anxious for reconciliation with Ormond and the royalists, now faced a major dilemma. Although Glamorgan had been discredited, the publication of the Ormond peace treaty unaccompanied by the Welsh earl's religious concessions was likely to alienate the clerical party and split the confederate movement. Ormond was, however, opposed to the publication of Glamorgan's terms, while Clanricarde advised that such a move would do nothing to assist the king, who was by now firmly in the grip of the Presbyterian Scots. These issues dominated a meeting of confederate leaders that took place in Limerick early in June 1646. It was here that a furious Rinuccini at last learned that the terms of the Ormond peace treaty had already been finalised back in March. Pointing to the collapse of the king's cause in England, and emboldened by Owen Roe O'Neill's victory over a Scots army at Benburb, the nuncio now argued in favour of an outright Catholic conquest of

²⁹ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 100-6, 109-11; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic reformation*, pp 134-7.

Ireland. Having failed to win support for this stance, Rinuccini departed to attend a planned ecclesiastical congregation in Waterford. Meanwhile George Digby had arrived in Dublin, bringing word of the king's approval of the peace treaty that had been agreed with the confederates in March.³⁰

This news led Ormond to publish the peace treaty in Dublin on 30 July. The supreme council followed suit three days later and began its preparations to receive Ormond in Kilkenny. This caused the simmering tensions within the confederate movement to erupt. Within days Rinuccini and the Catholic church leaders who were gathered at Waterford had rejected the peace. They proceeded to declare its acceptance a breach of the confederate oath of association and threatened its main backers with excommunication. With support from the Catholic towns and key army commanders, Rinuccini and his allies quickly dismantled the peace treaty and, following a brief attempt at reconciliation, imprisoned some leading members of the peace faction. The nuncio was thereafter installed as president of a reconstituted supreme council, which was to rule in association with the ecclesiastical congregation. Determined to consolidate his political triumph, Rinuccini turned his thoughts to a military assault on the capital.³¹ Having been forced by the unexpected turn of events to retreat in haste from Kilkenny to Dublin, Ormond had now to weigh other options, including surrender to the English parliament.

³⁰ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 106-9; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic reformation*, pp 136-8.

³¹ P. Corish, 'Ormond, Rinuccini and the confederates, 1645-9', in Moody *et al.*, *A new history of Ireland*, iii, pp 320-1; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 108-17.

Protestant Alternatives

Ormond had invested considerable energy in the high-profile negotiations with the confederates, but he had also proven willing to explore other means to secure his ends. The details of these complex initiatives have been reconstructed in the work of Robert Armstrong and others. For example, Armstrong has drawn attention to Ormond's efforts in the summer of 1645 to create 'a cross-religious third force' attractive to disillusioned sections of both the confederate and covenanter movements.³² Kevin Forkan has stressed the significance of Ormond's secret dealings, via Humphrey Galbraith, with potential allies in Protestant Ulster in 1645-6.³³ Ormond was clearly keen then to pursue alternatives that would enable him to avoid major concessions to, and dependence upon, the confederate Catholics. An accommodation with the English parliament offered yet another possible means to avoid a treaty with the confederates. Just as in Kilkenny, Ormond also had influential allies at Westminster. When English parliamentarians became polarised into 'Presbyterian' and 'Independent' parties in the mid-1640s, most of Ormond's contacts gravitated to the former grouping. His good relations with influential Presbyterian politicians such as Denzil Holles helped to enable the prospect of an agreement to be explored in the second half of 1645. This endeavour was, however, extremely vulnerable to any change in the political landscape at Westminster.³⁴

³² Armstrong, *Protestant war*, pp 137-8

³³ K. Forkan, 'Ormond's alternative: the lord lieutenant's secret contacts with Protestant Ulster, 1645-6', *Historical Research*, 81 (2008), pp 610-35.

³⁴ P. Little, 'The marquess of Ormond and the English parliament, 1645-1647', in T. Barnard and J. Fenlon (eds.), *The dukes of Ormonde, 1610-1745* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2000), pp 83-99.

Such a change occurred in January 1646 when the English parliament appointed Viscount Lisle as commander-in-chief of a projected Irish expeditionary force. Lisle was ultimately named as the parliament's lord lieutenant of Ireland for a twelve-month period, commencing in April 1646. He was closely identified with the anti-Scottish party at Westminster; the political Independents opposed to the policies of Ormond's Presbyterian friends. Lisle's appointment by parliament put him in direct competition with Ormond, whose authority was derived from the king. The Independents' determination to row back on the solemn league and covenant and to limit Scottish political influence in post-war England also coloured their approach to Ireland. The eventual result was a plan for a distinctly *English* reconquest of Ireland, led by Lisle.³⁵ The political momentum that developed behind this plan by the beginning of 1647 drew upon the enthusiasm and experience of a group labelled by Patrick Little as 'the Irish independents'. With its roots in the pro-plantation Boyle circle of the pre-war period, its most notable member was Sir John Temple, one of those who had been dismissed from the Irish privy council along with Parsons in 1643.³⁶ Temple's opposition to any compromise with the confederates was given full vent in his book *The Irish rebellion*, which was published in London in 1646. This influential work, which made extensive use of evidence from the 1641 depositions, was designed to vindicate a harsh military solution to the Irish problem.³⁷ The middle ground from which Ormond sought to construct alliances with confederates, covenanters and others was to be rendered scorched earth.

³⁵ J. Adamson, 'Strafford's ghost: the British context of Viscount Lisle's lieutenancy of Ireland', in Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland from independence to occupation*, pp 128-59.

³⁶ P. Little, 'The "Irish Independents" and Viscount Lisle's lieutenancy of Ireland', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), pp 941-61.

³⁷ J. Temple, *The Irish rebellion* (London, 1646).

Lisle eventually made his way to Munster in February 1647, where his political and religious outlook quickly alienated some powerful local interests. Before long Inchiquin, the parliament's lord president of Munster, began efforts to mobilise opposition to Lisle at Westminster. Lisle's fate was sealed shortly thereafter by a further shift in the balance of power within the English parliament. Amidst wider moves by the Presbyterians against both their Independent rivals and the increasingly powerful New Model Army, Lisle's Irish commission was allowed to lapse in April.³⁸ These alterations reopened the prospect of an agreement between the parliament and Ormond. At Kilkenny in February 1647 a new general assembly had reinforced the clergy's earlier rejection of the Ormond peace treaty, and fresh confederate efforts at negotiation with Dublin made little headway.³⁹ Ormond was now increasingly inclined to surrender the capital to parliamentary forces, rather than pursue any further talks with the confederates. The necessary treaty was signed on 19 June 1647, paving the way for Colonel Michael Jones to take command in Dublin.⁴⁰

Royalism Revived

This development, and the series of disastrous military defeats suffered by the confederates over the months following, set the scene for a tense meeting of the confederate general assembly in November. Events in England also appeared to offer no respite, as the New Model Army had gained custody of the king and marched on London in August to secure its Independent allies in control of the

³⁸ Adamson, 'Strafford's ghost', pp 144-54.

³⁹ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 127-37.

⁴⁰ Little, 'Ormond and the English parliament', pp 93-7.

parliament. By this point Rinuccini had stepped down from the supreme council and a number of the men overthrown by him in 1646 had returned to positions of influence.⁴¹ Unsurprisingly, the Stuart monarchy remained central to confederate political calculations. The public hangman at Kilkenny was duly ordered to burn a radical tract penned by a Lisbon-based Irish Jesuit, Conor O'Mahony, in which he advocated the election of a native king.⁴² The confederates instead weighed up the possibilities of negotiating with Queen Henrietta Maria and of seeking the protection of a foreign prince. After considerable wrangling, agents were appointed to travel to Paris, Madrid and Rome. The confederates' main objective was to secure an agreement with the Stuart court in exile, which was to incorporate religious clauses approved by the pope. The relevant agents eventually took ship on 10 February 1648.⁴³

At the end of the previous year, Charles had signed an engagement with the Scots, with a view to building a new royalist alliance. The king hoped to capitalise on divisions within and between the English parliament and its army, with Ormond once again designated to play a key role in Ireland. Ormond travelled to France in February 1648, where the confederate envoys had arrived at the exiled royalist court. Following advice from Ormond, Henrietta Maria determined that once again negotiations between the lord lieutenant and the confederates offered the best way forward. The return to the royalist fold of Inchiquin's Munster forces and the Scots in Ulster was also to be pursued. Back in Ireland, Ormond's envoy Colonel John Barry sought to engineer a truce

⁴¹ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 151-61.

⁴² Corish, 'Ormond, Rinuccini and the confederates', p. 324; Conor O'Mahony, *Disputatio apologetica et manifestativa de iure regni Hiberniae pro catholicis Hibernicis contra haereticos Anglos* (Lisbon, 1645).

⁴³ Ohlmeyer, 'Ireland independent', pp 105-6; Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 161-69.

between Inchiquin and Kilkenny. Rinuccini was opposed to this, in part because he feared that a truce would open the way for Ormond's return. After attempting to rally episcopal support, the nuncio fled from Kilkenny on foot of an alleged assassination plot against him.⁴⁴

From this low point, the road to civil war among the confederates was short. Having taken refuge with Owen Roe O'Neill in the midlands, Rinuccini learned of the truce with Inchiquin, signed on 20 May. He also received false intelligence that Thomas Preston's Leinster forces were on the march to attack O'Neill's camp. Determined to repeat the tactics that had proven effective in 1646, Rinuccini and some bishops pronounced the excommunication of all who supported the Inchiquin truce. This time, however, he met with opposition not only from the supreme council but also from a substantial part of the episcopate. The supreme council decided on an appeal to Rome and seized control of the Jesuit printing press in Kilkenny to prevent the easy circulation of the nuncio's decree of excommunication. Over the months following, the council continued to outmanoeuvre and progressively to isolate the nuncio, who had relocated to Galway. When a new general assembly met on 4 September 1648, Ormond's return was imminent and those who backed an agreement with him appeared to be in the ascendant at Kilkenny.⁴⁵ Unfortunately for them, the wider royalist movement was again in turmoil after Oliver Cromwell's defeat in of an invading Scottish army at Preston in August.

Despite the growing urgency for a settlement, the second Ormond peace treaty was not formally signed until 17 January 1649. Religious issues had again

⁴⁴ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 169-74.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 177-86. Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic reformation*, pp 201-6.

proved to be the main sticking point, in particular the question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. News that Charles was to be put on trial for his life was one of the factors that helped to move matters towards a conclusion. But the executioner's axe ensured that the king would never have opportunity to accept, to reject or perhaps to fudge the terms that Ormond had agreed on his behalf. The confederate government was promptly dissolved, with twelve commissioners of trust being appointed to manage Catholic-controlled areas. The Ulster Scots, horrified by the regicide, were also reconciled to the lord lieutenant, who now derived his authority from the new king, Charles II. Although O'Neill held back from joining this royalist alliance, Rinuccini left Galway and sailed for home.⁴⁶

The Politics of Conquest and Defeat

Having at last secured a peace treaty with the Catholics, Ormond was now determined to win full control of the kingdom. Unfortunately for him, Michael Jones in Dublin and a handful of other commanders remained loyal to the English parliament. To make matters worse, the marquis of Antrim and other Catholics who opposed the peace had begun to explore the possibility of an alliance with the parliament. While the latter talks ultimately came to nothing, they encouraged the Irish involved to refrain from joining Ormond.⁴⁷ Meanwhile Oliver Cromwell was appointed in March 1649 to lead an expedition to Ireland. The leaders of the newly founded commonwealth could point to a range of justifications for a conquest: the royalist and Catholic threat from Ireland; revenge for 1641; the acquisition of Irish land to satisfy the adventurers; and the

⁴⁶ Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland*, pp 185-201.

⁴⁷ Ohlmeyer, *Civil war and restoration*, pp 217-9.

need for military success to boost the regime's popularity at home.⁴⁸ These motivations were underpinned by a wide domestic consensus on England's right to rule the neighbouring island, although there were some dissenting voices on this point.⁴⁹ In May Sir William Parsons approached the council of state with a tract that he had penned to rehearse and to justify English dominion from earliest times to the present.⁵⁰ Against this background, leveller-inspired unrest in the parliament's army was quickly crushed and Cromwell prepared to cross the Irish Sea.⁵¹

The massacres committed by Cromwell's troops at Drogheda and Wexford in the autumn of 1649 are among the most controversial episodes of the period. When the Catholic bishops gathered at Clonmacnoise towards the end of the year, they were able to point to those recent excesses as evidence that the English parliament was intent on 'the destruction of the lives of the inhabitants of this nation'.⁵² From his winter quarters in Munster, Cromwell responded to the bishops by publishing a furious tirade against Catholicism, within which he included vague promises of favour to those who had not played prominent roles in the conflict. If his overtures made little impression on Ireland's Catholics, the same could not be said for the Protestants. Even before his arrival in Ireland, Cromwell had won over Lord Broghill, a figure of considerable influence in Munster. Late in 1649 Broghill helped to persuade Protestant garrisons in the south to defect from the faltering royalist cause. By

⁴⁸ J. Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1999), pp 64-7.

⁴⁹ C. Durston, "'Let Ireland be quiet": opposition in England to the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland', *History Workshop*, 21 (1986), pp 105-12.

⁵⁰ [William Parsons], 'Examen Hiberniae', National Library of Ireland, MS 692.

⁵¹ Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland*, pp 67-71.

⁵² *Certain acts and declarations made by the ecclesiasticall congregation of the arch-bishops, bishops, and other prelates: met at Clonmacnoise the fourth day of December 1649* (London, 1650), pp 3-6.

the end of April 1650 Cromwell had agreed terms with most of the remaining Protestant royalist forces.⁵³ Under the pressure of war, Ormond's broad but fragile alliance had quickly fallen apart. Some respite was provided by O'Neill's belated decision to join forces with Ormond, but the general's death in November 1649 deprived his army of effective leadership. At Cromwell's departure from Ireland six months later, his army controlled a large swathe of territory. By contrast, Ormond had been reduced to threatening to leave the country unless the recalcitrant city authorities in Limerick and Galway agreed to admit royalist garrisons.⁵⁴

Faced with this bleak scenario, Charles II eschewed an expedition to Ireland and opted instead to travel to Scotland in June 1650, where he subscribed to the covenant. By August the king had disowned the Ormond peace treaty, although he secretly informed Ormond that he had done so only out of political necessity. In any case the Catholic bishops, increasingly frustrated by successive military failures, had by this time run out of patience with the lord lieutenant. Recent meetings, including an assembly attended by Ormond at Loughrea in April, had failed to resolve Catholic grievances around issues such as military appointments and alleged financial corruption. At a gathering in Jamestown, Co. Leitrim in August, the Catholic bishops agreed upon a public declaration outlining Ormond's alleged failure to uphold the 1649 peace treaty, his neglect of the Catholic interest and his ineffective management of the war effort. Having expressed their preference for a revival of confederate power structures, the bishops urged Ormond to depart the kingdom. Ormond

⁵³ J. Cunningham, *Conquest and land in Ireland: the transplantation to Connacht, 1649-1680* (The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2011), pp 13-14.

⁵⁴ M. Ó Siochrú, *God's executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the conquest of Ireland* (Faber and Faber, London, 2008), pp 129-32, 144-8.

characteristically refused to bend to the will of the Catholic episcopate, but his position was becoming increasingly untenable. News of Cromwell's victory over the Scots at Dunbar on 3 September cast a further shadow over the royalist cause. After a period of sustained bickering with the bishops, Ormond went into exile in December.⁵⁵

Ormond's position at the head of the royalists in Ireland was taken over by Clanricarde. On the opposite side, Henry Ireton had succeeded Cromwell, his father-in-law, in mid-1650. With their military fortunes in decline, Clanricarde and other Catholic leaders were increasingly attracted to the prospect of aid from the continent, this time from Charles, duke of Lorraine. Exiled from his patrimony by the French in the 1630s, Lorraine had pursued a successful career as a military contractor under the Habsburgs. By the 1650s he controlled substantial resources of men and money. Lorraine was gradually drawn into discussions around a series of disjointed proposals that emanated from different sections of the Irish political elite. He was most enthused by the notion of becoming 'protector' of the kingdom of Ireland, but in April 1651 Clanricarde, anxious to prevent any diminution of Stuart sovereignty, blocked this scheme.⁵⁶ As the royalist and Catholic leaders continued to strive desperately for a means to turn the tide of the war, Ireton led his forces across the River Shannon.

Such breakthroughs helped Ireton to contain emerging divisions within his regime. Although he had welcomed the arrival in January 1651 of four commissioners appointed by the Rump parliament to rebuild a civil government in Ireland, their presence had quickly generated tensions. The approach taken by

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 148-60.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 162-78.

one of the commissioners, John Weaver, was to become a particular source of grievance to English army officers in Ireland. Weaver did not hesitate to voice his displeasure at the extreme methods being employed by the officers in their attempts to pacify restless areas, including the widespread killing of civilians. As a religious Independent, he was also alarmed at the rapid spread of Baptist beliefs within the army. Following Ireton's death in November 1651, the republican Weaver attempted to bring the army in Ireland to heel by imposing tighter civilian control, but he met with concerted opposition both from his fellow commissioners and from leading army officers. In April 1652 he retreated to Westminster, where his continued efforts to weaken the army's dominance of developing state structures in Ireland fed into the growing rift between the parliament and military interests in England.⁵⁷

Weaver's return to London contributed to a long overdue increase in English political attention to Irish affairs. Over the previous two years the royalist threat from Scotland and infighting over reform were among issues that had dominated the agenda at Westminster. Amongst the matters that had been neglected was a scheme drawn up by Ireton in March 1651 as he sought to bring an end to the conflict in Ireland. Borrowing from the approach employed by the English parliament as it endeavoured to reach a settlement with the king in the 1640s, Ireton proposed a sliding scale of punishments for his enemies in Ireland. There could be no mercy for anyone implicated in the 1641 rebellion, but the 'lower orders' and those who had not been heavily involved in the confederate or royalist movements were promised more lenient treatment. Landowners, apart

⁵⁷ J. Cunningham, 'The Rump parliament, Cromwell's army and Ireland', *English Historical Review*, 129 (2014), pp. 830-45.

from those who could demonstrate 'constant good affection' to the interest of the English commonwealth, were faced with at least partial confiscation of their estates. Although Ireton's 'qualifications' were too harsh to bring about the speedy Catholic surrenders that he envisaged, the parliament's failure either to endorse them formally or to propose an alternative approach deprived its representatives in Ireland of potential political alternatives to fire and sword.⁵⁸

By the beginning of 1652 the collapse of Charles II's offensive in Britain and the inexorable advance of the parliament's forces in Ireland threatened to undermine any remaining Catholic resolve to continue in arms. Clerical efforts to bolster the war effort by resurrecting the confederacy and by brandishing the threat of excommunication had proven ineffective. The divisions and desperation among the Catholics at home had also been reflected in the continued negotiations with the duke of Lorraine. In this process, the strength of individual agents' attachment to the Stuarts was one of the factors that helped to determine the extent of the inducements that they offered to the duke. Clanricarde rebuked the city of Galway for addressing Lorraine as 'Protector Royal', but the lord deputy could do nothing to break Sir Charles Coote's tightening siege of that town, the last major port in Catholic hands.⁵⁹ With even the boggy boltholes of Leinster coming under pressure from English military offensives, Colonel John Fitzpatrick moved to break the deadlock.

Fitzpatrick's surrender on terms in March 1652 provoked a decree of excommunication and a wave of condemnation from his comrades. Nonetheless it was soon followed by other large-scale submissions, with most of the men

⁵⁸ *Idem, Conquest and land*, pp 17-22.

⁵⁹ Ó Siochrú, *God's executioner*, pp 181-6.

concerned resigning themselves to exile. The only guarantee forthcoming on the practice of Catholicism was that it would not be permitted. The commissioners of parliament did promise, however, that nobody would be compelled to attend Protestant religious services or to pay recusancy fines.⁶⁰ This approach opened up the possibility that lay Catholics' consciences at least would remain intact, but the same could not be said for their estates. Most of the surrender terms agreed around this time followed Ireton's qualifications in providing for the whole or partial confiscation of almost all Catholic estates. Apart from effectively bringing the war to an end, the most significant consequence of the surrender negotiations was the emergence of a more moderate approach to the issue of prospective capital punishments. Ireton had proposed to exempt from pardon any Catholic involved in the first year of the conflict, every Catholic cleric, and members of the first confederate general assembly. By mid-1652 it had been agreed instead that in practice only persons proved guilty of murder should face the ultimate penalty.⁶¹ It now fell to parliament to confirm the fate of a wasted population.

Land and Power

With the end of the Irish war in sight, Westminster turned its attention to the difficult questions of who precisely should govern Ireland and how exactly its vast tracts of confiscated land were to be divided up. The first of these questions quickly became bound up with republican concerns about the extent of army power and the threat that it posed to civil government. It was in this context that

⁶⁰ J. Cunningham, 'Lay Catholicism and religious policy in Cromwellian Ireland', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 64 (2013), pp 769-86.

⁶¹ *Idem*, *Conquest and land*, pp 24-6.

John Weaver mobilised sufficient support in parliament to block the renewal of Cromwell's commission as lord lieutenant in April 1652. The abolition of the lord lieutenancy immediately undermined the position of Major-General John Lambert, who had been about to depart for Ireland to take up office as lord deputy. Weaver followed up this initial strike against military dominance of Ireland with a concerted campaign to limit the amount of land that would be granted to officers and soldiers in lieu of their substantial arrears of pay. At the same time the army's main competitors for Irish land, the civilian investors under the Adventurers' Act of 1642, were offered a range of inducements to encourage their plantation.⁶²

This political struggle over authority and property in Ireland, which was part of the wider dispute between the parliament and army in England, was played out across the summer of 1652 and beyond.⁶³ The appointment of Cromwell's son-in-law Charles Fleetwood to a dual role in Ireland as commander-in-chief and as a commissioner of the civil government was just one indicator that the balance of power was tipping in favour of the army. In early August parliamentary debate on a bill relating to the Irish land settlement ground to a halt, most likely because the officers in Ireland had yet to be consulted about it. Meanwhile Ireton's qualifications had resurfaced. With some amendments and additions arising from the recent surrender negotiations, they were passed as the Act for the Settling of Ireland on 12 August.⁶⁴ Parliament's treatment of its Irish enemies had ultimately generated much less political

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp 27-8; Idem, 'Cromwell's army, the Rump parliament and Ireland', pp 845-8; Bottigheimer, *English money and Irish land*, pp 119-27.

⁶³ On the English context, see B. Worden, *The Rump parliament* (Cambridge University Press, 1974).

⁶⁴ Cunningham, 'Cromwell's army, the Rump parliament and Ireland', pp 852-3; Idem, *Conquest and land*, p. 29.

controversy than its policy towards its servants and friends. Yet it remained clear that much work was required to clarify and to elaborate on the finer details of the post-war settlement.

Back in Ireland, a High Court of Justice was swiftly established to deal with those accused of murder. The rebel-leader Sir Phelim O'Neill was one of several hundred persons condemned to death.⁶⁵ In the absence of any major military threat, the English army officers found time to gather at Kilkenny in October to formulate their demands relating to the land settlement. They insisted on full satisfaction of their arrears before any land had been assigned to the adventurers. The officers entrusted the veteran officer Sir Hardress Waller with the task of representing their interests in London. He also continued their campaign against Weaver, who was still ensconced at Westminster and pushing for a substantial haircut on the debt owed to the Irish army. Weaver was eventually forced to resign from his Irish office in February 1653, after Waller had approached parliament with a lengthy petition of grievance signed by the officers in Ireland. Thereafter Waller secured some concessions relating to the army's share in the land settlement, but not without encountering further political resistance. This tense negotiation was still in progress when Cromwell expelled the parliament on 20 April.⁶⁶

Before the nominated parliament convened in July 1653, the main elements of the Irish land settlement had been finalised and announced by the interim army-dominated council of state. It seems that much of the detail was carried over from the bill previously under consideration by the Rump

⁶⁵ J. Wells, 'English Law, Irish Trials and Cromwellian State Building in the 1650s', *Past and Present*, 227 (2015), pp 77-119.

⁶⁶ Cunningham, 'Cromwell's army, the Rump parliament and Ireland', pp 853-8.

parliament. The provinces of Ulster, Leinster and Munster were designated for plantation, with the backbone provided by a joint adventurer-army plantation stretching across ten counties. Catholic land entitlements were to be satisfied in the western province of Connacht under a scheme of transplantation.⁶⁷ The transplantation was central to the conquerors' vision of an anglicised and prosperous Ireland firmly attached to Protestantism. When the nominated parliament rubberstamped these arrangements, Fleetwood's government appeared well positioned to press ahead with the remaking of Ireland. He enjoyed strong support among the newcomers: the religious radicals and the army officers who served as governors of the administrative precincts into which the country was divided. Moreover he felt no inclination, and saw little need, to reach out to Ireland's established communities, whose power and influence had been decimated by conquest.⁶⁸

The Cromwellian Protectorate

This situation was short lived. The power structures put in place at the end of 1653 under the instrument of government rapidly altered the post-war political dynamic in Ireland. Cromwell's elevation to the position of lord protector proved especially disruptive. In the first place, it alarmed the radical interest in Ireland. Edmund Ludlow, one of Fleetwood's fellow commissioners, was just one of those who refused to accept the legitimacy of the protectorate.⁶⁹ Secondly, the lord protector provided an alternative focus for Protestants and Catholics in Ireland

⁶⁷ *Acts and ordinances of the English interregnum, 1642-1660* ed. C. Firth and R. Rait (Stationery Office, London, 1911), ii, pp 722-53.

⁶⁸ T. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English government and reform in Ireland, 1649-1660* (Oxford University Press, 1975), pp 11-14, 98-106.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p 101-9

who hoped to improve their position by winning concessions on landholding and other issues. Although Fleetwood was appointed to the revived office of lord deputy in 1654, he could do little to prevent Cromwell from showing favour to various petitioners. The Munster Protestants ultimately secured the indemnity promised them at their surrender in 1649. The Ulster Scots also resorted to articles granted by Cromwell during the conquest as they sought to avoid transplantation to Munster. The success of Catholic appeals to Cromwell was much more limited, but the very fact that they were free to make them caused Fleetwood great distress. Irish Catholic agents maintained a prominent presence in London for much of the decade. They lobbied against transplantation and from 1657 onwards they opposed efforts to enforce an anti-Catholic oath of abjuration in Ireland.⁷⁰ The Catholics' political efforts to obstruct the land settlement coincided with the appearance of a pamphlet published anonymously by the Munster Protestant Vincent Gookin at the beginning of 1655. This trenchant critique of the policy of transplantation was in essence an unprecedented attack on Fleetwood's administration.⁷¹

The growing weakness of Fleetwood's position was confirmed when Cromwell sent his son Henry to replace him at the head of the Irish government later in 1655. Henry Cromwell worked to reduce the power of the radicals favoured by Fleetwood and gradually came to depend on the 'Old Protestants', both at the local and national levels. This grouping of pre-1641 settlers also successfully demonstrated the political potential of another of the measures put

⁷⁰ Cunningham, *Conquest and land*, pp 48-70; idem, 'Lay Catholicism and religious policy', pp 769-86.

⁷¹ V. Gookin, *The great case of transplantation in Ireland discussed* (London, 1655); J. Cunningham, 'The Gookin-Lawrence pamphlet debate and transplantation in Cromwellian Ireland', in Anthony McElligott et al. (eds.), *Power in history* (Historical Studies xxvii, 2011), pp 63-80.

in place in 1653: the admission of thirty MPs from Ireland to the protectoral parliaments. Their presence in parliament allowed the Old Protestants a formal input into debates on crucial issues such as trade, taxation and government. With leadership from Lord Broghill, they emerged as strong supporters of the Cromwellian regime and backed the proposal in 1657 to transform the protectorate into a hereditary monarchy. Cromwell's refusal to assume the crown thus came as a blow to Old Protestant hopes for a stable bulwark against political and religious radicals. His death in September 1658 further heightened their anxiety. When army leaders forced Richard Cromwell to resign in May 1659, the progress made to date by the Old Protestants in recovering power and property appeared to be in jeopardy.⁷²

The General Convention

With the Rump parliament back in power in England, Henry Cromwell was recalled from Ireland and efforts got underway to purge his supporters from the army and positions of influence. The political context was altered again in October when the Rump was once more shut down by the army. When George Monck decided to march from Scotland in support of the expelled MPs, Broghill, Coote and other officers in Ireland moved successfully to seize control of garrisons across the country. Thereafter it became apparent that the old Protestant leaders now in the ascendancy did not share the objectives of those who sought to restore a republican government. Ludlow was prevented from landing at Dublin and the regicide Waller was arrested there in February 1660.

⁷² T. Barnard, 'Planters and policies in Cromwellian Ireland', *Past and Present*, 61 (1973), pp 31-69; P. Little, *Lord Broghill and the Cromwellian union with Ireland and Scotland* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2004), pp 124-69.

By the end of that month a convention comprised of 138 members and dominated by the Old Protestants was in session in Dublin. Amongst its main priorities was the upholding of the recent massive transfer of Catholic lands into Protestant hands. The larger political issue of a return to Stuart monarchy was ultimately resolved elsewhere, when the English Convention parliament proclaimed Charles II king on 1 May 1660.⁷³

Four decades have passed since Patrick Corish warned that historians investigating the mid-seventeenth century in Ireland risked disturbing ghosts.⁷⁴ Other scholars have echoed him in summing up the period by referring to Protestant winners and Catholic losers. Regardless of the particular approach taken, the ghosts, as Corish recognised, can hardly be avoided. Nor should the violence that birthed them be detached from the political processes explored in this chapter. In the 1640s Irish politics was dominated by failure. Settlements reached in desperation proved fragile. It is no surprise, however, that disputes of the sort that ripped apart early modern Europe evaded political resolution either in Kilkenny or elsewhere in the three kingdoms. The conflict in Ireland eventually became what hardliners on both the Catholic and Protestant sides had long wished it to be: a fight to the finish. In this, the winners were Protestant; Catholics were disenfranchised, transplanted and transported. Elite politics in post-war Ireland reflected the transformation set in train by conquest. It was now largely an intra-Protestant sphere of action, more closely dependent on England than heretofore. In the midst of all this change, some continuity was

⁷³ The period leading up to the Restoration is explored in detail in A. Clarke, *Prelude to restoration in Ireland: the end of the commonwealth, 1659-1660* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁷⁴ P. Corish, 'The Cromwellian regime, 1650-1660', in Moody et al. (eds.), *A new history of Ireland*, iii, pp 385-6.

evident. Catholic agents travelled to London seeking concessions and the fulfilment of promises, just as they did before 1641 and were to do again after 1660. More significantly, the Old Protestants who had prospered prior to the rebellion gradually recovered influence in the 1650s. Their firm stance against any revival of Catholic political power would do much to shape the Ireland of Charles II.

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