



**TIPPERARY HISTORICAL JOURNAL
1990**

© County Tipperary Historical Society

**www.tipperaryllibraries.ie/thc
society@tipperaryllibraries.ie**

ISSN 0791-0655

Thomas MacDonaghis "Middle Country": The Norman & Cromwellian Plantations

by Henderikus A. Taatgen

*In Summer time, under the leaves, in Calm
Of middle country, sweet it is to be
Alone amid the old monotony
Of sabbath peace.*

Thomas MacDonagh¹

— 1 —

Although the contemporary Irish provincial framework goes back to the sixteenth century, the four provincial names are of much greater antiquity. Ulster, Leinster, Munster, and Connacht are mentioned in historical texts of the early Middle Ages relating the exploits of kings in pre-Christian Ireland. Some of these texts, however, suggest the former existence of five provinces. This five-fold division of the island also survives in the Irish word for "province", *coiced*, which means a "fifth".

Although it seems that at a remote time this lost fifth province was incorporated into one, some, or all of the remaining four provinces, there is no conclusive evidence for the prior existence of a five fold division of the island. Early medieval texts rather suggest a process in the opposite direction, by allowing for two different interpretations, both of which postulate the historical existence of four provinces before the fifth one came into being².

The first interpretation goes back to the book of *Lebor Gabala Erenn*; this attributed the division of Ireland into five parts to the mythical *Fir Bolg*. These cultural heroes were led by five brothers who assembled at Uisnech, the midpoint of the island, for the purpose of sharing the country between them. Here, at the Stone of Divisions, all the provinces - Connacht, Ulster, Leinster, and "the two Munsters" - came together.

Uisnech also figures in the second interpretation, which projects the fifth fifth not within one of the other four, but at the centre of the island. This was the province of *Mide*, "the Middle", an area around Uisneach created by *Tuathal*, who took a portion from each of the other four provinces in the second century A.D.

At the end of the twelfth century Giraldus Cambrensis recorded that the Stone of Divisions at Uisnech ". . . is called the navel of Ireland, because it stands in the middle of the country".³ But whereas Giraldus located Uisneach in "the Parish of Killare, Westmeath", the Books of Survey and Distribution, compiled shortly after 1700, mention ". . . a place called the Navell of Ireland . . . (situated in) . . . five parcells of Gleabe Land neere Birr"⁴. According to this source, Uisnech was located further south in the parish of Birr in Offaly.

It is doubtless this last (and geographically more accurate) position of Ireland's navel that



captured the imagination of Thomas MacDonagh in "A Season of Repose". Here the poet meditates not only on the land of his upbringing, but also on an area reminiscent of *Tuathal's Mide*. MacDonagh's countryside is for Irish history what Mide is for Irish mythology - an area where the divisions of man have been resolved within a unity of nature.

The country of the poet is co-terminous with the baronies of Lower Ormond, Ballybrit, and Clonlisk: see Map 1. The barony of Lower Ormond is situated in the northernmost part of county Tipperary, while Ballybrit and Clonlisk form the southernmost part of county Offaly - in English times, the King's County. Thus, both mythological and historical man have tried to impose their will on the landscape; but, in the long run, their efforts have been silenced by middle country's enduring calm.

MacDonagh's middle country comprises the southern extension of Ireland's central lowland: see Map II. To the south and east this extension rises to greater heights, including the Arra Mountains (1577 ft.), Keeper Hill (2278 ft.), the Devil's Bit (1577 ft.), and the Slieve Bloom Mountains. The highest top of the Slieve Bloom carries the name of Arderin (1734 ft.).

To the north the poet's country has no geomorphological demarcations. Here the boundaries are formed by the River Shannon and its tributaries, the Little Brosna and the Camcor River. Just outside Portumna the Shannon empties itself into the geological depression of Lough Derg. The boundary then follows the flow of water from north-east to south-west, where the concavity cuts through the hills near Killaloe, flanked by Slieve Bernagh in Clare to the west and by the Arra Mountains to the east.

There is thus a rise of land towards the hills and the mountains in the south and east, and a fall towards the rivers and the drainage basin in the north and west. A cross-section along this direction, however, reveals a curved rather than a straight line. The greater part of the country is relatively flat and lies between the 200- and 300- ft. contour lines, creating a rather monotonous landscape, where it not for the existence of a range of broken hills standing conspicuously against the surrounding fields.

This chain of fields is situated six to ten miles east of Lough Derg, stretching almost parallel to the direction of this drainage basin. The northernmost and highest of these elevations carries the name of Knocksheegowna, "hill of the heifer spirit", popularly known as Fairy Hill.

Fairy Hill and the mountains in the south and east of the area are composed of Silurian strata - chiefly slates, grits, and shales. In all cases the Silurian rocks are ringed by a hard rim of old red sandstone. In the synclines, where denudation has failed to penetrate through the younger strata, thick layers of carboniferous limestone survive, which form the chief rock floor of the area.

However, the relief of the landscape is not only the result of the Palaeozoic processes of folding, sedimentation, and denudation. In the Pleistocene, the area was covered with glaciers, which eroded the anticlines and deposited drift in the synclines.

A large variety of glacial, limestone-bearing drifts overlay most of the carboniferous beds. In a few other places this rock floor is topped with glaciofluvial deposits of gravel and sand. The meltwater deposits take the form of long narrow ridges, which rise at least 20-30 feet above the surrounding countryside (eskers). Alternatively, they appear in the form of flat-topped steep-sided hills of well-sorted sand and gravel (kames).

Next to these drifts and deposits are landscape features which owe their existence to the drier conditions of the Holocene. Fen and marsh developed in places where the drift was very thin or entirely absent, and where drainage was impeded. Using the amount of rainfall as the dividing criterion, the Irish bogs built up on fen and marsh have been distinguished into two types⁵.

Since the bogs in the area concerned receive less than 1,250 millimeters of rainfall per annum, they are of the "raised type". The mosaic of drifts, deposits and bogs has to a large extent



determined the regional pattern of land use. Man the cultivator, however, has also been constrained by the prevailing climatic conditions of the region.

Giraldus Cambrensis noted that the climate of Ireland is "... the most temperate of all countries ... The air is so healthy, that ... you will find few sick people, except those who are at the point of death"⁶. Nowadays the temporal and spatial variations of the Irish climate are recorded by meteorological stations distributed over the country. One such station is located along the northern border of middle country near Birr, and a summary of its measurements of local air temperature and rainfall over a period of 30 years is given in Table I.

TABLE 1

Monthly values of mean daily air temperature (C) and monthly averages of rainfall (millimeters) recorded at Birr, 1931-1960⁷.

Months	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Temp.	4.4	4.9	6.7	8.4	11.0	13.8
Rainf.	85	59	52	49	62	60
Months	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Temp.	15.1	15.1	13.1	9.9	6.8	5.3
Rainf.	86	82	87	84	78	89

The mean annual temperature of 9.5C does not allow for either much higher or much lower monthly values. January is the coldest month, the maximum temperature of 15.1C being reached in the months of July and August. Although the annual average rainfall of 873 millimeters does not have much seasonal variation either, there is a comparatively dry period from February though June.

Within Ireland middle country and other regions further to the east receive much less rain than the regions in the west. Indeed, the cold winds and rainy clouds from the Atlantic have been made the principal criterion for a two-fold division of Ireland's climatic regions into "Extreme Atlantic" and "Irish lowland"⁸.

In middle country, the well-tilled patches of glacial drifts contrast sharply with the rough pastures of the flat expanses of bogland. The limestone-bearing drifts have served as the parent material for the formation of grey-brown podzolics⁹. But since the drifts of the older phase of icesheet glaciation are composed of impervious boulder clays and silts, these soils have a high water table, so that they sustain lush pastures.

Although a wider variety of plants can be grown in well-drained places, there has over the past 100 years been an increase in the extent of land under grass (meadow and pasture), but a decline in the acreage of wheat, oats, and roots. Pastoralism has become more important in this century; cattle are reared for milk production, stores and, in some cases, fattening.

The expanses of bog are irregular in their outline, and are usually covered with heather, a few beech trees and pines. In general, the bogs provide for rough grazing. But in drier patches, or in places where the peat has been removed either for fuel or as part of a reclamation project, the soil can grow potatoes, oats and grass.

The eskers and kames are of little agricultural use, many of these deposits being marked by trees or covered with heathland. In some places the eskers have provided routes across the bogs. In other places the deposits of sand and gravel have been removed for road-surfacing and building purposes.



The foregoing observations on land use have introduced man in his relationship to the environment. It is worth pausing briefly at his appearance on the scene, for with him we have also introduced different rhythms of historical time. The changes in the physical landscape traverse over such large distances that for humans geographical time is relatively fixed. MacDonagh speaks of middle country's "Calm", and Braudel of the "semistillness" of the "*longue duree*"¹⁰.

By contrast, the cultural landscape is a dynamic entity, a constantly changing constellation of human imprints on the surface. But whereas some of these imprints are inherited relatively unchanged from a remote past, others are the results of historical transformations. The following provides a case in point.

The sense of intimacy conveyed by MacDonagh's countryside derives for a large part from the prevailing pattern of rural habitation. This consists of dispersed single farmsteads comprised of several fields enclosed by stone walls and hedgerows. The permanent enclosures date back to the second half of the seventeenth century, when grazing became more profitable and landowners started to expand their holdings¹¹.

The extra land for the enlarged holdings was provided by tillage plots as well as by rough pastures that had served as common grazing for the so-called rundale farmers. The rundale system of partnership farming has been associated with a settlement pattern of clustered farms, designated *clachen* by Evans¹².

Although the emergence of the enclosed grazing farm accelerated the process of disappearance



The group of stones known as The Three Fishermen.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTIN POWER)

of the *clachen*, it would be wrong to conclude that the one settlement pattern replaced the other. In the early eighteenth century the farm clusters co-existed with dispersed, but unenclosed, single farmsteads¹³.

In middle country this last settlement form can be traced back to early medieval farmsteads of which the remainders, the *raths* or earthen ringforts, are still scattered through the area. The rath, however, is by no means the oldest human modification of the regional landscape.

To this day no evidence has been found for the presence of Paleolithic man in Ireland. For this reason it is generally assumed that the earliest settlers of the island were the hunters and gatherers of the Mesolithic. The main traces of Mesolithic occupation are in the northeastern counties of Down and Antrim¹⁴.

More evenly distributed throughout the country are the megaliths and other stone monuments of the Neolithic farmers. As a result of recent archaeological excavations the projected date of arrival of these colonists has been pushed back in time deep into the fourth millennium B.C. One of the earliest agricultural areas in the country may well have been MacDonagh's middle country.

This idea is based on excavations which have recently taken place in the neighbourhood of Ardcroney, near Nenagh. The prehistoric site concerned is located near an indentation in the landscape and consists of three massive erect boulders. In local folk tradition they symbolize an equal number of greedy fishermen, who on three subsequent occasions would have broken their promise to share their catch with a hunger-bitten Saint Patrick!

The national saint, however, plays no role in the reconstructions of the archaeologist, who has identified this place as a Neolithic burial monument¹⁵. The radiocarbon dates of bones from this burial suggest a settlement around 3,500 B.C. Apart from this and other (as yet unexcavated) prehistoric sites, the landscape is strewn with relics of subsequent phases of occupation.

As mentioned, most conspicuous are the raths, the fairy forts of popular legend, but otherwise associated with iron-age colonization of the Celtic-speaking peoples, who came to Ireland during the last quarter of the first millennium B.C. Most of the surviving ringforts, however, were built some time after the arrival of the first Celtic immigrants, and have been identified as the typical single-family farmsteads of the early Christian period¹⁶.

By then the wanderings of Patrick and his followers had resulted in the establishment of a nationwide network of monasteries. One of these retreats for prayer, study and meditation was founded at Shinrone near Roscrea in 630 A.D. *Disert Chuimin*, or Kilcommon Abbey as this was known in later times, was under the auspices of the Columban monks¹⁷. Of the original buildings the small chapel is still extant.

As early as the sixth century there was also a monastery at Monaincha. However, all traces of the buildings of this foundation have disappeared. Only the twelfth-century church, together with a medieval addition to it, remain¹⁸.

From the next century come the remains of a church built for the Dominicans at Lorrha, and St. Cronan's Church at Roscrea. A High Cross is erected in the graveyard attached to St. Cronan's Church, and the base of such a Scripture Cross marks the consecrated ground of Lorrha churchyard. According to Ryan, however, both places were monastic sites long before the thirteenth century¹⁹.

In the case of Roscrea this is attested by the presence of a round tower across the road from St. Cronan's Church, which must have served both as a watch tower and a place of refuge and stores for monastic treasures²⁰. From the same period, and also of Irish origin, is the ruined church of the Franciscan friary at Nenagh²¹. But unlike the religious houses in Lorrha and Roscrea, the Nenagh friary was founded in Norman times.

In 1185 MacDonagh's countryside was included in the vast territories of land granted by Prince



John, Lord of Ireland, to Theobald Fitzwalter (or Butler). Up to this time the land of Ballybrit and Clonlisk had been part of Ely O'Carroll, while Ormond was in the possession of the O'Kennedys, who had acknowledged as their overlords the kings of Thomond.

Notwithstanding the established position of these ruling families, there is no documented evidence of their resistance to the arrival of Theobald and the Normans of lesser ranks, who rapidly consolidated their positions within the area. By 1250 the Normans had established a chain of settlements, of which the castle of Nenagh was to become the chief residence of the Ormond Butlers. The strongholds of the lesser Normans included tower houses and fortresses of earth, the so-called moated sites and *mottes*.

The term 'moated sites' refers to a variety of square and rectangular ditches with banks surrounding interior buildings. It appears that these earthworks were dug in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Map evidence alone suggests the former existence of between 25 and 30 moated sites in middle country²².

Fewer in number were the *mottes*, large earth mounds reinforced with wooden defences. The *motte* located in Roscrea was replaced by a large stone castle in the middle of the thirteenth century. Some of the other *mottes* in middle country had a tower house on or near the site; but these were later additions²³. The earliest tower houses date from the beginning of the fifteenth century. They would, however, become the dominant form of protected settlement in the following centuries, both for the descendants of the Norman settlers and the native Irish.

The institutional basis of Norman settlement was the manor, which reflected the complexity of a not fully developed feudal society. The lord of the manor exercised legal jurisdiction over his subjects, including the Norman free tenants and the native Irish tenants or *firmarii*. In MacDonagh's countryside the manorial system appears to have been developed more strongly in the east than in the west.

In the beginning of the fourteenth century Ballybrit and Clonlisk were comprised within the "Manor of Donkerryn"²⁴. The tenantry roll of this Butler manor (compiled in August 11, 1305) shows a larger number of Norman freeholders than of Irish *firmarii*. More significantly, among the native tenants there is not a single O'Carroll.

The Butler manor in Ormond was organized around the demesne lands adjoining the castle of Nenagh. Outside these demesnes the Norman holdings were confined to relatively small areas around the water-protected moats and the more sophisticated *mottes*.

The greater part of the land in Ormond remained in the hands of the native population, who continued to pay rents to their indigenous rulers, the O'Kennedys. In their turn the O'Kennedys acknowledged the overlordship of the Ormond Butlers by the payment of the *Mairt an Iarla* or 'rent of cowes', resembling the tribute they had formerly paid to the O'Brien kings of Thomond²⁵.

The Butler overlordship in MacDonagh's countryside was challenged in the beginning of the fourteenth century, first by the O'Carrolls in Ely and later by the O'Kennedys in Ormond. In the course of the rebellion Nenagh Castle was abandoned by the Butler Earls, who took up residence in Gowran and Kilkenny. With them went nearly all the Norman settlers, with the exception of some lesser Butlers, as well as the Norman family of De Marisco. These had intermarried with the O'Kennedys and other Irish families.

Gleeson holds that by as early as 1350 most of the land of middle country had been reclaimed by the native Irish²⁶. The leading O'Kennedys and O'Carrolls had regained their ancient titles, and would hold on to these for some 200 years, in spite of the fact that, in the course of the fifteenth century, the O'Kennedy lordship of Ormond would be subdivided into Lower and Upper Ormond, and the *Mairt an Iarla* be recovered by some of the cadet branches of the Butlers who had remained in the area.



In the second part of the next century this Irish rent in kind was transformed into a money payment apportioned among the O'Kennedy lords and their chief vassals. Moreover, these rents were now subject to English leases, substituting heirship for *tavistry*, or the inheritance by agnatic descent groups²⁷. Since in Ely also the principal O'Carrolls were to abandon their Irish titles for leases according to English common law, this re-acknowledgement of the Butler overlordship entailed a weakening of the position of the Irish lords.

However, this shift in the balance of power was more apparent than real. On the one hand, the Irish lords had complied with this policy of surrender and regrant only on condition that they would suffer no encroachments on the extent of their patrimonies. Although in the second half of the sixteenth century middle country would see an expansion of the area occupied by foreigners, this did not occur at the expense of the extent of land effectively occupied by the native Irish.

On the other hand, there can be no question that among the lesser folk the Irish tenures would endure, at least in Lower Ormond. The manuscript returns of the Civil Survey show that, for a period well extending into the seventeenth century, large portions of the land in this barony continued to be held by two or more "proprietors". While in most cases each of these landlords would hold his part "... in fee by descent from his Ancestors", it was often recorded that "... The said lands are not clearly divided between the said Proprietors"²⁸.

Yet, if the native land tenure conditions would endure among broad layers of the native population, in other areas of life the Irish were unaffected by the presence of the foreigners. As already mentioned, when the Anglo-Normans began to erect tower houses, this architectural novelty was soon embraced by the native aristocracy. In Ballybrit and Clonlisk no less than eleven of these structures had been erected by the early 1600s²⁹.

By that time the Irish landed gentry had also abandoned Latin and French for English as the written language for their official records³⁰. In addition, Irish bards, poets and medical men like the O'Mearas of Ormond were given employment, not only by the Irish, but also by the Anglo-Norman squires and landowners³¹. And, as a result of the presence of the latter, the Irish workers of the soil had substituted the horse for the oxen as the dominant means of plough traction and had incorporated beans, peas, and grain into a diet that had been based on butter and milk³².

The foreigners in their turn were not so numerous as to be able to lead lives totally isolated from the Irish. As we have seen, already in the early fourteenth century the De Mariscos and the lesser Butlers had intermarried and fostered with the O'Kennedys and O'Carrolls, and become *Hiberniores ipsis Hibernicis*.

Other descendants of the old colonial stock had kept a more distinct ethnic identity, but nevertheless gone so far as to adopt the Irish vernacular³³. Moreover, they had taken up land in common with the Irish, or subjected themselves to Irish Brehon law whenever this would suit their purposes³⁴. MacDonagh's countryside, in sum, was one of the areas in Ireland where "... two cultures met, intermingled, (but also) struggled for supremacy"³⁵.

For the descendants of the Anglo-Norman settlers this sense of supremacy was to a large extent derived from their untainted self-image as English citizens. In spite of the fact that they had "gone native" in many other areas of life, the colonists had always distinguished themselves from the Irish in their loyalty to the Crown.

For this reason their landed possessions were at first exempted from the measures of expropriation and plantation, a policy the Crown had begun to implement after Henry VIII had resumed the direct government of Ireland in 1534. The old colonial stock (or "Old English", as they came to be known in the sixteenth century) would share their political loyalty with the new Protestant settlers of English and Scottish origin. But they differed from the so-called "New English" in their unwavering adherence to the Pope as Christ's vicar on earth.



The possibility of a plantation of both Lower and Upper Ormond was contemplated as early as 1603-06³⁶. A survey for this purpose was carried out in 1639, but the projected plantation never took place. The territory of Ely O'Carroll, by contrast, had always been a more troublesome area for the foreign rulers. In the summer of 1600 Sir Charles O'Carroll, lord of Ely, was killed by "... some petty gentleman of the O'Carrolls and O'Meaghers"³⁷. Five years later the Butlers overlordship of Ballybrit and Clonlisk was made redundant, and the area was incorporated into the shire organization of the King's County.

In 1619, one-quarter of the land of both baronies was set aside for distribution among nineteen British undertakers³⁸. Since the earlier plantations of other areas had shown that large estates would foster inefficiency among the new settlers, the grants in Ely were limited to 1,000 acres. For the same reason the undertakers were forbidden to sell their possessions to one another. The names of the undertakers appear in a list appended to the Instructions for Plantation³⁹.

The remaining three-quarters of the land were divided among the natives of "the better sorte" - those who had previously held 100 acres or more. In a few cases the Irish claims of less than 100 acres were also honoured; but 60 acres were the absolute minimum, with the result that all the "inferior natives" lost their possessions⁴⁰.

Three large grants were given to Teige and Mulroney Duff O'Carroll and to Daniel McGillefoyle. These three men were allowed to enclose parts of their dominions for demesne lands, and to appoint a seneschal who could administer justice to the value of forty Irish shillings. Yet, pretenders to the lordship of Ely were "... forbidden on pain of forfeiture to take the style and title of the Great O'Carroll"⁴¹.

Table II summarizes the distribution of the land of middle country among the Irish, Old English, and New English on the eve of the all-Irish rebellion of 1641. It shows a much stronger presence of the New English in Ely than originally intended, with the new planters occupying more than one-third of the land of Clonlisk, and almost one-half of Ballybrit.

The number of the new planters is also far less than nineteen, while three of them - Francis Metthop, William Parsons, and William Peasley - occupy more than 3,000 acres distributed over both Ballybrit and Clonlisk. The name of Peasley does not appear on the list appended to the Instructions of 1619.

TABLE II

Distribution of land (percentages) among the Irish, Old English, and New English in middle country in 1641⁴².

Baronies	Irish	O.E.	N.E.	Acres
Clonlisk	59	5	36	24,323
Ballybrit	47	7	46	21,378
Lr. Ormond	76	13	11	53,990
Middle C.	64	11	25	99,691

As already mentioned, by this time Lower Ormond had escaped the projected plantation. This accounts for the much smaller percentage of the land of this barony occupied by only three English Protestants: the Earl and Countess of Ormond (5,752 acres) and Richard Osbourne, Clerk of the Court for the County of the Cross Tipperary (100 acres).

By contrast, the area occupied by the Old English was somewhat larger in Lower Ormond than in the other two baronies. In Ballybrit and Clonlisk the small group of Old English included a few



members of the regionally established Anglo-Norman families like Butler and Purcell, as well as a number of other "Irish papists" of Norman ancestry like Dingin (or Dungan) and Oxburgh. It seems unlikely that both the Butlers and Purcells had suffered any losses during the plantation of 1619. Dungan and Oxburgh, on the other hand, probably acquired their possessions after 1619, which they bought either from the Irish or the New English.

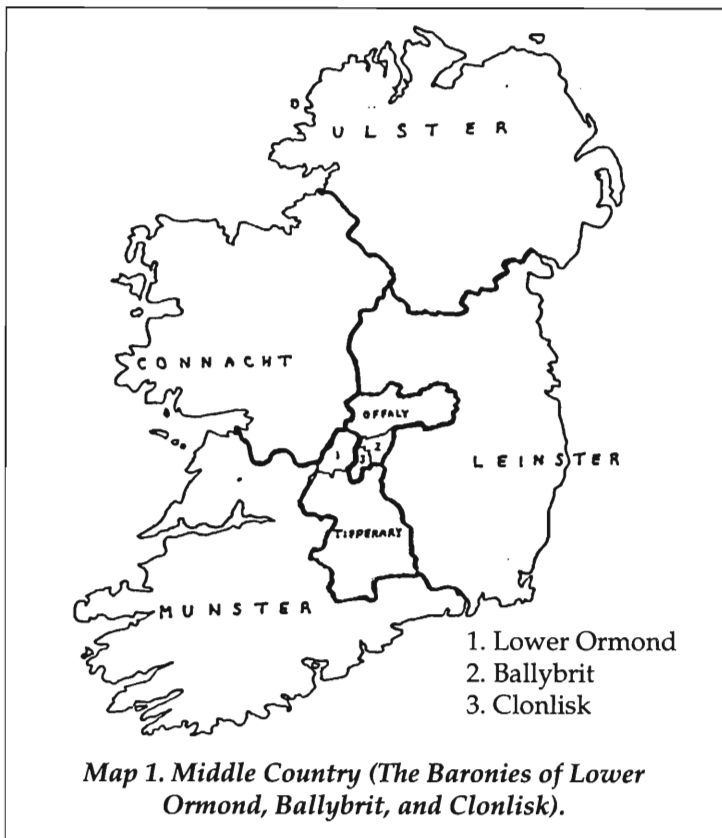
In Lower Ormond the Old English can be divided into several groups. First, there were the direct descendants of the Norman settlers, including a number of Butlers (2,745 acres), one John Cantwell (1,444 acres), and those who could trace back their lineages to the family of De Marisco, but are returned under the names of Morris, Morrissy, or McMorrogh (547 acres).

The second group consists of the grantees of the lands of the religious houses which had been dissolved when Henry VIII rebelled against the supremacy of the Pope. Within the County Palatinate of Tipperary these lands were subject to the judicial decisions of a distinct Court to which Sir Richard Osbourne had been appointed Clerk.

Surprisingly, the major grantees of these church lands in Lower Ormond had not embraced the reformed faith. They include the Grace and Magrath families - of whom the latter, moreover, was of Irish rather than of Norman descent. Next to the lands of the Augustinian Priory of Tyone, which had passed into the hands of the Grace family (2,091 acres), the Abbey lands of Lorrha had been granted to John Dungan (already mentioned). In 1641, however, the Abbey lands appear to have been in possession of two Irish families "... by mortgage from Sir John Dungan"⁴³.

Finally, the ranks of the Old English in Lower Ormond included a number of persons who had purchased land from the Irish at a time when the plantation of Ormond had seemed imminent. These Old English "land-sharks" would never settle in the area. They were Sir Nicholas White (572 acres) and the nominally ubiquitous John Dungan, who, in addition to his possessions of land in Ballybrit and of the Abbey lands of Lorrha in Lower Ormond, had acquired land in the Lower Ormond parish of Kilbarran.

In spite of these encroachments on their ancient patrimonies, the Irish were still in possession of more than three-fifths of the land of middle country in 1641. In Ballybrit and Clonlisk the O'Carrolls occupied 18,054 acres, 40 per cent of the land of both baronies, but 80 per cent of the area held by the Irish. In Lower Ormond the O'Kennedys held



21,421 acres, 50 per cent of the baronial lands, but only 52 per cent of these lands occupied by the Irish. Other prominent Irish families in Lower Ormond were the O'Hogans (5,344 acres), and the McEgans (5,834 acres); 2,285 acres in Lower Ormond were also held by the O'Carrolls.

Throughout the sixteenth century the steadily growing colony of Protestant settlers had not seriously threatened the position of the Old English. During this period the Crown had simply made a distinction in its confiscation policies between one kind of Irish Catholic and another.

Things began to change when, in the first decades of the following century, the government started to rake up ancient dormant royal claims. Around the same time additional cause for concern for the Old English consisted of the "matters of grace and bounty", a series of concessions the government had promised to make in return for its levying of extra annual subsidies, and which were particularly valuable to the Old English.

The "Graces", however, were not only imperfectly observed right from the beginning, but also not given statutory confirmation in the years to follow⁴⁴. Increasingly alarmed, the Old English felt they had no choice but to seize on the first major opportunity which would arise to defend their established positions.

— 4 —

This opportunity came in 1641, when the Irish in Ulster rose to arms. The Ulster rebellion rapidly spread to other parts of the country, and acquired an all-Irish Catholic character after the Old English joined in. The rebellion would mark the end of an era in the history of the colonization of the country.

From 1641 onwards the struggle for the land in Ireland was to be waged along religious lines of cleavage, with Irish Catholics and Protestants entrenched in diametrically opposed positions. For the remainder of the seventeenth century this struggle resulted in three major settlements, of which the first (the Cromwellian settlement) would have dramatic consequences for middle country.

The backbone of the 1641 rising was only broken after Cromwell took command of the English army in 1649, and passed through the country "like a lightning fire". The Irish war had been made possible by 1,533 English citizens, who had "adventured" money on condition that they would be repaid in the form of land to be forfeited by the defeated Irish rebels⁴⁵. However, already in the early 1640s it was clear that these so-called "adventurers" were not going to form the only category of claimants of Irish land.

As the costs of the war had begun to surpass the amount of money invested in it, the land to be confiscated would also be used to pay off the soldiers' arrears. As soon as the war was over they would receive debentures which they could make good in land. With the completion of the conquest of the country in 1652 the final debt had reached such proportions that it required nothing less than an almost total confiscation of land held by Irish Catholics.

The Act of Settlement of 1652 condemned to death a large number of Irish "rebels". On the other hand, it left undisturbed those persons who throughout the rebellion, had ". . . manifested their constant good affection to the commonwealth of England".

Most of the land that was needed to pay off the huge debt had to be taken from those landholders who had not taken an active part in the rebellion, but could not prove "constant good affection" either. They were to suffer partial forfeiture and, moreover, were forced to accept land elsewhere that would be equivalent in value to the proportion of their estates they were entitled to retain.

To ascertain the exact amount of land available for distribution among the soldiers and the adventurers, an order was issued by Cromwell to carry out three surveys. The scale of the operation that lay ahead is shown by what has survived of two of these undertakings, the Civil Survey and the Down Survey. The first is a manuscript survey of the extent of the landed properties



at the outbreak of the rebellion, and the second the mapped result of an effort to “down admeasure” the bounds of all the forfeited lands.

In the words of the nineteenth century historian Prendergast:

“It must have been painful to the owners of these estates and their families to see them valued before they had actually passed out of their hands, being only a preparation for their banishment, and for others to occupy their ancient hereditary seats, endeared to them by a thousand tender memories”⁴⁶.

In the meantime the Act of Satisfaction of 1653 had stipulated that the “delinquent” proprietors were to be removed across the Shannon into county Clare and the province of Connaught, where they would receive land in exchange for the share of their estates that remained to them. However, there is reason to believe that a substantial number of Irish and Old English landholders in middle country comprised within the Act of 1653 completely ignored the transplantation order.

The names of the freeholders of middle country in 1641 are mentioned in the left-hand column of the “Books of Survey and Distribution”. Some of them may have lost their lives in the subsequent years. But the dead cannot have been so numerous as to account for the few of them whose names appear in Simington’s (1970) annotated “List of the Transplanted Irish 1655-1659”.

The claims of both the soldiers and the adventurers were met in ten contiguous counties, including Tipperary and the King’s County (Offaly). In order to make sure that both categories of claimants were mixed in the plantation, the baronies of each county were divided by lot into two halves, one for the soldiers and the other for the adventurers. In middle country Lower Ormond and Clonlisk fell to the soldiers, and Ballybrit to the adventurers.

Most of the disbanded soldiers, however, were less than happy to be paid for their services by land in lieu of money. The common men, in general, were disinclined to settle down on the few acres they would receive for their debentures. Others, with larger amounts of arrears but in urgent need of cash, did not want to make good their debentures either.

As a result, the sale of the debentures became a trade, defeating one of the major purposes of the plantation, which was to settle the area of the ten counties with a large number of soldiers. By the end of the Commonwealth regime in 1659 the land of Lower Ormond and Clonlisk was divided into a small number of larger estates held by only a few officers.

Similar problems arose in the baronies set aside for the adventurers. In the aftermath of the conquest and with the country in a state of turmoil, many of them were reluctant to take up their possessions. Others refused to bring in a prescribed number of English tenants who would actually work the soil. Accordingly Parliament decided that in the ten counties divided between the adventurers and the soldiers the landowners were allowed to employ certain categories of Irish as labourers and servants, and to re-install them as tenants on limited portions of the holdings.

Precluded from these opportunities were, of course, the former property-holders who had been exempted from pardon for life and estate, but had escaped execution, as well as those rebels who were to be exiled, but had escaped banishment. In addition, none of the transplanters who had remained in the area could be taken as tenants or servants. Thus the category of Irishmen available to assist the settlers consisted largely of the landless, including those to whom pardon for life had been extended as early as in 1652, the “. . . husbandmen, plowmen, labourers, artificers, and others of the inferior sorte”⁴⁷.

It has been suggested that, with the exception of the Catholic landowners, the lives of most other people in rural Ireland was not greatly disturbed by the Cromwellian settlement. The massive transfer of land ownership may, indeed, have introduced few changes in the material circumstances of large numbers of landless.

Yet it cannot be denied that with this transfer the foundation was laid for a long-term process of



cultural change, gradually affecting such areas of native life as education, language and religion. Moreover, it has also to be understood that landownership in middle country was to be altered by the next two plantations in the seventeenth century.

— 5 —

A totally new situation arose when the Stuarts re-mounted the throne in 1660. By the Act of Settlement of 1662 all land confiscated since the outbreak of the rebellion was vested in the Crown as trustee for certain specified purposes. These were, first, the confiscation to adventurers and Cromwellian soldiers of lands held by them on May 7, 1659; and second by the payment of arrears to the so-called '49 Officers, the Protestant Royalists who had served in the army before 1649.

A third specified purpose was the restoration of various categories of dispossessed landowners. These included those who had stood by the King and followed him into exile to France in 1649, those who had accepted and "adhered to the peace" of 1649, and those who had been innocent of any part in the rebellion.

All persons seeking restoration could turn to a "Court of Claims", which would only hear the claims of the so-called "innocents". Even so, it was quite clear to an interested party like the Duke of Ormond that to satisfy these claims of innocence, "... There must be new discoveries made of a new Ireland"⁴⁸.

Ormond strongly supported a "Bill of Explanation" designed to re-assess the various claims, which would be passed by Parliament in 1665. This Act would have disastrous results for one category of "restorable persons" who never had any real chance in the scramble for land - the "Irish papists".

The right-hand column of the Books of Survey and Distribution shows that in Ballybrit and Clonlisk, most of the New English (but none of the Old English) landed proprietors of 1641 had managed to hold on to, or be restored to, their former properties. One Daniel Redmond appears to have acquired 1,479 acres in Clonlisk; this was a claim made good for land this member of an old Hiberno-Norman family had forfeited elsewhere.

One other Old English newcomer in Ballybrit and Clonlisk was Colonel Richard Grace, one of the last of the Irish commanders to surrender in the rebellion. His arrears were paid off by a grant of 1,382 acres of land distributed over both baronies, held jointly by him with several others.

Among the settlers at the Restoration we find no more than three bearing an Irish name, and then with claims in Ballybrit only. These were 394 acres held by Owen Carroll together with Matthew Nulty "and his wife", and 1,432 acres by Mary Carroll "also Dillon", of which 280 acres were her own and 1,152 acres in joint ownership with several others.

On the Restoration the Duke and Duchess of Ormond were put at once into possession of their former estates in Lower Ormond, which they had formerly held as the Earl and Countess of Ormond. Both in fact recovered far more than they had before the rebellion; with 7,183 acres, they were the largest property holders in Lower Ormond.

Of the former Old English freeholders in this barony, two appear to have been almost equally successful in wielding their influence at Court: Sir Nicholas White (4,011 acres) and Lord Dungan, Earl of Limerick (3,852 acres). As "innocent Catholics", both were compensated with the land in Lower Ormond which they (or their families) had lost elsewhere.

On the other hand, one looks in vain for the names of the other former Old English freeholders in this barony: Morris(y), Grace, Butler, and Cantwell. Just as unfortunate was the group of the former Irish freeholders in this barony.

The Irish contingent among the Restoration settlers is exhausted with the names of Thady Meara (79 acres), Bryan Kennedy (56 acres), and Dorothy Kennedy "also Lee" (432 acres). In addition there



were those who were not among the Lower Ormond freeholders of 1641: Dr. Thomas Arthur (398 acres), Benedict Arthur (153 acres), Francis Coghland (201 acres) and Edmund Kelly (324 acres).

The background to the Williamite settlement is well known: King James's policy of putting the army on a firm Catholic footing, and of appointing Catholics to crucial positions in administration; the Ulster Protestants who in reaction formed themselves into associations and raised troops; James's ill-fated Siege of Londonderry and the subsequent landing of King William's forces on the south shore of Belfast Lough; and the Battle of the Boyne followed by the Treaty of Limerick, which was not ratified by Parliament until 1696, and then only in a mutilated form⁴⁹.

The first article of the Treaty had guaranteed a certain measure of religious toleration for the Irish Catholic population; this was completely ignored. Already before 1697 Parliament had started to pass the first of a series of penal Acts against the Irish Catholics, which were contrary to the spirit of the Treaty.

On the other hand, not all persons who had supported King James were formally proceeded against. Despite this, some 270 estates comprising almost 1,000,000 acres were forfeited, and vested in trustees who were directed to sell them "by public cant".

In Lower Ormond the trustees acquired some 34 acres held by the Earl of Carlingford in the name of Nicholas White, and 356 acres by Lord Dungan in the Parish of Modreeny. In Ballybrit the confiscations consisted of 216 acres out of the property of Colonel Richard Grace and Richard Croshin, and 246 acres held by Owen Carroll together with Matthew Nulty "and his wife". The confiscated property in Ballybrit was sold to the Hollow Sword Blade Company, which made large purchases elsewhere in Ireland at this time, but was dissolved around 1720⁵⁰.

If the Williamite settlement had not much of an impact on middle country, this was largely because so few acres in this area had been left in Catholic hands. This is not to say that by this time all previous freeholders of Old English and Irish stock had disappeared.

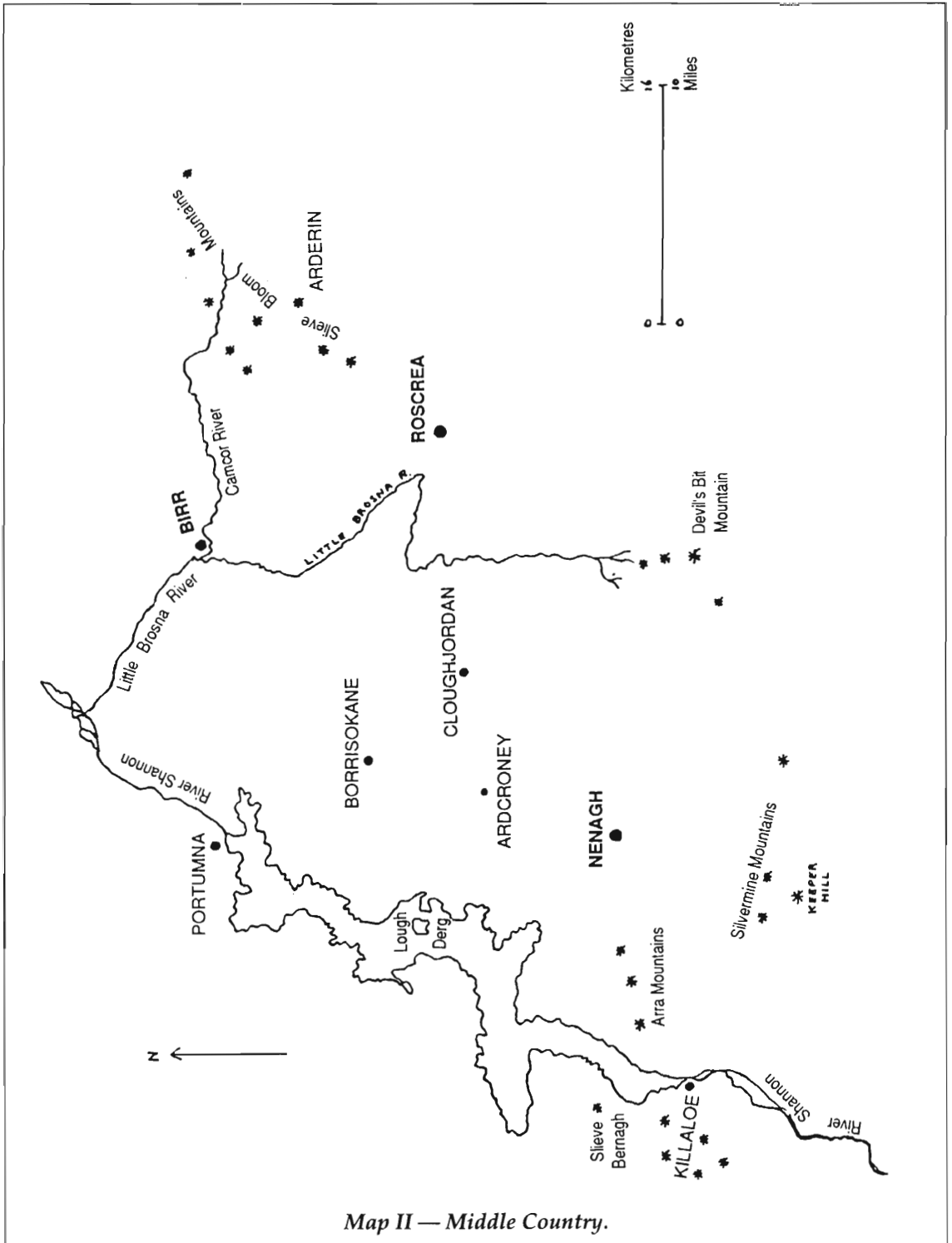
In addition to the few members of the Irish and Hiberno-Norman families who had somehow survived the three plantations, and whose names appear in the right-hand column of the Books of Survey and Distribution, there is some evidence that, through the second part of the seventeenth century, a considerable number of the "Irish papists" of 1641 had survived as leaseholders or lesser tenants on the estates of absentee landowners like the Duke of Ormond, the nepotists Dungan and White, and the Cromwellians Eyre and Stopford⁵¹.

On the other hand, there can be no question that the Williamite settlement provided a more solid basis for a policy that was given its most explicit expression in the Penal Code, but of which the foundation had already been laid with the Cromwellian plantation. This policy aimed at nothing less than the superimposition of one culture on the other.

As already mentioned, in the area of "mixed plantation" the English landowners had been authorized to employ certain categories of Irish as farm labourers and servants, and to re-install them as tenants. However, this appeal to the native labour force had its practical implications in the mid-1650s.

As Prendergast points out, the landlords ". . . were to be bound to make them speak English within a limited time, and their children were to be taught no Irish; they were to observe the manners of the English in their habit and deportment wherein the English exceeded them. Their children were to be brought up under English Protestant schoolmasters; they were to attend the public preaching of Protestant ministers; they were to abandon their Irish names of Teig, and Dermot, and the like, and to call themselves by the significance of such names in English; and for the future were to name their children with English names, especially omitting the (O') and (M'); and lastly, should build their houses with chimneys as English in like capacity do, and demean themselves in their lodging and other deportments accordingly⁵².





FOOTNOTES

1. Ryan, D. (ed.): *The 1916 Poets* (Westport, Conn, U.S.A., 1979).
2. Rees, A. & Rees, B: *Celtic Heritage; Ancient Tradition in Ireland & Wales* (London, 1976) pp. 118-122.
3. Cambrensis, G.: *Historical Works* (T. Wright, ed.) (New York, 1968 ed.), p.117.
4. *Books of Survey & Distribution*, Vol. 13 (P.R.O., Dublin, n.d.), p.58. (hereafter cited as BSD).
5. Whittow, B.: *Geology & Scenery in Ireland* (Harmondsworth, 1974), p.130.
6. Cambrensis, op.cit., p.51.
7. Rohan, P.K.: *The Climate of Ireland* (Dublin, 1975), Tables III & VI.
8. Freeman, T. W.: *Ireland - A General & Regional Geography* (London, 1969), p.56.
9. Aalen, F.A.: *Man and the Landscape in Ireland* (Dublin, 1978), p.56.
10. Braudel, F.: *On History* (Chicago, 1980), p.33.
11. Leinster, I.: *Das Werden der Agrarlandschaft in der Grafschaft Tipperary (Ireland)* (Marburg, 1963), p.121.
12. Evans, E.E.: "Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System", in *Geography* 24 (1939).
13. Buchanan, R.H.: "Rural Settlement in Ireland", in N. Stephens and R.E. Glasscock, eds, *Irish Geographical Studies* (Belfast, 1970), p.152.
14. Aalen, op. cit, p.43
15. Manning, G.: "Prehistoric Sites in the Neighbourhood of Ardcroney", in *Eile* 1 (Roscrea) 1983-1984.
16. Buchanan, op.cit, p.148.
17. Moran, P.: *The Early Irish Church* (Dublin, 1864), pp. 250 - 263.
18. Leask, H.G.: *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, Vol. II (Dundalk, 1958), pp. 129-136.
19. Ryan, J.: *Irish Monasticism* (Dublin, 1931).
20. Evans, E.E.: *Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland* (New York, 1966), p. 38.
21. Leask, H.G.: *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings*, Vol. II (Dundalk, 1958), p.114.
22. Glasscock, R.E.: "Moated Sites and Deserted Boroughs and Villages: Two Neglected Aspects of Anglo-Norman Settlement in Ireland, In N. Stephens & R. E. Glasscock, eds, *Irish Geographical Studies in Honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast, 1970), p. 165.
23. Leask, H.G.: *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1964), p. 57; Cairns, C.T.: *Irish Towerhouses; A County Tipperary Case Study*, *Irish Settlement Studies*, No. 2 (Dublin, 1987), p. 7.
24. White, N. B. ed.: *The Red Book of Ormond* (Dublin, 1932), p. 147.
25. Gleeson, D.F.: *The Last Lords of Ormond* (London, 1938), p. 9; Gleeson. op.cit. in note 25 supra, p. 350.
27. Gleeson, 1938, op. cit, pp. 12, 51, 52.
28. Simington, R.C. ed: *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656, County of Tipperary, Parish of Modreeny*, Vol. II(Dublin, 1934), pp. 276-351.
29. Atkinson, N.D.: *The Plantation of Ely O'Carroll 1619-1693*, M. Litt thesis, T.C.D. (Dublin 1959), maps iv & vi.
30. Bliss, A.: "The Development of the English Language in Early Modern Ireland, in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin & F. J. Byrne, eds.: *A New History of Ireland*, Vol. III (Oxford, 1976), p. 546.
31. O Cuiv, B.: "The Irish Language in the Early Modern Period", in Moody, Martin & Byrne, op.cit at n.30 supra, pp. 519-522.
32. Cullen, L.M.: *The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 1600-1900* (New York, 1981), pp. 141 & 142.
33. O Cuiv, op.cit., p. 509.
34. Clarke, A. & Dudley Edwards, R: "Pacification, Plantation and the Catholic Question", in Moody, Martin & Byrne, op.cit. at n.30 supra, p. 171; Empey, C.A.: "The Butler Lordship", *Journal of the Butler Society* 3, p. 185.
35. Jones-Hughes, T., in Stephens & Glasscock. op. cit. at n.22 supra, p. 246.
36. Gleeson, op. cit .at n.26 supra, p. 55.
37. O'Donovan, J. ed.: *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters (1854)* (New York, 1966, Vol. VI, p. 2179.
38. Clarke & Edwards, op. cit., p. 221.
39. Atkinson, op. cit, pp. 72 & 73.
40. Butler, W. F. T.: *Confiscation in Irish History* (1917) (Port Washington, 1970), pp. 84 & 85.
41. Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 100-103.
42. BSD, Vols. 13 & 19; Gleeson, op. cit. at n.26 supra, p.242. (The extent of the baronies is given in plantation acres).
43. Gleeson, D.F.: "The Ormond Freeholders of the Civil Survey", in *Journal of R.S.A.I.*, 66 (Dublin, 1936), p. 148.
44. Beckett, J. C.: *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London, 1981), pp. 59-69.
45. Bottigheimer, K.: *English Money and Irish Land: The 'Adventurers' in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Oxford, 1971).
46. Prendergast, J. P.: *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland (1870)* (Dublin, 1922), pp. 201-202.
47. *Ibid*, p. 96.
48. Beckett, op. cit., p. 120.
49. *Ibid*, pp. 137-149.
50. Gleeson 1938, op. cit. at n.26 supra, p.226.



51. *Ibid*, pp. 181, 204-216, 224-228.
 52. Prendergast, *op. cit.*, pp. 247 & 248.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Manuscript Source

Books of Survey and Distribution (manuscript volumes). Volumes 13 (Kings and Queens Counties) and 19 (Tipperary). PRO, Dublin.

B. Printed Sources

O'Donovan, J. ed.: *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* (1854) (New York, 1966).
 Simington, R.C. ed.: *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654-1656. County of Tipperary, Parish of Modreeny, Volume II* (Dublin, 1934).
 —, ed.: *The Transplantation to Connacht 1654-58*, (Dublin, 1970).
 White, N.B. ed.: *The Red Book of Ormond* (Dublin, 1932).
 Newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Irish Times*, *Nenagh Guardian*, *Nenagh News*, *Nenagh News and Tipperary Vindicator*, *Sunday Tribune*.

C. Books and Articles

Aalen, F. A.: *Man and the Landscape in Ireland* (Dublin, 1978).
 Atkinson, N.D.: *The Plantation of Ely O'Carroll 1619-1693*, M. Litt. Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1959.
 Beckett, J. C.: *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923*. (London, 1981).
 Bliss, A.: "The Development of the English Language in Early Modern Ireland" in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, volume III, Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).
 Bottigheimer, K.: *English money and Irish land; the "Adventurers" in the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland* (Oxford, 1971).
 Braudel, F.: *On History* (1969) (Chicago, 1980).
 Buchanan, R. H.: "Rural settlement in Ireland" in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock, eds., *Irish Geographical Studies* (Belfast, 1970).
 Butler, W. F. T.: *Confiscation in Irish History* (1917), (Port Washington, 1970).
 Butlin, R. A.: "Land and People, c.1600" in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume III, Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).
 Cairns, C. T.: *Irish Towerhouses: A County Tipperary Case Study*. *Irish Settlement Studies*, no. 2 (Dublin, 1987).
 Cambrensis, G.: *Historical Works*. Revised and edited by T. Wright (1863) (New York, 1968).
 Clarke, A.: "The Irish Economy, 1600-60" in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume III, Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).
 Clarke, A. and R. Dudley Edwards: "Pacification, Plantation, and the Catholic Question", in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume III, Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).
 Cullen, L. M.: *The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 1600-1900* (New York, 1981).
 Empey, C. A.: "The Butler Lordship", *Journal of the Butler Society* 3 (1970-1).
 Evans, E. E.: "Some Survivals of the Irish Openfield System", *Geography* 24 (1939).
 —: *Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland* (New York, 1966).
 Freeman, T. W.: *Ireland - A General and Regional Geography* (London, 1969).
 Glasscock, R. E.: "Moated Sites and Deserted Boroughs and Villages: Two neglected aspects of Anglo-Norman Settlement in Ireland", in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock, eds., *Irish Geographical Studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast, 1970).
 Gleeson, D. F.: "The Ormond Freeholders of the Civil Survey", *Journal of R.S.A.I.* 66 (1936).
 —: *A History of the Diocese of Killaloe* (Dublin, 1962).
 Jones-Hughes, T.: "Town and Baile in Irish Place-names", in N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock, eds., *Irish Geographical Studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans*, (Belfast, 1970).
 Leask, H. G.: *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, Volume II* (Dundalk, 1958).
 —: *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (Dundalk, 1964).
 Leister, I.: *Das Werden der Agrarlandschaft in der Grafschaft Tipperary (Ireland)* (Marburg, 1963).
 Manning, G.: "Prehistoric sites in the neighbourhood of Ardcroney", *Eile* 1 (1983-4).
 O Cuiv, B.: "The Irish Language in the Early Modern Period" in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, and F. J. Byrne, eds., *A New History of Ireland, Volume III, Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691* (Oxford, 1976).
 Prendergast, J. P.: *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (1870) (Dublin, 1922).
 Rees, A. and B. Rees: *Celtic Heritage - Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1976).
 Remnick, R. A., *Theory of Ethnicity: an anthropologist's perspective*, (Lanham, 1983).
 Ryan, D., ed.: *The 1916 Poets*. (Westport, Connecticut, 1979).
 Ryan, J.: *Irish Monasticism* (Dublin, 1931).
 Whittow, B.: *Geology and Scenery in Ireland* (Harmondsworth, 1974).

