ENGLISH REFORMATION AND IRISH WITCHES
THE EFFECTS OF CONFESSIONALISATION IN SUPPRESSING
WITCHCRAFT ACCUSATIONS IN EARLY MODERN IRELAND
By William Kramer

There was a witch in Youghal. Mary Longdon testified before the Assize at Cork on 11 September, 1661, that she had been bewitched by Florence Newton. Longdon said Newton, after kissing her on the forehead, had caused her to suffer fits and trances, during which Longdon saw Newton's face and knew that Newton was the cause of her malady. Longdon testified that during her fits she vomited foreign material such as pins, horseshoe nails, wool and straw. Longdon's employer, John Pyne, confirmed that Longdon was frequently struck by small stones hurled from an invisible source. As Longdon concluded her testimony, Newton peered at her from between the heads of the people standing in front of her. Newton raised her manacled hands toward Longdon and said, "Now she is down." Without another word, Mary Longdon collapsed to the floor and began convulsing, biting her own arms and shrieking.[1] Could there be any doubt? "Gammar" Newton was a witch. There was a witch in Youghal.

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[1] Joseph Glanvill, *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (London: 1726) quoted in John Seymour, *Irish Witchcraft and Demonlogy* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co. Ltd., 1913) 109–3, 116.

The most remarkable aspect of this case was not the nature of the accusations, which actually followed a pattern typical of most Puritanical witchcraft accusations; more importantly this was the first recorded witchcraft trial in southern Ireland in eighty-seven years. The last one was in Kilkenny in 1578, wherein two women were tried for witchcraft under "natural law" and executed.[2] Indeed, Ireland stands out among the countries of early Modern Europe as having very few recorded witchcraft trials and no actual witch hunts. In point of fact, there was no actual statute in Ireland criminalizing witchcraft until 1586.[3] Why was Ireland spared this plague of internal suspicion that took the lives of nearly 50,000 women and men in the rest of Europe? There are many reasons that the tendency of witchcraft accusations was suppressed in Ireland, but one of the underlying causes was the process of dual confessionalisation that resulted from the Reformation of Henry VIII. The effects, in Ireland, of the Protestant Reformation begun by Henry VIII and carried on by successive generations of Tudor and Stuart monarchs created a condition of open religious conflict that suppressed those conditions that facilitated witchcraft accusations and witch-hunts.

The political, religious and social conditions necessary to support witchcraft accusations, trials and larger witch-hunts have been well documented by scholars such as Brian Levack, Robin Briggs and Christina Larner. Even Anne Barstow in her rather gender-biased *Witchcraze* demonstrated some of these prerequisite conditions. Historians of Ireland seem to have overlooked this aspect of Irish history, probably due to the dearth of documented witchcraft trials in Ireland. There are several collections of insightful and informative essays treating this era, such as those in *The Course of Irish History* and *The Oxford History of Ireland*, which contains an excellent essay by Nicholas Canny. Recently published are two more volumes of essays by various scholars analyzing the development of religious division in Ireland and the history of institutional violence in early modern Ireland, respectively *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland* and *Age of Atrocity*. While these works present analyses of various specific instances of violence or religious disunity in Ireland as a result of English coloniza-

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[2] Carrigan, *History of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol iii, 18, quoted in Seymour, *Irish Witchcraft*, 60.
[3] Seymour, *Irish Witchcraft*, 61.

tion, they have neglected an overall synthesis regarding the effects of these instances or trends on the conditions of Irish society which resulted in the suppression of witchcraft accusations and witch hunt—and the significance thereof. This essay will provide a very brief attempt toward correcting that oversight in examining the effects of the English Reformation as instituted by the Tudor-Stuart monarchs, the English Civil War and the Restoration in Ireland by creating a condition of dual confessionalisation.

Ute Lotz-Heumann first applied the German concept of confession-alisation to Ireland in 1999.[4] The concept of confessionalization was originally developed in the early 1980s by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, who built upon the work of Ernst Walter Zeeden. Zeeden, in 1958, analyzed the development of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist churches in late sixteenth century Germany. Zeeden determined that the three faiths began establishing "confessional churches" based on the "confession of faith" by their members, what Zeedan called "confession-building."[5] Reinhard and Schilling, recognizing the relationship between religion, society and politics developed the paradigm of "confessionalisation" to encompass the political and social dimensions of confession-building. Conessionalisation, thus incorporates confession-building into the process of early modern state formation.[6] Confessionalisation was not unique to Ireland, but the socio-political and religious impacts of simultaneous Protestant and Catholic confessionalisation in that country were.[7]

The English Reformation itself was distinct in that it was driven primarily by the dynastic and political agendas of Henry VIII, rather than reactions against corruption within the Catholic Church. To be certain, there were both institutional and doctrinal reform movements in England from which Henry VIII and subsequent Tudor monarchs would derive support for their policies, but the fact remains that the impetus for the English Reformation began with Henry VIII's "Great Matter." Had it ended there things in both England and Ireland might be very different. Beginning in

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[4]Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland: Periodisation and Character, 1534–1649", in *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland*, ed Alan Ford and John Mc-Caferty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 24–53.

[5]Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland," 27.

[6]Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland," 28.

[7]Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalisation in Ireland," 53.

1531, with the enforcement of the Act of Praemunire against the Convocation, Henry VIII began the somewhat gradual process of separating the Church in England from the Pope in Rome.[8] The annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was secured by the Act in Restraint of Appeals in April 1533. An economic and political agenda became immediately apparent with the 1532 Statute of Annates, which abolished the practice of sending the first year's salary of each new bishop to Rome. The November 1534 Act of Supremacy, which declared Henry VIII the "Supreme Head of the Church of England," was preceded by a second Statute of Annates that severed all financial ties with Rome and channeled the once papal revenue into the Royal Treasury.[9] Overall, Henry VIII made relatively few changes within the Church. He abolished the reliquaries and confiscated the monastic lands, but, despite the production of an English translation of the Bible, church services remained in Latin and the Eucharist remained a Sacrament of transubstantiation. Henry VIII created an institutionalized, official Protestant state religion, with the king as the "supreme head" of both the Church and the State. The State had become the Church and religion became inextricably wedded to English and Irish politics. This would ultimately have severely polarizing effects on both religion and politics in Ireland.

The chief governing officer of the English regions in Ireland was the Lord Deputy, alternately the Governor General, who was appointed by, and answered exclusively to, the English Crown. By the fifteenth century, competition for this position was dominated by the FitszGerald earls of Kildare and the Butler earls of Ormond.[10] This contest was settled in 1478 when Garrett More FitzGerald, earl of Kildare was appointed as Governor General of Ireland. FitzGerald, "the great earl" had established close familial ties with both Old English and Gaelic Irish lords, particularly the O'Neills of Tyrone. The power and influence of the Kildare FitzGeralds

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[8] The term "gradual" is relative. The entire process took six years to complete from 1531 attack on the Convocation to the 1536 Act Against Papal Authority. While this may seem gradual to modern historians, it was probably rather sudden to those who lived through it.

[9] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *This Realm of England: 1399–1688* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), 122. Emphasis mine.

[10] Nicholas Canny, "Early Modern Ireland: c. 1500–1700," In *The Oxford History of Ireland*, edited by R. F. Foster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.) 89.

was demonstrated in 1467 when the summary execution of the FitzGerald earl of Desmond and imprisonment of Kildare by Sir John Tiptoft of Worcester provoked an armed uprising of combined Old English and Gaelic Irish forces.[11] The great earl's involvement in one of the Yorkist plots to overthrow Henry VII brought Tudor attention to Ireland and resulted in FitzGerald being replaced by Sir Edward Poynings. Poynings was charged with bringing the entirety of Ireland into "whole and perfect obedience."[12] In December of 1494, Poynings called a Parliament in Drogheda which brought the whole of Irish government under the control of the Crown. Under the statute that has come to be known as "Poynings' Law," the Irish Parliament could meet only with royal permission and only after the king and council had reviewed and approved the measures to be enacted.[13] From one perspective, royal oversight prevented the Irish Parliament from enacting any statutes contrary to the will of the Crown. Viewed from another perspective, however, this statute allowed the Crown to dictate and control what measures were heard by Parliament, and allowed Henry VIII to introduce and enact specific Reformation measures in Ireland.

Poynings was ultimately unable to maintain control in Ireland and Henry VII restored Kildare to his position in 1496. The Governorship of Ireland became a *de facto* hereditary title for the Kildare FitzGeralds when it passed from the great earl to his son, Garrett Oge in 1513. In 1533 Oge was called to London by Henry VIII for a second time. The first, in 1519, resulted in the temporary transfer of the Governorship to the earl of Surrey. Surrey was unable to accomplish the task Henry VIII had set for him without enormous cost to the Crown, and Oge was restored to power. Oge, apparently was less than optimistic about this second royal summons and when he departed in February of 1534, he left control of the government in the hands of his son Thomas, Lord Offally. Offally determined to prove to the Crown that the FitzGeralds of Kildare were necessary for the governance of Ireland, just as had been proven in 1467 and 1496, marched into the council chamber at St. Mary's Abbey and, throwing down his sword of

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[11] Art Cosgrove, "The Gaelic Resurgence and the Geraldine Supremacy: c. 1400–1534," in *The Course of Irish History*, edited by T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart Publishing, 2001) 131–2.

[12] Cosgrove, "The Gaelic Resurgence," 133.

[13] Cosgrove, "The Gaelic Resurgence," 135.

state declared himself no longer the king's deputy, but rather his enemy.

By this time, in England, Henry VIII's "Reformation Parliament" had passed both the Statutes of Annates and the Act in Restraint of Appeals; and though the Act of Supremacy was still five months off, when "Silken Thomas" staged his revolt, the King's course had to have been clear.[14] It certainly seems to have been to Lord Offally, who attempted to garner Gaelic support for his cause by opposing the king's religious policy. The institutional Catholic churches in Ireland had largely fallen into disuse and disrepair and religious renewal and revitalization became the work of Observant Friars, who concentrated their efforts among the Gaelic Irish.[15] It was these friars who sustained the Catholic faith and solidified Irish resistance to the religious reforms of Henry VIII after his marriage to Anne Boleyn and his break with Rome in 1533.[16] Silken Thomas' manipulation of religious sentiments for his own purpose turned what was primarily a political contest of wills into an institutional attack that Henry VIII could not ignore or countenance through negotiation. Politico-religious conflict had come to Ireland.

Henry VIII's response was direct and decisive. The Silken Thomas Rebellion was put down in 1534 by William Skeffington who first attacked the Kildare castle Maynooth with sustained artillery bombardment, then summarily executed Lord Offally and all of the survivors when they surrendered. Henry VIII then attempted to repeat the Church of England policies in Ireland and met with little popular resistance. In 1536, the Irish Parliament passed an Act declaring Henry VIII "the only supreme head on earth of the whole Church of Ireland."[17] Following the English model, Henry VIII abolished the monasteries and seized the monastic lands within Dublin and the Pale. Despite the absence of open resistance, Henry VIII was either unable or unwilling to enforce this policy in the Gaelic controlled lands and by 1539 friars in the Gaelic regions were preaching martial resistance to Henry VIII's policies.[18] The wealthy, Old English families

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[14] Smith, *This Realm*, 120

[15] Smith, *This Realm*, 136–7.

[16] Cosgrove, "The Gaelic Resurgence," 137.

[17] 28 Henry VIII c5, quoted in G. A. Hayes-McCoy, "The Tudor Conquest: 1534–1603," in *The Course of Irish History*, eds. Moody and Martin, 144.

[18] Hayes-McCoy, "Tudor Conquest," 144.

demonstrated symbolic resistance to the Henrician Reform by removing their children from English universities such as Oxford and Cambridge and sending them to Catholic universities on the Continent.[19] Henry VIII created an official Protestant State religion in Ireland based on the English model that existed only in the Anglicized regions. Beyond the Pale, the Gaelic Irish and Old English retained their Catholic faith and their Catholic churches.

The religious reforms carried out by Henry VIII's heirs met with even less success in Ireland than Henry's. In England, the Regency of Edward VI, under Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and archbishop Thomas Cranmer, issued the first *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549, which allowed the English speaking congregation to follow the mass. The book failed however, because it failed to definitively address the matter of the Eucharist. The traditional Catholic interpretation of the mass was that the bread and wine were *actually* transformed into the body and blood of Christ, transubstantiation; while the Protestant interpretation was that the service was only commemorative and an actual transformation did not occur, consubstantiation. At the time, this issue, more than any other, formed a dividing line within the Church of England. The ambiguous language in the first prayer book was supposed to be a compromise, but that only angered the reformist-minded Protestants in England. The Act of Uniformity, 14 March, 1549, which was supposed to enforce the use of the prayer book, was similarly ineffective. In Ireland in June of that same year, the *Book of Common Prayer* was also ordered into use in the Church of Ireland. The matter seemed settled in 1552 with the publication of *Second Book of Common Prayer*, which declared the mass an act of consubstantiation and removed all of the Catholic trappings from the Church. The second Act of Uniformity required religious conformity within England, and by association, Ireland. While this act went largely unenforced in either country, it did set the stage for a state-instituted religion that was substantially different than the predominant faith of the majority of Ireland.

When Edward VI died on July 6, 1553, Mary Tudor—a Catholic—ascended to the throne, she reversed all of the "Edwardian" reforms and many of her father's. While Mary's restoration of Catholicism probably met with

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[19] Canny, "Early Modern Ireland," 99.

at least tacit approval from the Irish Catholics, the English were not nearly so receptive. In January 1554, 3000 men of Kent rose up in protest of both Mary's husband, Philip II, the king of Spain, and the restoration of a papal mass. Mary was able to rally the London troops and put down the uprising, but religious conflict remained at the forefront of Mary's reign. Mary, in contrast to Henry VIII, Edward VI and, later Elizabeth I, effectively "confessionalized" politics. In Mary's mind it was better to burn heretics than hang traitors, and the first of her "martyrs" were in fact political victims.[20] Thomas Cranmer, the architect of the Church of England under Edward VI, was burned as a heretic rather than a traitor to Mary's Crown.

The ascension of Elizabeth I in 1558 saw the restoration of the Church of England and in 1560 Elizabeth attempted to legislate the Protestant Church of Ireland back into effect by restoring royal supremacy over the Church and prescribing the use of the English *Second Book of Common Prayer*. The fact that Elizabeth I's Irish Parliament represented almost exclusively the Anglicized regions of Ireland resulted in association of the Protestant church with a foreign power. Added to this was the fact that priests of the Society of Jesus had come to Ireland to enforce the rulings of the Council of Trent and Catholicism became entrenched in Ireland. Gaelic Irish and Old English effectively united as Catholics and the Protestant Church of Ireland became the religion of the English colony and the "official class."[21]

In England, Elizabeth I's policies demonstrated a complete reversal of Mary's as Elizabeth I returned to a practice of politicized religion. Elizabeth handled troublesome Catholics as traitors rather than heretics of the Church of England, translating the Catholics' loyalty to the Pope as allegiance to a foreign prince. Rather than creating martyrs, Elizabeth I executed traitors to the Crown.[22] Though her revised *Second Book of Common Prayer* reintroduced ambiguous language regarding the Eucharist and became less severely Protestant, the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563, however, leaned heavily toward Calvinism.[23] Ultimately Elizabeth I's Church had

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[20] Smith, *This Realm*, 165.
[21] Hayes-McCoy, "Tudor Conquest," 145.
[22] Smith, *This Realm*, 172.
[23] Smith, *This Realm*, 171.

room for both Catholic trappings and Protestant dogma. Archbishop Laud pursued a heavily Catholic program within the Church, though he never moved for a reunification with Rome. None of this spared Elizabeth I the scorn of the Catholic Church and in 1570 Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I in his papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis*.[24]

Papal condemnation of Elizabeth I combined with her expansionist programs into Catholic Ireland would eventually lead to open religious war between the Catholic Irish and the Protestant English settlers. In 1565, Elizabeth attempted to expand English influence into Ireland through the use of regional presidencies in Munster and Connacht. In Munster, the program of presidencies under Sir Henry Sidney led to the establishment of provincial councils of the English settlers who were intensely Protestant and hostile toward the Gaelic Irish in that region. Open hostilities had been brought to an end when Elizabeth I curtailed Sidney's program, but they remained and obviously continued to simmer for several years.[25]

The very fact that two witches were tried in Kilkenny in 1578 indicates that tensions were high in that region, but open hostilities were suppressed. Studies have shown that witchcraft accusations and witch-hunts occur in areas of religious division as an alternative to open inter-religious conflict.[26] Increased anxiety over religious instability in the area tended to cause people to look for the enemy within. Additionally, given that most witchcraft suspects were held in prison for several months prior to actual trial, it would be reasonable to assume that the witches tried and executed in 1578 had been charged and arrested as early as 1577. Another indication that hostilities remained latent is the fact that witchcraft allegations did not occur during times of open warfare when the human agents of destruction were readily identifiable.[27]

Religious hostilities erupted into open conflict when James Fitz Maurice FitzGerald returned from exile on the Continent in 1579 to lead a

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[24] T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin, editors, *The Course of Irish History* (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart Publisher, 2001), 403.

[25] Canny, "Early Modern Ireland," 108–9.

[26] Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 127.

[27] Levack, Witch-Hunts, 180; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996) 308–9.

rebellion against the heretic Queen Elizabeth. The Munster rebellion was based on religious grounds: Catholic Irish against English Protestants. To make matters worse, from the English perspective, the Irish forces were bolstered by Spanish and Italian forces in 1580. Elizabeth I responded by sending an army of 8000 and crushed the rebellion in 1583. Leaders of the rebellion were executed as traitors. Catholic lands were confiscated by the Crown and a program of plantation brought 4000 English-Protestant settlers into the region.[28]

Religion played a role in the 1595 Ulster rebellion as well. For years Ulster had been a thorn in the English side. Shane O'Neill, who succeeded Conn O'Neill as the earl of Tyrone waged a fairly continuous campaign of raids against not only his fellow Gaelic lords, but also against the Pale lands. For years Elizabeth I refrained from taking direct action against Shane O'Neill, assuming, correctly it had seemed, that the situation would rectify itself when Hugh O'Neill supplanted his uncle as the earl of Tyrone in 1585.[29] In 1595, however, Hugh O'Neill joined his fellow lords in Ulster in open revolt against English encroachment. O'Neill knew that Ulster could not stand alone against the might of England, so he attempted to rally widespread Irish support by declaring himself the champion of the Counter Reformation in Ireland. Once again Spain sent troops to Ireland to support a "Catholic rebellion."[30]

The revolt outlived Elizabeth I and it fell to her Calvinist heir, James I and VI to bring O'Neill to heel. The Irish forces were defeated in 1603, when they attempted to rendezvous with the Spanish army, and O'Neill surrendered to the English army at Mellifont in the north of the Pale. The surrender may have been negotiated, but the acts of atrocity committed by the Protestant English Army in Ulster from 1600 to 1603 would not soon be forgotten. Not content with killing men, women, and children in Ulster, the predominately Calvinist army also slaughtered the bishop of Derry and twenty other Catholic Priests from Ulster.[31] The Nine Years' War may not

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[28] Canny, "Early Modern Ireland," 110–11.

[29] Hayes-McCoy, "Tudor Conquest," 148 and Canny, "Early Modern Ireland," 112.

[30] Canny, "Early Modern Ireland," 113.

[31] John McGurk, "The Pacification of Ulster, 1600–3," in *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland*, edited by David Edwards, Padraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 122–3.

have started as a religious conflict, but it certainly ended as one. James I's program of plantation in Ulster only served to exacerbate the problem in the end. The king confiscated the lands of Catholic Irish involved in the rebellion, which were then given to Protestant settlers, many of which were Scottish Presbyterians. Rather than successfully removing the Catholic Irish, they frequently became the tenants of the new Protestant landholders. This resulted in the region being riddled with angry and resentful Catholics, who were waiting for their opportunity to strike back.[32]

Anti-papist sentiments in England were reinforced after November 5, 1605 when a group of Catholic activists attempted to destroy Parliament with four barrels of gunpowder hidden under Whitehall. Sir Thomas Percy, the earl of Northumberland's suspected involvement in this plot only served to deepen English suspicion towards Catholics.[33] The strong anti-Catholic reaction to the Gunpowder Plot may well have had an influence on James I. In 1606, the king heard the appeal of Brian Gunter in the Court of Star Chamber. Gunter claimed his daughter, Anne had been bewitched by Elizabeth Gregory and two other women. Anne suffered from seizures and trances and allegedly identified he tormentors during her seizure. The Assize court acquitted Gregory and the other women; Brian, probably relying on the reputation of James I as a witch-hunter, appealed to the king for another hearing. Not only was James skeptical at this point, but he set one of the most skeptical men in the kingdom to depose both Anne and Brian Gunter, Samuel Harsnett[34] Anne confessed to Harsnett that her father had given her "green waters" to drink that gave her the seizures and trances she claimed were the result of being bewitched.[35] While it is difficult to draw a direct causal relationship between the Gunpowder Plot and James I's

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[32] Aidan Clarke, "The Colonization of Ulster and the Rebellion of 1641: 1603–60," in *The Course of Irish History*, eds. Moody and Martin, 154.

[33] James I, "Proclamation for the Apprehension of Thomas Percy," in *James I: The Masque of Monarchy*, edited by James Travers (Surrey, UK: The National Archives, 2003), 50–51. Percy was the head of one of England's most powerful Catholic families.

[34] James Travers, *James I*, 36; Brian Levack, editor, *The Witchcraft Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 249. Samuel Harsnett was the chaplain to the Archbishop of York and in 1603 he published a pamphlet entitled, "A Declaration of Egregious Popish Imposture" which began with a prologue by Edward Jorden, who believed that witchcraft confessions were the result of hysteria.

[35] "The Deposition of Anne Gunter," in *James I*, ed. Travers, 36.

skepticism in the Anne Gunter case, the inflated anti-Catholic sentiments of the country following discovery of the Plot influenced events in England and Ireland for many years afterward.

England's anti-Catholic policies continued to be a source of political, social, and religious turmoil in Ireland. The Old English found themselves faced with actual disenfranchisement and potential dispossession based solely on their religion. Their past loyalties to the Crown counted for naught with the Protestant Parliament in Dublin, under the control of Viscount Wentworth, earl of Strafford, which passed further anti-Catholic laws in 1634. Wentworth arranged the confiscation of one quarter of the Catholic owned lands in Connacht and made no distinction between Irish and Old English Catholic. Admittedly, Wentworth was equally harsh with the Presbyterian settlers in Ulster. Rather than affecting an appearance of balance in Irish eyes, Wentworth's policies created enemies in both religions. Worse yet for Wentworth, in England his policies appeared papist and he was recalled to London in 1639. By 1641, the Irish Parliament had joined with the English Parliament in charging Wentworth with treason.

Religious confessionalism and politics became even more polarized and intertwined in Ireland with the outbreak of the English Civil War. While the war in England centered on the rights of Royal prerogative conflicting with Parliament's perceptions of its ancient rights to influence governmental policy, in Ireland religion was the primary issue. The Catholics in Ireland quickly realized the religious impacts of the king's loss of power. If either the Parliament or its Scottish allies, both of which were "militantly and intolerantly Protestant," should gain dominance over the king the results for the Irish Catholics would be disastrous.[36] In 1641 the Gaelic Irish Catholics rose in Ulster under Sir Phelim O'Neill and were quickly successful in taking control of Ulster. O'Neill insisted that he and his army were loyal subjects of the Crown and he even went so far as to have all of his soldiers take an oath of loyalty to Charles I. This convinced the Old English Catholics of O'Neill's sincerity and they quickly joined with the Gaelic Irish forces, demonstrating that, for the Old English, religious loy-

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[36] Clarke, "Colonization of Ulster," 159.

alty was more important than racial loyalty.[37] Oliver Cromwell's fears of a Catholic Army were realized in Ireland as that was the very name the united Old English and Gaelic Irish army took for itself. The Irish forces were again bolstered by the arrival of Continental reinforcements including Archbishop Rinuccini, serving as papal nuncio.[38] With the defeat and execution of Charles I in England, Cromwell was now free to subdue Ireland. Reports of Catholic atrocities against Protestant settlers in Ulster inflamed the anti-Catholic sentiments of the Puritan Army. Cromwell's viciousness at Drogheda and Wexford, where he captured and executed the leaders of the Catholic Army, made an indelible impression upon the Irish. By the time the war was over in Ireland, the Puritan Army had slaughtered at least 618,000 Irish Catholics.[39] Cromwell's real revenge took the form of land confiscations. In Ireland, Cromwell found a solution to the mounting expenses of the Civil War. Profits from land confiscated from Irish Catholics helped defray the financial costs while the land itself served as payment for many Cromwellian veterans. Those Catholics deemed "innocent" of the rebellion were relocated to Counties Clare and Connacht on the west coast.

The Confederate uprising and Cromwellian settlement had profound effects on the psychology of Irish society. As noted above, periods of open military conflict suppressed society's need for witchcraft accusations. In areas of open warfare, witchcraft accusations typically occur on the periphery, as demonstrated in Essex in 1645–6. By this time the Civil War had become concentrated to the west of England and Matthew Hopkins was able to manipulate the latent anxiety of people to spark one of the largest hunts in English history. In Ireland, however, there was no periphery. By relocating all of the Catholic Irish to the west coast, Cromwell effectively eliminated the periphery of the Irish wars. Additionally, by displacing all of the surviving Irish Catholics, Cromwell disrupted the process of suspicion building that frequently occurred in tight knit communities and led to witchcraft accusations.[40]

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[37] Alan Ford, "Living Together, Living Apart: Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland," in *The Origins of Sectarianism in Early Modern Ireland*, edited by Alan Ford and John McCafferty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18.

[38] Edwards, Lenihan and Tait, *Age of Atrocity*, 12; Clarke, "Colonization of Ulster," 161.

[39] Smith, *This Realm*, 306.

[40] Briggs, *Witches*, 308–9.

The Restoration of Charles II to the throne of England brought further changes to Ireland and ultimately resulted in an increase in anxiety amongst the Puritan settlers. Charles II endeavored to rectify some of the injustice the Irish Catholics experienced at the hands of Cromwell and he promised to return their lands to them. At the same time, Charles II also promised not to dispossess the settlers of their lands.[41] Ultimately, the Act of Settlement was a compromise. The Irish Catholics would have some of their land restored, though not necessarily the land that was taken from them, and certainly not all of it. The Protestant Cromwellian settlers were required to surrender one third of their estates to accommodate the Act. This of course created resentment among the Cromwellian settlers. Add to this the Puritan anxiety over a restored monarch and the potential or actual return of a socially unacceptable group and the conditions favorable to witchcraft accusations grew; Florence Newton became a witch in Youghal.

From the Protestant torture and execution of Dermont O'Hurley, the Catholic archbishop of Cashel, to the scorched earth policies of the English in the early seventeenth century, from the Catholic atrocities against the Protestant settlers in Ulster in 1641 to Cromwell's brutal victories at Drogheda and Wexford, religious conflict was open, bloody and violent.[42] The "enemy" was clearly defined as a member of the opposite religion. The nature of the Protestant revolution in England was inextricably tied religion to politics in Ireland, which resulted in every major conflict becoming a religious war between the Protestant state and the Catholic resistance. The open and active nature of these conflicts, combined with the repeated smaller raids of the Gaelic lords struggling to maintain independence, resulted in an environment antithetical to witchcraft accusations. Ironically, it was only when a modicum of stability developed, coupled with increased anxiety that witches actually appeared in Ireland.

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[41] J. G. Simms, "The Restoration and the Jacobite War," in *The Course of Irish History*, eds. Moody and Martin, 165.

[42] Richard Stanihurst, *Brevis praemunitio pro futura concertione cum Jacobo Usserio*, quoted in Ford and McCafferty, eds, *Origins*, 1.

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