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Cover image: Detail of Charles II touching a patient for the king's evil (scrofula) surrounded by courtiers, clergy and general public. Engraving by R. White. Credit, Wellcome Library, London (Creative Commons License)
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In 1691, in the immediate wake of military operations across Ireland, the Church of Ireland bishop of Derry published his major political treatise. William King’s *The State of the Protestants of Ireland* was at first glance an atrocity album. It documented in lurid detail the sufferings of his co-religionists in the recent turmoil, and provided a historical setting for the carnage by dwelling on previous incarnations of internecine violence in the century preceding the War of the Two Kings (1688–91). The bleak pornography of violence contained in its darkest pages conceal its actual purpose, however. Nor is it to do justice to the churchman to see *The State of the Protestants* as an addition to the canon of martyrologies composed by Protestant and Catholic protagonists alike. Rather, King’s authorial purpose in compiling this horrifying compendium was, counter intuitively, to explore the question of social order.

In King’s case, two modes of social order were understood to be in competition. The first, with which he identified the Jacobite supporters of James IV and II, was grounded solely in personhood. The authority of the monarch was a consequence of the individual being elected by God to rule. This divine rule of kings was attractive in its simplicity; King himself had flirted with it in the opening salvoes of the Revolution of 1688. Yet its moral consequences were, he now argued, depraved. Presuming that individual authority was sufficient to impose social order ensured that politics was perpetually in crisis, as competing groups fought to impose their particular vision of the common good. However well-intended the protagonists, the outcome of this view was to turn politics into a vortex of plot and counterplot, as parties and factions competed to define the common good as being in their own peculiar possession.

This concept of social order was contested by an abstract notion of social order grounded in natural law. It was this position which King identified with the supporters of William of Orange. Herein, society originated in man’s natural sociability, and was conducted to support the flourishing of all who remained within it. The monarch’s role was to protect the society from foreign
and domestic foes. In King’s estimation, this was where James had failed. Adopting a view of society as being the product of personal authority he had threatened his Protestant subjects with violence in his desire to impose a Catholic religious settlement. In the basic architecture of natural law lay the presumption that each person is born with an inalienable right to self-protection. It was this right the Protestants of Ireland exercised during the War of the Two Kings by transferring their allegiance to William.

The problem of social order vexed King’s seventeenth-century contemporaries. The discourse of natural law was itself developed as a creative response to civil violence. The great Dutch jurisprudentialist Hugo Grotius wrote his study of *The Free Sea* (1609) as a consequence of privateering; his German student, Samuel von Pufendorf was reflecting on the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (1618–48) in composing his *Duties of Man and Citizen* (1675). Similarly, in England, ideas of natural order and personal authority focused the minds of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

Yet, historians have in large part been entranced by the violence that prompted such reflection, and not by the proposals to resolve conflict which it inspired. The civil wars of England, the Bishops’ War in Scotland, the carnage that emanated from the 1641 Rebellion in Ireland, have provided lurid fodder for examination. The destabilisation and eventual collapse of the state in the 1640s and the rickety regimes that characterised the 1650s have held particular fascination, driven by a desire to comprehend why a people might turn their violent urges inwards, towards each other, and destroy the society which they inhabit. King’s *State of the Protestants* is in this vista another exploration of the Gothic charisma of the killer.

This collection of essays takes as its starting point the reimagining of King’s *State of the Protestants* as a meditation on social order, to explore how the Stuart realms of Ireland and Scotland were venues of social experimentation. It asks how contemporaries understood their society, examining the terms of codification and the presumptions they held concerning its operation. In other words, far from seeing the seventeenth century as a black hole for social thought, it proposes that it was a peculiarly fertile time to think about society and to offer modes of categorisation and conceptualisation.

This ambition is exemplified in the first essay, by Scott Spurlock, who opens up the interior working of the terms ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ to propose a much more nuanced and coloured vocabulary of confessional identity than is usually deployed by historians anxious to identify political camps with religious affiliations. A similar blind spot is identified by Eamon Darcy in
his contribution on the outbreak of the 1641 Rebellion, where he contends that, unlike elsewhere in the province, the violence in Antrim, through its peculiar migration history, was inflected by ethnic categories that pitched Lowland Scots and Presbyterian Settlers against an alliance of Highlander and Gaelic Irish. In a startling conclusion he proposes that the conflict in Antrim was an extension into Ulster of a decidedly Scottish rivalry between the Cameron and MacDonnell clans. In Barbara Fennell’s piece two counter-intuitive insights are offered. First she proposes that the 1641 Depositions, so frequently mined for their recitation of atrocity, in fact absorb the punishment inflicted on women by given it expression. Second, the documents re-inscribe the social order by understanding women as nested within a wider community through their reference to men. The question of social authority is also the specific focus of Mark Sweetnam’s study of clerics in the 1641 depositions, where he finds that Protestant ministers were targeted by rebels as much because of their exploitative economic position—as passive recipients of tithes and as active moneylenders—as they were because of their faith. The disruption of the 1640s and 1650s also caused contemporaries to reflect on the social categories that posed the threat of disintegration, as Kirsteen MacKenzie’s article shows. Her essay studies how the editor of a London news book could dismiss a category of subject—in this case the Scottish Highlander—by constructing an image of it as a social outsider. Similar treatments of the Irish Catholic informed King and his predecessor, William Temple, whose Irish Rising (1646) perpetuated the conceit of the Irish Catholic as a barbarous and untrustworthy foe. Finally Laura Hedrick explores how what she terms the ‘visual social order’ was disrupted by the practice of transvestism, which she notes was often a common practice in Scotland in carnivalesque celebrations, despite the severe reputation of the Kirk. In exploring how ideas of gender were blurred and subverted, she highlights the connective tissue between categories of social order, medical understanding and political authority.

Taken together this volume of essays continues the remarkable collaboration that Irish and Scottish historians have embarked upon in developing, through Trinity College Dublin and the University of Aberdeen, the 1641 Depositions website [http://www.1641.tcd.ie/], and its accompanying materials. It also thickens the Irish Scottish comparison by dwelling of categories and concepts that were used in the process of governing these societies. The result of a workshop held in Aberdeen and organised by Dr Michael Brown and Dr Caroline Erskine, and with a number of papers specifically commissioned for
the volume, it constitutes a welcome addition to the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*.

Michael Brown

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Problems with Religion as Identity: 
The Case of Mid-Stuart Ireland and Scotland 
Scott Spurlock

Defining what component elements are integral in defining identity, either individual or corporate, is always challenging. Identity within a social grouping is multi-layered, dynamic and exists as part of a continuum that is affected by competition from within the collective and externally.\(^1\) Moreover, identities can be multiple and alternating. Therefore the essential act of defining the key elements that delineate an identity for a collective, thus allowing a group to be distinguished and labelled, at any particular point in time is difficult. This is still more challenging for the historian who is chronologically and conceptually removed from her/his subject and who must discern between the voices of primary sources and the traditions that have formed long after. Even when self-defining terms can be taken directly from a person or people in the distant past, it is dangerous to assume that the meaning remains the same for the modern mind as it did for those who espoused the label, for their meanings and usage can change even in short periods of time.\(^2\) For this reason it is important for historians to return to the rubrics of identity we have inherited in historiography and scrutinise the meaning, accuracy and usability of the categories of identity that have been constructed.

Identity has been a particularly challenging and ongoing topic of debate for historians of Ireland. There are inherent difficulties in identifying successive waves of immigration into Ireland and charting their various influences on the formation of an increasingly amalgamated community. This is challenging when the identities of both the incomer and the indigenous are themselves already composite. Though long-established terms, historians of Ireland continue to grapple with defining the labels of ‘Anglo-Irish’ or ‘Old English’ and ‘New English’. The purpose of this essay is not to return to this well-trodden debate. Instead, one component of identity that historians have tended to turn to as the lowest common denominator to delineate the peoples of Ireland from the mid-sixteenth century onwards will be reassessed. Like so

many other approaches, the oversimplification of religious identity to broad confessional umbrellas has essential shortcomings. And yet, as this paper will discuss, Irish history is not alone in this trend. In Scottish history as well, religious labels have been employed with too little scrutiny, with the result that diverse religious, social and political motivations become lumped into overly homogenised definitions.

**Making Sense of Catholicism in Ireland**

Although many popular histories of Ireland emphasise the religious and cultural impact of the Tudor period, the introduction of religious reform—for imperial motives—is not unique to sixteenth-century Ireland. The invasion, settlement and integration of Vikings in Ireland from the ninth century had significant cultural and ecclesiastical implications. Similarly, the arrival of English to Ireland began nearly 400 years before the reign of Henry VIII, hence the proliferation of labels for the various inhabitants of the island. As historians of medieval Ireland emphasise, Henry II’s intervention in the twelfth century was also fundamentally rooted in religious terminology and given sanction by the English pope Adrian IV’s *Laudabiliter* (1155). Although the authenticity of the document continues to be disputed, England justified intervention in Ireland on religious grounds with the result that rival Gaelic- and English-speaking Catholic traditions divided Irish Christians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries perhaps even more profoundly than the gradual and erratic implementation of Protestantism after Henry VIII’s 1537 Act of Supremacy. Tensions ran so high between Irish- and English-speaking Franciscans in Cork that blood was purportedly shed in 1291. The cultural divisions between Gaelic Irish and Anglo-Irish were further cemented politically by their diverging responses to Edward Bruce’s invasion in 1315, the repressive Statutes of Kilkenny (1366) and the Gaelic Resurgence between 1350 and 1500. Even the groundswell of monastic reform in the fifteenth century that witnessed the founding of more than forty Franciscan houses was largely limited to Irish-speaking regions. This division between Gaelic and Anglo-Irish Catholics persisted down to the middle of the seventeenth

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4 John A. Watt, ‘The Irish Church in the Middle Ages’ in Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland: Revisiting the Story* (Dublin, 2002), 54.
century. By the end of the fifteenth century this resulted, according to Patrick Corish, in the ‘churches … already falling into disrepair and even into total ruin in the “land of so long continual war within himself”’.

The question this article is concerned with is the degree to which Catholicism in Ireland can be viewed as a unified and uniform religion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Much work has been done since John Bossy’s groundbreaking essay ‘The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Ireland, 1596–1641’—particularly by Colm Lennon, who argues for the formation of an Irish Catholic identity in Ireland in the 1570s and 1580s—but the issue remains that the state of Catholicism in Ireland by the end of the sixteenth century was far from standardised. In the early years of the Reformation the religious persuasion of most people could be described as indifferent in relation to the pull from either the Protestant or Catholic direction prior to 1590. In fact, when Edmund Tanner famously wrote to Rome in 1571 he expressed little fear about the threat of Protestant heresy, claiming less than 100 Irish had embraced the new religion. Instead he decried the state of the Catholic faith:

a pious Catholic is hardly to be found: and no wonder since the clergy are the most depraved of all. Moreover, there is so little instruction to be had in the Christian faith that few can so much as repeat the Lord’s Prayer, the articles of the faith, or the commandments, and still fewer understand them. Sermons are so uncommon that there are many that have never so much as heard one; the sacraments are so rarely administered, so much more rarely understood, that the ignorant people know not whether they were appointed by God or by men. In fine, so gross is the ignorance of the people that there are many who, passing all their lives in the grossest sin, have grown so accustomed thereto that they dare to say that it is just as lawful for them to live by theft or rapine as for him that worthily serves the altar to live by the altar.

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7 Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience*, 62.
In light of so scathing a report, how Catholic should Ireland be considered by the middle of the sixteenth century? And, as a corollary of this important question, how appropriate is it for religion to serve as the primary attribute for demarcating identity? Marianne Elliott’s assessment that the popular religion in Ulster in the sixteenth century ‘was mostly one of localised folk practices’, similar to much of Europe, makes the assertion that religion should be the primary marker of identity seem implausible. Elliott does not doubt that religion was fundamentally rooted in Gaelic culture, but the influence of local politics and the lack of a formal structure meant religion reflected cultural identity rather than serving to define it.

Despite Patrick Corish’s claim in 1985 that conflict in early-modern Ireland—once accepted as rooted ‘essentially, indeed almost exclusively’, in religion had rightly come to be ‘seen as a much broader clash of cultures’, religion persists in being the primary marker of identity not simply in popular memory, but in much of the scholarship as well. Such a distinction is evidenced even in Aidan Clarke’s highly nuanced The Old English in Ireland (1966, 2000). Here Clarke argues that the criteria for being ‘Old English’ was ‘demographic, historical and racial, its connotation was political and religious’—meaning Catholic—which led to the ‘possession of a certain politico-religious attitude’. David Edwards interprets this to mean that ‘religion, not ethnicity, determined political identity’. However, Edwards notes that such a distinction meant Clarke treats ‘the Irish-born and bred twelfth earl of Ormond, James Butler’, a Confederate, ‘as one of the “New English” because of his Protestanism, and the English-based fifth earl of Clanricarde, Ulick Burke, as “Old English” because of his Catholicism’ despite the facts that Clanricarde had primarily royalist motivations, had sided with Ormond against the Catholic Confederacy during the 1640s, and allied with Murrough McDermod O’Brien, first earl of Inchiquin, in 1648 and besieged Galway. Inchiquin himself then provides a very difficult test for distinguishing individuals based on their ‘possession of a certain politico-religious attitude’ for he was an O’Brien, of Gaelic stock,

2012].

12 Ibid., 67.
13 Corish, The Irish Catholic Experience, 262.
14 Aidan Clarke, The Old English in Ireland, 1625–42 (Ithaca 1966, Dublin, 2000), 16.
16 Ibid., 100n; Clarke, Old English in Ireland, 16.
but had been fostered in his youth by Protestants. He converted to the ‘new’ faith between 1628 and 1635. Although he served the Confederate cause (as a royalist) after fleeing Ireland he eased himself into Spanish service and by 1654 was governor of Catalonia and returned to the ‘old’ faith by 1657.\textsuperscript{17} The problem, as evidenced here, is that the apparently simple rubric of Catholic or Protestant is far too simplistic to explain the shifting milieu of motivations directing personal choice and actually clouds a number of the issues at hand. This is especially the case when a number of settlers, both before and during the official plantations, were Catholic. The 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} earls of Antrim fostered Catholicism and planted Catholics on their lands, while also planting Protestants in order to appease the State. Other Catholics in the early seventeenth century, including Sir George Hamilton of Greenlaw, also attracted Catholic Scots to settle in Ulster.\textsuperscript{18} Perhaps as many as one in five Scots settling in Ulster by 1625 was Catholic.\textsuperscript{19} Thus the simplicity of the claim that ‘in Ireland religion was the criterion used to distinguish between natives and newcomers’ in the seventeenth century must be questioned.\textsuperscript{20}

\section*{Catholicism and Politics}

Certainly there were occasions during the latter half of the sixteenth century when clearly Catholic ideologies were hitched to political aspirations, such as in the Desmond rebellions (1569–73, 1579–83), the Baltinglass Rebellion (1580–1), and even the early years of the Nine Years War (1594–1603). Yet these had only localised appeal and did not necessarily even carry the argument to such a degree as to demand participation of all Catholics. When, in 1572, Irish friars emerged from hiding and openly preached a Catholic crusade against English oppression it failed to elicit a general rebellion.\textsuperscript{21}

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Ambiguous Allegiances’, \textit{Irish Review}, 33 (2005), 117.}
\footnote{Fitzwilliam to Elizabeth I, 7 December 1572, \textit{Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland, 1509–73}, Hans Claude Hamilton (ed.) (London, 1860), 490; Mary Ann Lyons,}
\end{footnotesize}
Therefore, although a militant form of political Catholicism espousing ‘faith and fatherland’ developed in the 1570s, it remained marginal. For example, Gerald Fitzgerald, the 11th earl of Kildare, who had a Crusader-esque pedigree having fought for the Knights of Rhodes against the Turks and played a prominent role in suppressing the Protestant-led Wyatt’s rebellion that opposed the marriage of the Catholic Mary Tudor to Philip II of Spain, failed to be convinced in 1579–80 of the necessity to fight for ‘faith and fatherland’ in Desmond’s second rebellion. For Hiram Morgan the origins of linking Catholicism and Irishness in terms of ‘faith and fatherland’ rest with the return of James Fitzmaurice from the continent in 1579. Yet, as late as 1599 the appeals of Hugh O’Neill and ‘Red Hugh’ O’Donnell for a united Catholic response to English policies threatening Gaelic Ulster fell on deaf ears. This lacklustre reaction is all the more striking when the monarch, Elizabeth I, had been excommunicated by the Pope in 1570. In order to further his cause as a Catholic one O’Neill desired the Pope to excommunicate all who failed to support his rebellion. Rome, however, doubted such a move would strengthen the position of the faith in Ireland or ease relations with the English monarchy. If general dissatisfaction could not be harnessed under the banner of Catholicism in such circumstances, identity and actions appear not to have been primarily motivated by confessional interests. In fact, Catholicism was by no means the exclusive preserve of the ‘Old English’ and Gaels of Ireland in the 1580s. David Edwards notes Hugh O’Neill and his great rival Sir Henry Bagenal were both Catholics. Moreover, the majority of the troops Bagenal levied in England for Irish service were also Catholic. In the 1580s and early 1590s to be Irish did not necessarily mean to be first and foremost a Catholic, nor did being devoutly Catholic indicate Irish-ness. Furthermore, Catholicism

23 Bradshaw, ‘Ambiguous Allegiances’, 112.
did not equate to a sense of belonging to a universal church in general, nor a specifically Roman one in particular.\textsuperscript{27}

The Process of Confessionalisation

So far, the purpose of the argument has not been to question the presence of Catholicism in Ireland; forms of Catholicism were certainly widespread. The issue is whether these forms of Catholicism were in any way uniform, overarching or capable of serving as the bedrock of identity. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin claims that: ‘to the present century no one factor was more influential in distinguishing and dividing the histories of the two islands than the (in archipelago terms) localized success of the post-tridentine Irish catholic church’.\textsuperscript{28} This may be true, but when this transformation took place is as yet undetermined. For Sean Connolly, clear cut confessional identities took root before the 1590s as the result of ‘ethnic and political conflicts within Ireland, rather than of the importation to there of the competing religious ideologies of continental Europe.’ However, only after the initiation of the Jesuit mission in 1596 and the introduction of a continental seminary-trained clergy did a Catholic conformity begin to be instilled in Ireland. For Connolly the primary purpose of the Irish Counter-Reformation was ‘concerned less with the combating of heresy than with reshaping indigenous religious traditions to conform to the new model laid down at Trent’.\textsuperscript{29} This is important, particularly in relation to the political dynamics of the Irish diaspora at the end of the sixteenth century.

The process identified by Connolly enabled the formation of what Hiram Morgan has called a conception of ‘faith and fatherland’.\textsuperscript{30} While appeals to such an idea were made by Hugh O’Neill and Hugh O’Donnell in the mid-1590s, faith and fatherland failed to motivate much of a response. Perhaps the cold response by O’Neill and O’Donnell’s neighbours in Ulster, as Ciaran Brady has suggested, is because such appeals were hitched to Hugh O’Neill’s ambitions to extend personal dominance over the very people he was trying to summon together in the name of religion. For Brady ‘the aggressive,

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{27} Elliott, \textit{Catholics of Ulster}, 66.
\item\textsuperscript{29} Sean Connolly, \textit{Contested Island: Ireland 1460 – 1630} (Oxford, 2009), 337.
\end{itemize}
opportunist and frankly oppressive tactics which he employed against the other Gaelic lordships [were not] readily reconcilable with the image of the great defender of faith and fatherland which other commentators have sought to project upon him.\textsuperscript{31} While the debate about O’Neill’s motives continues, Marianne Elliott notes ‘even the pope doubted O’Neill’s sincerity’.\textsuperscript{32} Yet the basic ideas promoted by O’Neill and ignored by his most of his audience came to be reformulated and reintroduced into Ireland decades later. This process of reformulation did not take place in Ireland. Instead, it was an identity forged in the Irish experience of exile in Spanish regiments and continental seminaries. However, this expatriate influence on Ireland would take several decades to bear fruit at home and would not take root until the circumstances had become even more difficult, particularly for Irish Gaels.

Structurally the great change for the Catholic church in Ireland took place between 1618 and 1648 with the reintroduction of a diocesan system. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, following in the steps of Patrick Corish, asserts the reestablishment of ‘a functioning Catholic episcopate [in 1630] in a kingdom where the state was Protestant was … a European anomaly’.\textsuperscript{33} However, two qualifications about Ó hAnnracháin’s assertion need to be made. First, although the period between 1618 and 1648 witnessed a dramatic series of episcopal appointments with forty provisions being made and the residency of twenty-seven bishops by 1648, Donal Cregan reminds us that this needs to ‘be regarded as an isolated group of bishops virtually without immediate predecessors or immediate successors’.\textsuperscript{34} In other words, this period was an anomaly in Ireland as well. Moreover, the introduction of an episcopal hierarchy without a well-trained clergy at the parish level meant little in terms of implementing Catholic education and presumably Catholic identity among rank-and-file Irish men and women. It was for this reason that Caroline Hibbard, when writing about the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy between 1618 and 1630, implies it had little impact prior to the political changes

\textsuperscript{31} Ciaran Brady, ‘The Macdonalds and the Provincial Strategies of Hugh O’Neill’ in William Kelly and John Young (eds), \textit{Scotland and the Ulster Plantations} (Dublin, 2009), 57.

\textsuperscript{32} Elliott, \textit{Catholics of Ulster}, 59.

\textsuperscript{33} Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, ‘In Imitation of that Holy Patron of Prelates the Blessed St Charles: Episcopal Activity in Ireland and the Formation of a Confessional Identity, 1618’ in Ford and McCafferty (eds), \textit{The Origins of Sectarianism}, 74.

\textsuperscript{34} Donal F. Cregan, ‘The Social and Cultural Background of a Counter-Reformation Episcopate, 1618–60’ in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds), \textit{Studies in Irish History} (Dublin, 1979), 86.
brought about by the establishment of the Catholic Confederacy allowed for a groundswell of support.\textsuperscript{35} This may be in part due to two facts. First, even if it is accepted that a functioning ecclesiastical structure had been restored by 1630, its influence was, to a significant extent, limited to Anglo-Irish regions.\textsuperscript{36} Second, not all of the bishops in office in Ireland were of equal quality. The nuncio Giovanni Battista Rinuccini noted a distinct difference in the ability of Ireland’s bishops, with the older bishops being of a much inferior calibre to those most recently appointed.\textsuperscript{37}

The second qualification to Ó hAnnracháin’s argument is that the introduction of a functioning episcopal hierarchy from abroad is not an indication of the state of Catholicism in 1618. In other words, the question remains as to whether the flurry of structural change resulted from an inherent desire in Ireland for a Catholic clergy to attend to a predominantly Catholic society or was this an external attempt to bring about a significant cultural change as Connolly suggested for the 1590s? The answer is probably both, but it leads to a corollary. Despite Ó hAnnracháin’s claim that the situation in Ireland was almost unique in Europe because the bishops appointed ‘were all the product of seminary education’ and ‘had been appointed … with little input from any secular interest’,\textsuperscript{38} Cregan gives ample evidence for lay political motivations and numerous examples of kin interventions or attempted interventions in episcopal appointments. For instance, Tyrconnell’s interest in facilitating episcopal appointments while in exile in 1628 included the extension of O’Donnell influence in northern Connacht as well as ““poaching” on former O’Neill territory, in the diocese of Derry, whose inhabitants he described as “my subjects”.’\textsuperscript{39} Jesuits regularly complained of secular intervention in the appointment of Irish bishops intended to maintain the status quo of kin influence over a church dependent on friars supported by those very kin groups.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, there are numerous instances where moves were made to block appointments due to family links that might be unfavourable to kin.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Elliott} Elliott, \textit{Catholics of Ulster}, 68.
\bibitem{Aiazza} Aiazza (ed.), \textit{The Embassy in Ireland}, 141.
\bibitem{Cregan} Cregan, ‘The Cultural and Social Background’, 89.
\end{thebibliography}
aims and ambitions. Thus the appointments reflected, and to some degree embodied, a desire for creating a Catholic patria formulated and incubated by an exiled Irish community. Yet could the presence of a fully formed episcopal structure, imported from abroad, attain the homogenisation of Catholicism in the generation and a half between 1618 and 1648? Again, it might be argued the answer is probably yes and no.

Scholars generally accept that this late-blooming post-tridentine reform had a limited impact. For Ó hAnnracháin, ‘the impact of Catholic reformers in Ireland is to be measured less by the extent to which they managed to substitute popular religious practices with the devotions of the educated élite than in the manner in which they acquired popular legitimacy as a professional clerical body mediating between the people and God’. Real grassroots change could not be introduced immediately. Ó hAnnracháin goes on to say: ‘From an Irish perspective, however, rather than representing the tail-end of a period of reform, this was an era of dynamic religious innovation which telescoped together a number of developments that occurred more gradually in less peripheral parts of the Catholic world.’ However, the dynamic process coalescing in the remarkable creation of an autonomous Irish nation in the Catholic Confederation of Ireland in 1642, also served to antagonise and expose the inherent weaknesses and incompatibilities in Irish society. The combination of commitments proved to be problematic and largely foreign to many Irish minds, as the Catholic clergy emerged as ‘a formidable and distinctive interest during the 1640s… [at a time] when the question of their corporate right to jurisdiction and property became the burning political issue within the Confederate association.’ This is especially important when the party that primarily directed this process for developing a Catholic patria represented the intellectual fruits of exiled Gaeldom. Perhaps the clearest indication of the fragmented nature of Catholicism is evidenced at the time when it has often been presented as being most triumphant. The establishing of the Confederation and its tripartite commitments to faith, king and country brought pressures and expectations that could not be reconciled corporately.

While Ó hAnnracháin admits that continental interest in events in Ireland ultimately testified ‘more to the limitations of a confessional solidarity than to its strengths’, it might be argued that the same could be said of the domestic

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42 Ó hAnnracháin, Catholic Reformation in Ireland, 10.
43 Ibid., 3.
44 Ibid., 11.
situation. For as Brendan Fitzpatrick explained the situation in 1647, it was loyalty to the monarch and not Catholicism that ‘had been the one thing’ the confederates had been able to agree upon. Even in the wake of the confederacy’s implosion, the previous divisions among Catholicism in Ireland remained: the ‘Old English kept to their diocesan Counter-Reformation structure, while the Gaelic Irish supported their regular, unreformed clergy, best represented by the Franciscan Friars Minor.’ In fact, even during the height of Catholic power during Rinuccini’s presence in Ireland, he reported that the bishops tended to be ‘for the most part lukewarm’ in attaining a complete Catholic settlement, while those in regular orders ‘are without comparison much more so’ apathetic.

According to Rinuccini, the root of their error likely rested in ‘the ample power vested till now in the Regulars, under the title of Missionaries, which equals and in some respects exceeds that of Apostolic Nuncio’. Thus it may be argued that the intellectual formation of a Catholic patria, having been formulated by dissatisfied Gaelic élites and codified by the Gaelic bardic intelligentsia educated in continental colleges at its root could not hold together the disparate interests of the Confederacy’s constituent parts, for they had fundamentally different aims that the nominal homogeneity of the confederated Catholics could not smooth over. Yet a meta-narrative was created during the failed Confederacy, even if it only contained a selective interpretation of Catholicism in Ireland.

The role that religion played in political revolts prior to 1603 was recast by the subsequent appropriation of political rebels as Catholic martyrs in works such as David Rothe’s *Analecta Sacra* (1616–19), Thomas Messingham’s *Florilegium Insulae Sanctorum* (1624), Archbishop Lombard of Armagh’s *De regno Hibernia, sancta insula, commentarius* (1632), and Philip O’Sullivan Beare’s *Historiae Catholicae Iberniae Compendium* (1621). This reconstruction, or perhaps overestimation of a consistent Catholic lineage for Ireland, found another voice in the Franciscan proliferation of a bardic ‘Clann Israel’ tradition that identified exiles as God’s chosen wandering in the wilderness with a promise to return home. Jerrold Casway helps bring this picture into fuller focus by emphasising that the formulation of the Kilkenny ‘experiment’ provided ‘a

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47 Ibid., 203.
48 Aiazza (ed.), *The Embassy in Ireland*, 141–142.
49 Ibid., 142.
50 Morgan, ‘Faith and Fatherland’, 16.
forum and opportunity for a provincial-minded and religious society to create a Catholic *patria*.\(^{51}\) It was not only a new context but a new ‘identity’ forged over the previous twenty years through the concerted external efforts of exiles, ecclesiastics and half-hearted international supporters. Moreover, it perhaps owed as much to the policies of the Spanish crown as it did to Irishmen, as the king founded and funded a number of Irish colleges: Alcalá, Evora and Lisbon (1593); Douai (1594); Antwerp (1600); Santiago de Compestela (1605); Leuven (1606); Lille (1610); Seville (1611); Nieupoort (1627); and Madrid (1629).\(^{52}\) More than just influenced by Spanish ambitions, the colleges in the Low Countries, which have been noted as the most influential in relation to the continental renaissance of Gaelic language and culture responsible for ‘Clann Israel’ ideology, were forged in the experience of the Spanish Netherlands where a particularly militant style of aggressive, political Catholicism existed. The importation of this ideal can be seen in a number of sources, but an account of a sermon delivered in 1613 expresses the importance of continental influences. In May that year Turlough McCrudden, a friar native to Tyrone who had recently returned from the continent, proclaimed ‘that he was come from the Pope to persuade them not to change their religion, but rather to go into rebellion’. He further told his listeners that Tyrconnell would return with 18,000 Spanish troops ‘and that, according to a prophecy in a book at Rome, England had only two years more to rule in Ireland’.\(^{53}\) Although the reception the sermon received is unclear, the message is that of the continentally-constructed image of Clann Israel.

This material presents a challenge to scholars, as Marianne Elliott and others have noted, because the surviving literature is not from the Irish rank-and-file, but ‘the “classical” writings of the dispossessed Gaelic élite’.\(^{54}\) As such, the Gaelic sources need to be handled carefully ‘since those who transcribed them (the scribes) effectively decided what would survive and disproportionately selected those showing Catholicism the true religion of Ireland and associating

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52 Declan M. Downey, ‘The Irish Contribution to Counter-Reformation Theology in Continental Europe’ in Brendan Bradshaw and Dáire Keogh (eds), *Christianity in Ireland: Revisiting the Story* (Blackrock, 2002), 101.
Protestantism with England and foreign ways.\textsuperscript{55} Or put another way, the product of a bard’s quill will be much less likely to reflect the sentiment of the rank-and-file population than the ambitions of the patron who supports him. There is yet another layer to the interpretation of these texts when the ‘poets and the priests were often one and the same’.\textsuperscript{56}

The Confederacy established in 1642 is probably the closest a united Catholic identity came to becoming a reality. Yet even those who could agree that Catholicism and the monarchy were essential requirements for the settlement of affairs in Ireland failed to establish a unified interpretation of what this might entail. The arrival of the papal nuncio in 1645 only solidified the divisions. He excommunicated Catholics he deemed too committed to the cause of Charles I. This placed immense pressure on the twofold political and religious commitments established in the Oath of Association. The nuncio advocated a fundamentalist religious agenda and deemed the only acceptable settlement to be the full restoration of Catholicism in Ireland. While this might leave room for the king to remain, the role of the church would have to be elevated to the status that Ireland would, for all intents and purposes, be a Catholic theocracy. While not going as far as to call Rinuccini’s policy ‘theocratic’, Thomas Cooney did declare his intentions as ‘too Ultramontane and not national enough’.\textsuperscript{57} Among Rinuccini’s demands upon arrival in Ireland were that the Lord Deputy appointed for Ireland be a Catholic, Catholic bishops sit in parliament, an autonomous Catholic university be established and submission to the king’s authority take place only after the monarch formalised all concessions to the Catholic religion.\textsuperscript{58} Not only did Rinuccini’s policies divide lay Catholics, they divided the clergy.\textsuperscript{59} While historians have labelled the parties that split under his influence as ‘nuncioists’ and ‘Ormondists’, which to some degree implies that one side was more religious than the other, the reality is there were Catholics on both sides. The challenge that befell the Confederacy was how to weigh up two distinct commitments. In fact, even after the implosion of the confederacy brought about by Cromwell’s invasion of Ireland, the personal and political implications of holding a Catholic faith

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 22–23.
\textsuperscript{56} Elliott, Catholics of Ulster, 127. For a discussion of the prominent role of bards in recasting Gaelic identity see, ibid., 132–143.
\textsuperscript{58} Raymond Gillespie, Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Making Ireland Modern (Dublin, 2006), 171.
\textsuperscript{59} Cooney, Irish Catholic Confederacy, 240–249, 278–279.
were far from clear. As Micheál Ó Siochrú’s excellent study of Cromwellian Ireland illustrates, Catholics during the Interregnum chose a range of ways to interact with a Protestant state, some even going as far as to serve as soldiers in English regiments. The crucial point is that even during the polarised 1640s and 1650s being Catholic did not dominate all aspects of identity. For this reason privileging Catholicism as the primary marker of identity fails to explain personal and corporate activity in early-modern Ireland.

Catholicism certainly has come to serve as an important marker of identity in Irish history and the events of the early-modern period have played a prominent role in popular memory. The key issue is how retrospective this process has been. While Ó hAnnracháin has suggested James VI/I’s distrust of Catholic loyalty was ‘over-intellectualised’, it is probably equally true that a coherent Irish Catholic identity before 1642 is equally a product of fabrication. In fact, it has been suggested that a coherent image of Irish Catholicism cannot be concretely identified before the production of popular ballads between 1640 and 1660 by continentally-trained Catholic clergy. The production of these vernacular verses introduced the seeds for formulating an Irish identity rooted in Catholicism. This fits with J.G. Simms’ assertion that it was only after the Interregnum that religion came to replace Gall and Gael as the primary demarcation of conflict. This process was driven not from the Irish side but rather by the Protestant state. By the second half of the seventeenth century ‘Irish’ and ‘papist’ came to be used interchangeably for Gaelic and Old English alike. In reality, however, this was a creation of political expediency rather than reality. Successive waves of settlers in Ireland have become amalgamated into the culture of Ireland. Even the most reticent new arrivals, such as Cromwellian planters, assimilated into their new cultural contexts. Because of the mix of Gaelic, Old English, New English and Scots in Ireland through the centuries, Marianne Elliott argues it is untenable to claim that Catholicism is the religion of the Irish race, ‘even if that was the

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64 Clarke, *The Old English in Ireland*, 10–11.

assumption (or more often the accusation) made by successive governments’.\footnote{Elliott, \textit{Catholics of Ulster}, 131.}
Thus the prominence of religion and the construction of a homogeneous ‘Irish Catholicism’ stemmed not merely from the Irish laity themselves, but from external pressures exerted by the literature of Gaelic bards and expatriate clergy, and most of all by the Protestant state.

\textbf{Presbyterianism in Scotland}

As in Ireland, religion has played a prominent role in the formation of identity in Scotland. Presbyterianism, and the Covenanting movement in particular, have had a similar legacy in Scotland as Catholicism has had in Ireland. The signing of the National Covenant in Scotland in 1638 and the formation of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland in 1642 present contemporary parallels. Scotland’s ‘Covenant for religion, king and kingdom’ had a contemporary counterpart in the Catholic Confederates’ \textit{Pro Deo, Rege et Patria, Hiberni Unanimes}. Like the construction of an ‘Irish Catholic’ identity, the historiography of ‘Scottish Presbyterianism’ developed during the Disruption in the nineteenth century and tended to portray the history of Protestantism from its establishment in the 1560s to the Presbyterian settlement of the Church of Scotland in 1690 as providential and teleological. Yet, like the claims of Catholic unity in Ireland during the same period, this interpretation is hagiographical. Scholars now widely accept that the establishment of Protestantism in Scotland was a slow and varied progression.\footnote{Michael Lynch, ‘A Nation Born Again? Scottish Identity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’ in Dauvit Broun, R. J. Finlay and Michael Lynch (eds), \textit{Image and Identity: The Making and Re-Making of Scotland Through the Ages} (Edinburgh, 1998), 82–104; John MacCallum, \textit{Reforming the Scottish Parish: The Reformation in Fife 1560–1640} (Farnham, 2010).} And, yet, this level of scrutiny is still significantly lacking in relation to the general histories of the Covenanting period. Even the most recent research has failed to fully appreciate the divisive nature of the Covenants, which like the Confederate Catholics, tried to hold together distinctly divergent aims. For example, Kirsteen MacKenzie’s recent University of Aberdeen doctoral dissertation, which is excellent in its detailed research and compilation of material relating to Covenanters in England, Ireland and Scotland, presents Covenanting as a predominantly unified espousal of Presbyterianism by a loosely linked network of religious communities with a shared vision for the British Isles.
This perspective is problematic for two reasons. First, neither the National Covenant or Solemn League and Covenant explicitly defines right religion as Presbyterian. Second, the Covenants proved divisive from the beginning.

The National Covenant set out the maintenance of the monarchy, religion in Scotland and the ‘publicke peace of the Kingdome’ which inherently implied Scotland’s sovereignty—as a coherent agenda upon which to establish national unity. While established aspects of Scottish culture, the ambiguous nature in which the three were bound together was intentional. Its authors sought to bring together a nation of individuals with diverse motivations and allow as broad an inclusion as possible. The National Covenant had been framed in this way in order for it to serve as a constitutional declaration enabling cohesion, rather than a subversive document enabling revolution. Its purpose being to bind the people of Scotland not just to God, but to one another. The inherent problem with framing the nation on these three principles proved to be in working out what this might mean in practice and a uniformly agreeable interpretation proved impossible. For William Dickinson and Gordon Donaldson, while the National Covenant intended to unite Scotland, ‘it may possibly be regarded as a formula which produced a deceptive appearance of unanimity’.

The broad inclusiveness of the Covenant’s language complicated the difficulty of working out the implications in practice. In fact, to be a true ‘Covenanter’ would mean to uphold king, religion and country without

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68 The closest the National Covenant comes to defining what is meant by the oft repeated ‘true religion’ and ‘perfect religion’ espoused is the claim ‘for maintenance of God’s true and Christian religion, and the purity thereof in Doctrine and Sacraments of the true Church of God, the liberty & freedom thereof in her National, Synodal Assemblies, Presbyteries, Sessions, Policy, Discipline and Jurisdiction thereof, as that purity of Religion and liberty of the Church was used, professed, exercised, preached, and confessed according to the reformation of Religion in this realm.’ While this might imply Presbyterianism, it does not indicate the relationship between these various jurisdictions. William Croft Dickinson and Gordon Donaldson (eds), A Source Book of Scottish History (London, 1954), III, 196; S. R. Gardiner (ed.), Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625–1660 (Oxford, 1906), 124–133. The Solemn League and Covenant simply declares the establishment of religion in line with the ‘best reformed churches’ and rejects bishops. Dickinson and Donaldson, Source Book of Scottish History, III, 123.

69 Dickinson and Donaldson (eds), Source Book of Scottish History, III, 101.

70 David Stevenson, The Covenanters: the National Covenant and Scotland (Edinburgh, 1988), 41–42.


72 Dickinson and Donaldson (eds), Source Book of Scottish History, III, 104.
prioritising one over the others. The perceived impossibility of this due to inherent contradictions, not simply because the aggressively pro-Presbyterian policies advocated by some proponents of the Covenants, but because it argued for an inversion of authority by which those subscribing the Covenant were to determine the appropriate role of the church and the king, was at the root of the Aberdeen Doctors’ rejection of the National Covenant in 1638.\footnote{D. Stewart, ‘The “Aberdeen Doctors” and the Covenanters’, \textit{Records of the Scottish Church History Society}, 22 (1984), 35–44; G. D. Henderson, \textit{Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland} (Cambridge, 1937), 168–169.}

Their fears proved to be correct, for the interpretation of covenant obligations proved highly divisive from the beginning. Despite there being no explicit condemnation of episcopacy in the original document an initially implicit opposition turned into an explicit denunciation in November. The General Assembly of the Kirk, which convened eight months after the Covenant began to be signed, ruled that bishops, the Five Articles of Perth and civil powers for ministers were all unlawful. Although the General Assembly decreed this anti-episcopal interpretation, which came to be known as the ‘Glasgow Declaration’, be added to the National Covenant and it be re-subscribed by the whole population, this is not what necessarily happened in practice.\footnote{Stevenson, \textit{The Covenanters}, 47; James King Hewison, ““Bands” or Covenants in Scotland, with a list of Extant Copies of the Scottish Covenants’, \textit{Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland}, 42 (1908), 166–182.} Instead the addition was frequently inserted into existing copies of the Covenant, ‘often above existing signatures’ or simply added as an addendum after the signatures.\footnote{Hewison, ““Bands” or Covenants in Scotland’, 173, 174, 177, 179. Some of these covenants contain as many as 550 signatures.} Some copies of the Covenant exist with the addition on the back of the document followed by subscriptions. However, rarely do all the original subscribers reappear after the addition. There are yet other surviving copies of the Covenant that make no mention of the Glasgow Declaration at all.\footnote{William Wilson, \textit{A Defense of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland} (Edinburgh, 1739), 474; John Currie, \textit{A Vindication of the Real Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland concerning Separation} (Edinburgh, 1740).}

The General Assembly’s declaration should have meant these copies were destroyed or had the declaration added before being re-subscribed. Since this did not happen, it left the door open for rival interpretations of the Covenant as multiple versions of the remained in circulation. The significance of this should not be underestimated, for it continued to be a point of contention in the Secessionist debates of the eighteenth century.\footnote{William Wilson, \textit{A Defense of the Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland} (Edinburgh, 1739), 474; John Currie, \textit{A Vindication of the Real Reformation-Principles of the Church of Scotland concerning Separation} (Edinburgh, 1740).}
By the summer of 1640 the shifting priorities of radical elements among the Covenanters led James Graham, 1st Marquess of Montrose, and seventeen other nobles to sign the Cumbernauld Band in August. The men pledged to defend the ‘public ends’ set forth in the National Covenant, which they reiterated included the rights of the king, rather than ‘the particular and indirect practising of a few’. In general, too little emphasis has been placed on the Cumbernauld Band. Its subscribers are often dismissed as royalists and therefore not true Covenanters, if such a definition can actually exist. Montrose, in particular, casts important light on the entire Covenanting period, for he had subscribed the National Covenant, including the strict Presbyterian interpretation presented in the Glasgow Declaration. However, in the wake of the Bishops’ Wars leading elements in Scotland pushed for a fundamental alteration to the aims of the movement. Although David Stevenson has argued very cogently for Scottish ambitions for a federal union with England under the conditions of a religious uniformity, this must be interpreted to some degree as a policy of imperialism that did not resonate with all subscribers of the National Covenant. Certainly the nineteenth-century laudatory history of the Covenanters produced by James Kerr recognised this propensity and stated: ‘Covenanters entered into and rejoiced in their vows to God, the Imperialism of King Jesus conquered the Imperialism which prince and priest had been enforcing with rigour; and this Imperialism shall be in the ascendancy yet the world over when the empires of earth shall crown the Christ of God as King of the Church and King of nations’.  

Although an inheritor of a particular tradition of the Covenanting movement fuelled by evangelical fervour, Kerr seems to hit the nail on the head here. Whereas Stevenson argues ‘the implications of the Covenanters’ revolt for the future of the union emerged only gradually’, the fact is an imperialistic agenda that looked beyond a simple federal union to a Covenanter theocracy had gained momentum by 1640. This impulse in Scottish Covenanting is what led Lord Broghill, the Cromwellian president of the council for Scotland in 1656, to refer to the rigid Covenanting tradition

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79 Hewison, ‘“Bands” or Covenants in Scotland’, 172.  
manifest in the Protester party of James Guthrie and Samuel Rutherford as ‘Fifth-monarchist-Presbyterians’.\textsuperscript{83} Certainly the shift in ambitions, and in particular the implications for the monarchy, were at the forefront of concerns for Montrose and his fellow subscribers of the Cumbernauld Band. Although not creating an immediate division, it anticipated the first major rupture within the Covenanting movement.

By 1644 Montrose took up the mantle of the king in opposition to a Scottish regime that had signed the Solemn League and Covenant the previous year, but the label royalist is too simplistic to define his motives. The Solemn League and Covenant essentially represented a military allegiance between Scotland and the English parliament against the king with Scotland requiring England to establish a state church in line with ‘the example of the best Reformed Churches’.\textsuperscript{84} The Parliament of England refused to explicitly name Presbyterianism. Montrose and others rejected the Solemn League and Covenant, believing it directly contravened the commitments set down in the first covenant. For Montrose, the honour of the king—an integral part of the Covenant’s aims—had been replaced by an imperialist endeavour to export a particular form of religion to England and Ireland. Since Charles had accepted the establishment of Presbyterianism as the state church in Scotland in 1641, as far as Montrose was concerned, this should have brought matters to an end. He wrote: ‘if the third point of the Covenant, the king’s honour and authority to be solemnly adhered to, since our religion and liberty was already so wholly and firmly secured’ then no further action could be taken. However, if any of the three were justifiably ‘in hazard or by all appearance possibly questioned, I should as willingly maintain as any else alive’.\textsuperscript{85} In other words, with Presbyterianism established in Scotland and the liberty of the people secured, on what grounds could the king be opposed or saddled with further demands without breaching the National Covenant? Therefore, the Solemn League and Covenant actually redefined the aims stated in the first covenant. Edward Cowan, in his masterful study of the man, argues Montrose believed the Solemn League and Covenant ‘prejudiced religion and the liberty of the subject, that it obliged Scots to arm against their king to maintain the liberties of the English parliament, and that it involved perjury and disloyalty’

\textsuperscript{83} Frances Dow, \textit{Cromwellian Scotland: 1651 – 1660} (Edinburgh, 1999), 204.
\textsuperscript{84} Dickinson and Donaldson (eds), \textit{Source Book of Scottish History}, III, 123.
for it contravened the National Covenant.\textsuperscript{86} Not only did it sacrifice the king’s honour for the sake of an imperialistic interpretation of ‘Reformed religion’, it actually put the sovereignty of Scotland at risk. On those grounds, the Solemn League and Covenant breached the National Covenant on two of three grounds. Royalism, at least for those who signed the first Covenant, needs to be viewed as operating within what they perceived to be their Covenanted obligations. Montrose might be better understood as one who felt compelled on a personal level to interpret the National Covenant holistically, although personal rivalries also played an important role.

Essentially, the principles asserted in the National Covenant and Solem League and Covenant were not the same. While the National Covenant sought to secure an already established status quo in Scotland and assert a national identity unified in king, religion and Scottish sovereignty and liberties, the Solemn League and Covenant represented an imperialistic agenda that declared the exportation of Scottish religion to England and ultimately beyond. Scholars disagree how fundamentally an imperialistic ideology was embedded in the thinking of those who drew up the National Covenant, but John Coffey argues it was present in the thoughts of Samuel Rutherford well before 1643.\textsuperscript{87} For Rutherford and others, it was rooted in a growing belief that Scotland had a prominent role in the apocalyptic triumph of Christ over the kingdom of Antichrist and even that the Scots must choose between King Jesus and King Charles.\textsuperscript{88} This became a fundamental force for exporting Scotland’s second Reformation beyond its own borders. However, this re-prioritisation of covenant obligations threatened the other two core priorities of king and liberty. That the Scots who supported the Solemn League and Covenant had an altogether different end in mind than their co-subscribers in England is evidenced by events that followed.

The endeavour proved hugely disappointing for the Scots as the sought after Presbyterian settlement for the Church of England never materialised. As the First Civil War raged, Scots divines serving in England as chaplains became dismayed over what passed for acceptable protestant religion among English parliamentarians.\textsuperscript{89} The rise of the sects caused them to fear that

\textsuperscript{86} Cowan, \textit{Montrose}, 143.
\textsuperscript{88} For the most recent study see: Crawford Gribben, ‘The Church of Scotland and the English Apocalyptic Imagination, 1630–1650’, \textit{Scottish Historical Review}, 88 (2009), 34–56.
\textsuperscript{89} Robert Baillie, \textit{Letters and Journals}, D. Laing (ed.) (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1841–2), II,
Problems with Religion as Identity

young impressionable Scottish soldiers might be corrupted by the heresies that spread through England like gangrene. In response they carried out an effective ideological campaign against English non-conformity through print, both by encouraging Thomas Edwards’ *Gangraena* (1646) and establishing a newspaper in London whose ‘golden words first transmuted into the lead of bullets; and these in turn to the logomachy in the south’, according to Joad Raymond.90 With the danger of losing on a popular front terrifying clergymen, the Scots worked incredibly hard in the Westminster Assembly of Divines to reach an acceptable Calvinist settlement at a theological level. This, however, became a heated process. While they managed to get the theological framework they wanted the primary point of contention remained the order of church government. Although the assembly carried on until 1652 the Covenanting regime recognised that left to the English parliament Presbyterianism would not be established.

In 1647 a faction of Covenanters dissatisfied with the results of the first civil war entered into negotiations with the king. The following year, precipitated by Scottish presbyterian ambitions, England plummeted into a second civil war. The allegiance of the Scottish state switched from the English parliament to the crown. On one hand this signalled a return to ideals espoused in the National Covenant, by upholding the rights of the crown that the second Covenant had undermined, but on the other hand it persisted in imperialistic aspirations, setting the sole condition for supporting the king to be that he initiate a seven-year trial period of Presbyterianism in England. In some ways this represented a further radicalisation of the Covenanting movement, for it represented Scottish determination in English affairs, despite the English Parliament’s explicit rejection of pledging themselves to Presbyterianism during the negotiations for the Solemn League and Covenant. Whereas some Scots perceived this their Covenanted duty, there was actually little scope for this even in the Solemn League and Covenant. Although many had desired a religious Covenant espousing Presbyterianism to hold the two countries together in shared expectations, what the English parliament had entered into was a civil league.91 However, the confusion had been embedded in the document by invoking a title that encapsulated both of these expectations rather than clarifying the distinctions.

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The Engagement with the king in 1647 rooted its authority in the Solemn League and Covenant. It demanded the king assert his ‘content to confirm the said League and Covenant by Act of Parliament in both kingdoms’ and identified the Engagers’ duty on the condition, ‘His Majesty is willing to give satisfaction concerning the settling of religion’, to ‘engage themselves first in a peaceable way and manner to endeavour that His Majesty may come to London in safety’.92 The second English Civil War was brief with the Scottish Engager army being decimated at the Battle of Preston in August 1648. Yet out of the crisis grew another radicalised tradition that profoundly shaped all subsequent Covenanting traditions. Those who rejected the Engagement did so on the grounds that Scotland risked breaching its Covenanted responsibilities by accepting an ungodly king. Hence a division developed between the engagers (comprising those deemed as ‘moderate’ Covenanters as well as some royalists, although the two need not be incompatible) and the Kirk Party made up of highly conservative Presbyterians, termed by Gordon Donaldson as ‘extremists’.93 This radical party came into power in Scotland in the wake of the catastrophic results of the Engagement. The Whiggamore Raid, the name referring to the cattle drovers of the southwest, physically took control from the Engagers in Edinburgh with the help of Oliver Cromwell’s army. The committee of estates fled the capital and in January 1649 the Act of Classes barred all but the most fervent Presbyterians from government. While the chief plotters of the Engagement—Montrose being listed by name—were barred for life, soldiers involved in the invasion of England were banned for ten years, takers of the Engagement oath for five years, and those deemed unfit by their local church for any kind of scandalous life or ‘who neglect the worship of God in thair families’ for a year.94 This enabled the establishment of a theocratic, Presbyterian state. The execution of the king by the English parliament seven days later, however, threw Scotland into chaos, for since they had ransomed the king to the parliament they felt his blood was on their hands as well. The committee of estates moved quickly to proclaim Charles II’s full rights to the crowns of Scotland, England, Ireland and France, on the condition that he reject his father’s sinfulness and subscribe the Covenants. In light of Scotland’s interference in English affairs throughout the 1640s the English parliament viewed this as an unequivocal provocation. Cromwell’s army entered Scotland in July 1650 and eventually routed a depleted Scottish

93 Dickinson and Donaldson (eds), Source Book of Scottish History, III, 139.
94 Donaldson, Scottish Historical Documents, 218–220.
army at Dunbar on 3 September. Rather than fielding the strongest possible force, the radical end of the Covenanting spectrum upheld the Act of Classes and forced far-reaching purges of the army, hoping a Gideon-esque force of the godly would be blessed. Instead an almost inexplicable disgrace took place at Dunbar, with over 10,000 Scots taken prisoner by a numerically inferior army. The failure of the Scots to defeat Cromwell at Dunbar opened Pandora’s box in relation to explaining God’s ‘wrath’ and providential judgement against His Covenanted people.

Interpreting Failure

In response to the humiliation at Dunbar the moderate Covenanters relaxed the Act of Classes through the passage of the ‘first public resolution’ by a commission of the General Assembly on 14 December 1650. In January 1651 the Act of Classes was fully rescinded. Already divisions existed between the ‘extreme’ Presbyterians and those of a more moderate persuasion. The Remonstrants, many of whom had supported the Whiggamore Raid, rejected the rescinding of the Act of Classes and support for Charles II on the grounds that he lacked any real fervour for the Covenants. When these positions were upheld by the moderate ‘Resolutioner’ majority at the General Assemblies of 1651 and 1652, the Remonstrants submitted formal protests and became known as Protesters. The Resolutioners were dominated by the belief that the Covenants sought to establish Scottish unity on the basis of religion, monarchy and liberties. The Protesters argued that the inclusion of the ungodly in governance broke Scotland’s obligation to right religion, moreover, the godlessness of Charles II meant he could not meet the strict criteria of a Covenanted king.95 The positions of the two groups on the monarchy set the tone for their relationships with the English regime that dominated Scotland between 1650 and 1660.

The Protester Patrick Gillespie argued Scotland, like Israel before them, suffered for the sins of their king for: ‘the King’s sin becomes the Kingdom’s sin, in so far as it is not mourned for, and repented of.’ Their fault had been to follow Israel’s error and request a king, which according to 1 Samuel 8, was not God’s desired form of governance.96 On these grounds the Protesters

95 Donaldson, Scottish Historical Documents, 220–222.
96 Patrick Gillespie, Rulers Sins the Causes of National Judgments: or, a Sermon Preached at the Fast, upon the 26th Day of December, 1650 (Glasgow, 1718), 17.
rejected the necessity of continuing to support Charles II, especially after he fled to the continent following his defeat at Worcester on 3 September 1651. The Resolutioners rejected this, viewing it as a breach of the Covenants, and continued to support the king. However, they eventually came to terms with the protectoral regime and agreed to stop praying for the Charles II in 1656, a breach of their previously held view of their Covenanted responsibilities.\footnote{Dow, \textit{Cromwellian Scotland}, 206.}

They had been driven to this compromise because the Cromwellian government had favoured the Protesters in settling ecclesiastical affairs after the abolition of the General Assembly in 1653. Protester cooperation with the state, to varying degrees, enabled them to place their own candidates in vacant charges. Whereas James Guthrie and Samuel Rutherford appear to have rejected the temptation to treat with the new regime, other Protesters did. In 1654 Patrick Gillespie managed to facilitate an arrangement whereby the protester minority gained an increasing share of charges that came to be known as ‘Gillespie’s Charter’.\footnote{R. Scott Spurlock, \textit{Cromwell and Scotland: Conquest and Religion} (Edinburgh, 2007), 145–148.}

Gillespie went as far as entering English Independents into charges in the Presbytery of Glasgow. He seems to have moved away from the ideal of pursuing the perfection of the state church at the national level and instead opted for providing a godly ministry at the local level. While not himself becoming a Congregationalist, for he continued to work through the Presbyterian structures of Glasgow’s presbytery, he certainly moved away from the national ideals of the first covenant and the imperialistic imperatives of the second, much to the chagrin of both Resolutioners and some fellow Protesters alike.\footnote{Ibid., 141–142.}


Although Gillespie continued to champion a federal model of theology after the Restoration, his Covenanter credentials had certainly been compromised during the Interregnum by allowing a state-sanctioned model of provincial certifiers that in some regions could be dominated by individuals who blatantly rejected Presbyterianism and the Covenants.\footnote{Patrick Gillespie, \textit{The Ark of the Covenant Opened; Or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Redemption Between God & Christ, as the Foundation of the Covenant of Grace} (Edinburgh, 1677).} Two points must be emphasised
here. Firstly, the animosity between the Protesters and Resolutioners by the end of the Interregnum was such that Robert Baillie, a Resolutioner, declared that many of his colleagues believed that an illness befalling the Protester Patrick Gillespie was ‘the evident hand of God upon him, and [they] would not have sorrowed for his death’.\(^{102}\) According to James Anderson, such sentiments were common place and had it not been for the ‘more merciful hands’ of the restored episcopacy ‘than those of the Resolutioners’ the protesters would have faced a savage persecution’.\(^{103}\) Second, however, to limit the responses to the failure of the Covenanting movement to these two camps fails to recognise just how fragmented it had become.

### Abandoning the Covenants

In the summer of 1651 a number of papers began to be submitted to Protester meetings around the country questioning not Scotland’s adherence to the Covenants, but the Covenants themselves.\(^{104}\) The first Scot to espouse this position publicly without hiding behind anonymity was Alexander Jaffray, former provost of Aberdeen. He had impeccable Covenanter credentials having been an emissary for the Kirk in the negotiations with Charles II to bring him back to Scotland and supported the demand that Charles II sign the Covenants before being allowed to return. Moreover, Jaffray had been imprisoned for several months after the Battle of Dunbar. However, by 1651 he came to the position that the Covenants in general, and Presbyterianism in particular, had become idols for Scotland.\(^{105}\) To put his own mind at ease, Jaffray entered into open discussions in Aberdeen. He soon became influential among a group of important figures in Aberdeen’s colleges including: John Menzies (professor of divinity at Marischal College and minister of Greyfriars church, Aberdeen), John Row (minister of Aberdeen’s third charge and instructor of Hebrew at Marischal College), William Muir (elder in the Kirk, professor of mathematics and principal of Marischal College) and the layman Andrew Birnie (regent in Marischal College). Despite several consultations with leading Protesters, including Samuel Rutherford and Wariston, the

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\(^{103}\) James Anderson, *The Ladies of the Covenant* (Redfield, 1853), 30.


group declared for Independency on 24 May 1654. Others followed suit. These Scottish Independents also benefitted from ‘Gillespie’s Charter’. With a quorum of four named certifiers the Independents could control the placement of ministers in Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, Morayshire, Inverness-shire, Ross and Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland. The heart of the movement continued to be centred in the colleges in Aberdeen, but their influence spread.\textsuperscript{106} By the end of 1656 the Resolutioner John Livingstone feared all the vacant charges in the Lothians might be filled by ‘professed Independents … from Aberdeen’s nest’.\textsuperscript{107} By the Restoration the movement splintered, with some—like Jaffray—later joining the Quakers, while others like John Menzies eventually conformed to episcopacy.

Yet another strand among the Protesters can be identified in the practices of Andrew Cant. A vociferous Protester and minister in Aberdeen, Cant was both repulsed by the Independents’ separation from the Kirk and envious of their ability to limit the ordinances of the church to those deemed truly godly. Cant therefore introduced a practice in Aberdeen that mirrored John Goodwin’s model of Independency in London. All were welcomed to the church to hear Cant’s sermons, but only those privately interviewed and judged worthy were admitted to communion. Since the Kirk already required examination in order to receive communion, Cant’s approach must have been even more rigorous.\textsuperscript{108} By January 1656 limited communions had already occurred twice, although Resolutioner colleagues bitterly criticised Cant’s practice and fellow Protesters challenged him. His approach represented an attempt to draw in the Independent John Menzies in an effort to heal the rift created by the Aberdeen Independents’ separation from the Kirk, which it seems to have achieved. However, the practice of Cant demonstrates a trend in Protester thinking that is evident in Samuel Rutherford by the end of the Interregnum. The events of the 1640s and 1650s had demonstrated to Rutherford and other Protesters the impossibility of holding to a doctrine of election that espoused the majority of the population of Scotland were degenerate alongside a practice of binding the whole nation together through covenants that held them responsible for godliness. According to John Coffey, Rutherford faced a ‘choice between submitting to the authority of a Presbyterian hierarchy that was prepared to tolerate malignants, and dissenting from the authority and

\textsuperscript{106} Spurlock, Cromwell and Scotland, 145–148.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 149; Baillie, Letters and Journals, III, 327.
\textsuperscript{108} Margo Todd, The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland (New Haven, 2000), 91–92.
forming small gatherings of the godly’. Both of these options seemed to breach the Covenants. Something had to give and the dismantling of the state church in 1653 allowed for working through the implications of the covenants in new ways. Yet as early as 1640 the proponents of a religiously radical interpretation of the National Covenant had been lambasted by Charles I as ‘in truth Brownists and Anabaptists and other independent sectaries’ for despite claiming a devotion to national Presbyterianism, they ‘are as far from allowing the church government by law established there [Presbyterian] (or indeed any church-government whatsoever) as they are from consenting to the episcopal’. So while some Covenanters failed to recognise the impossibility of what they were aspiring to do, some critics did not.

At the Restoration the vast majority of Scots conformed. Although 270 ministers were deposed, this represented less than a quarter of the clergy. Conformity by the majority of Scotland made it possible for a radicalised, Protester interpretation of the Covenants wherein a godly minority could claim continued obedience without the impossible burden of making the whole nation conform. Only as a minority could the Covenanting movement survive the failures and divisions of the 1640s and 1650s. Moreover, the impossibility of restoring a Presbyterian state church on the Covenanted model in 1690 meant the Westminster Confession of Faith replaced the central role of the covenants. While the United Societies may have rejected this compromise, the inherently divisive nature of the covenants had proved incapable of providing the unity the National Covenant had aspired to.

While a tendency to refer to the Covenanters as a largely homogenous movement that, despite facing changing political challenges between 1638 and 1690, was unified in their vision of establishing Presbyterianism continues to persist, the reality is that it remains difficult to fix a definition of what the label ‘Convenanter’ actually meant. For instance, Keith Brown has defined the Covenanters as ‘supporters of the 1638 National Covenant and the 1643 Solemn League and Covenant’. Louise Yeoman takes a different approach

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109 Coffey, Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions, 224.
113 Keith M. Brown, ‘Covenanters’ in David F. Wright, David C. Lachman and Donald E. Meek (eds), Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (Edinburgh, 1993),
and identifies the Covenanters as ‘those who resisted the Restoration church settlement in Scotland’. The inherent problem with these approaches is that they tend to ignore the complexities of the period between 1648 and 1662. More recently, Kirsteen MacKenzie roots the Covenanters primarily in their espousal of Presbyterianism, as Robert Wodrow had in the eighteenth century. She highlights the willingness of Presbyterians in Ireland to reject the political divisions rife in Scotland during the Interregnum by formulating the 1654 Act of Bangor. For her this indicates an overarching commitment to Presbyterianism above all else. The difficulty here, however, is that the Irish rejection of Scottish divisions does not provide an adequate definition of ‘Covenanting’ in Ireland. Instead it demonstrates that Presbyterians in Ireland were willing to ignore their Covenanted responsibilities in order to foster their own insular and marginalised Presbyterian communities. This approach, which has been prominent in Presbyterian historiography, fails to recognise that the espousal of Presbyterianism alone is not enough to explain the Covenanting movements. In this regard the work of John Coffey is very helpful, for he argues Covenanting was not primarily religious or ecclesiological, but rather political. This serves as a much more useful definition, because it recognises a wider set of motivations than just a commitment to Presbyterianism. It helps make sense of crucial figures, such as Montrose, who must be recognised as core components of defining the movement in the first few years. Rather than an aberration, Montrose demonstrates how widely the term must be defined. Moreover, it allows us to include important figures as diverse as Robert Leighton, Patrick Gillespie and John Menzies—who all signed the Covenants, but were able to justify conforming after the Restoration—in the story of the Covenanting movement.

Conclusion

At the outset, this article stressed the dynamic and complex nature of identity. In some ways the historiography of Ireland and Scotland has been much

116 Coffey, Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions, 17.
better at upholding the important role played by religion in the formation of identity in the early-modern period, whereas it has only recently been restored in the once Marxist dominated historiography of England.\textsuperscript{117} The problem in Scottish and Irish historiography has been the prominence given to religion as the primary source of identity and the unscrutinised acceptance of labels. The reality is people inhabiting the Atlantic Archipelago had multifaceted identities forged and altered by changing contexts. Religion certainly played an important role in early-modern Ireland and Scotland, but the hagiographical traditions that were solidified in the nineteenth century must be critically reassessed. The challenge for historians who inhabit an increasingly secularised world is to be able to locate the role of religion in the past in a way that steers between the tempting Scylla of religion being a non-factor in human consciousness and the Charybdis of religion being an opiate of the masses that rendered individuals and entire communities powerless to act for their own interests. Some valiant attempts to unpack artificially homogeneous identities have been made, but they have yet to take root. Brendan Fitzpatrick helpfully emphasises this in relation to the seventeenth-century Irish context: ‘In terms of modern Irish nationalism and republicanism (whose traditions are in many respects polar opposites), it may be surprising to learn that the Catholic Church in Ireland competed against itself for English Protestant toleration, and that this included negotiations with the Cromwellian slaughterers of Drogheda and Wexford, but the fact must be borne in mind that the church had never perceived its mission as political in either nationalist or republican terms’.\textsuperscript{118}

Catholicism in early-modern Ireland was not fundamentally political and a singular interpretation of religion was not the only element driving the Covenants in Scotland. Scholars must be able critically and sympathetically to place religion within the complex cultural milieus of early-modern Britain and Ireland and accept that the dynamics of identity meant the role of religion was not static or homogeneous.

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\textsuperscript{118} Fitzpatrick, \textit{Seventeenth-Century Ireland}, 216.
Facing two Cromwellian interrogators George Tomson, a Highlander living in Antrim, recounted his actions after the outbreak of rebellion in Ireland on 23 October 1641. What follows requires the reader to take into account that Tomson, who had fought with Irish rebels, hoped to avoid punishment for his actions in the 1640s. He began by explaining that in February 1642, after many of the native Irish had abandoned the town of Ballyrashane near Coleraine, he tried to recover goods that he had hidden there. A cohort of rebels led by Donnell Gorme McDonnell apprehended Tomson and his companion, William Loggan, took their clothes and decided to execute them. Having hanged Loggan, Tomson stood on the makeshift gallows awaiting his fate. Before the cart below him was released, Donnell Gorme McDonnell rushed to his aid and claimed that his life was to be spared for Tomson knew of weaknesses in Coleraine’s defences. McDonnell returned his clothes, a distinctive cloak and targe or Highland shield, and sheltered Tomson at his house where McDonnell’s Scottish wife took care of him. The arrival of the General Robert Monro’s troops from Scotland in April 1642, however, sparked widespread fears among the native Irish, many of whom immediately took flight and settled west of the river Bann, joining the forces of Sir Phelim O’Neill. Tomson explained that he fought with O’Neill’s forces until his capture by Monro shortly afterwards.1

Tomson’s examination reveals a great deal about the complexities of the 1641 rebellion. Having nearly lost his life, he survived as he knew matters of strategic importance that could assist the rebels. After joining the rebellion his interrogators viewed Tomson as a potential suspect; hence his assertion that he had been forced to join the rebel ranks. A key question remains: were there other factors at play here? Could Tomson, a Highlander, identify with the native Irish who had supposedly taken up arms against the colonial order? The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed the forging of close alliances

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1 Examination of George Tomson, 8 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 69v – 70v); much of his testimony is corroborated by Donnell Gorme McDonnell, 11 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 30v – 31).
between native Irish and Highland Scots, which reflected a common Gaelic identity. Is there, therefore, a forgotten dimension to 1641; namely, its ethnic character? Consequently, this article will address the following issues. First, how did the medley of ethnic communities that existed in Antrim in 1641 respond to the outbreak of rebellion? Second, how did individuals survive the 1641 rebellion and the wars of the three kingdoms in Ireland? Third, why did combatants participate in the rebellion: was it through coercion or consent?

Antrim has been chosen for a case study for a number of reasons. Its close proximity to Scotland meant that it became an entrepôt for potential Scottish settlers in Ireland who then moved west of the Bann. Highland (Highlanders) and Lowland Scots (referred to as Scots from now on) arrived in Antrim and began to establish settlements across Ulster. Close linguistic and cultural links shaped clan and kin networks between Highland and Irish communities. By the late middle ages it appeared that Gaelic (Irish and Highlander) communities in Ireland and the Western Isles of Scotland envisaged ‘the emergence of a consolidated Gaelic kingdom spanning the North Channel rather than a revived kingship of Ireland’. Furthermore, Antrim became both a launch pad, and a venue, for Scottish baronial wars throughout the late-medieval and early-modern periods, particularly when it concerned the rivalry between the MacDonnells of Antrim and the Campbells of Scotland that lasted for generations. Furthermore, when the Bishops’ Wars erupted in Scotland in 1639, both Gaelic and Scottish communities distrusted one another fearing the onset of ethnic violence motivated by sectarianism. Matters were further complicated by the actions of the lord lieutenant, Thomas Wentworth, who imposed the ‘Black Oath’, which rejected the Scottish National Covenant. This forced many Scots to leave Antrim fearing religious persecution. The

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outbreak of the 1641 rebellion and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms amounted to the latest instalment of the dynastic rivalry between the Campbells and the MacDonnells, this time fought by Archibald Campbell, earl of Argyll and Randal MacDonnell, earl of Antrim and triggered an ethnic war between the Gaelic Irish and Highlanders and their Lowland Scottish counterparts. Yet, according to Steven Ellis, by 1650 Gaelic communities in Ulster and Scotland no longer spoke of their cultural similarities and were divided along lines of faith and fatherland. So how did these Gaelic clans in Antrim respond to the crisis of the 1640s? Did they rely on formerly strong allegiances, marriage alliances and cultural ties with one another or did they foster their new ‘national’, as opposed to Gaelic, identities?

Historiographically, Antrim has been treated as a slight anomaly in narratives of the rebellion. Michael Perceval-Maxwell’s account focused more on the main thrust of the rising in Ulster, west of the river Bann, organised by Sir Phelim O’Neill. Nicholas Canny selectively drew upon events from Antrim to illustrate wider provincial trends in Ulster. For example, while attempting to understand tensions between English and Scottish settlers, he cited the deposition of Henry Maxwell (incorrectly referenced as the deposition of Robert Maxwell). Maxwell claimed that many of the MacDonnells of Antrim had joined in the rebellion. Apart from this, Canny paid little attention to events in Antrim. Jane Ohlmeyer’s biography of Randal MacDonnell, earl of Antrim, was more concerned with the earl’s response to the rising as opposed to the nature of the rising in his patrimony. In a similar manner, David Stevenson’s analysis of Alasdair MacColla’s career in the mid-seventeenth century focused on the Highlander’s experience of the rebellion, while his study *Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates* is more concerned with Monro’s military exchanges in Antrim after his arrival there in 1642. There is no dedicated account of what happened in Antrim after 23 October 1641 that investigates the responses of local residents to the threat of rebellion and considers the character of rebellion that occurred there. Studies of earlier

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10 Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 100–113.
conspiracies in the north of Ireland in the early-seventeenth century illustrate how Gaelic allegiances were invoked in order to foster closer ties between Irish and Highlander communities in the face of an increasingly aggressive colonial order. For example, in 1615 a Hiberno-Highlander alliance attempted to wrest control in east Ulster away from the English Crown.\textsuperscript{12} Despite this, historians have yet to discuss this Gaelic dimension to the 1641 rebellion in greater detail.

The bulk of evidence for what happened in Antrim during the 1640s is contained in the 1641 depositions, a body of 8,000 witness statements that describe the outbreak and course of the Irish rebellion. Most of the testimonies that record events in Antrim were collected during the 1650s as part of the Cromwellian investigation into crimes committed during the 1640s. Their use as a historical source is highly problematic, particularly in Antrim’s context.\textsuperscript{13} Many of those questioned were under suspicion and many tried to exonerate themselves from any blame. Furthermore, separated from the events by a decade or more, the 1650s statements lack the detail that characterise the 1640s examinations. Depositions taken during the 1640s from other counties contained alleged quotes from rebels as deponents tried to explain why they thought Irish rebels had taken arms. In the Antrim depositions, however, it is difficult to capture exactly why people took arms as there are so few statements taken from 1641–1649 that relate to Antrim.

Of the few depositions that mention Antrim during the 1640s most relate to the transportation of Irish Catholics to Scotland to fight against the king. These testimonies reflected royalist concerns of the invigorated Covenanting movement that had allied with the English parliament under the Solemn League and Covenant. Two Irish Royalists, James Ware and Wentworth Dillon, the earl of Roscommon, investigated this matter further and examined six people about Scottish movements in Antrim during the early months of 1644. According to Arthur Gore, three regiments of Irish people that he recognised ‘by their habit and language’ were sent into Scotland under the command of the Covenanters.\textsuperscript{14} Ware and Roscommon discovered that Covenanters recruited

\textsuperscript{12} Raymond Gillespie, \textit{Conspiracy: Ulster Plots and Plotters in 1615} (Belfast, 1987).

\textsuperscript{13} The best discussion on the methodological issues regarding the use of the depositions remains Aidan Clarke, ‘The 1641 Depositions’ in P. Fox (ed.) \textit{Treasures of the Library, Trinity College Dublin} (Dublin, 1986), 111–122.

Irish people who were allegedly guilty of murdering Protestant settlers to fight in Scotland against the Royalists, and that they had sworn to abide by the Solemn League and Covenant. In the words of Randall Dumvil, ‘they take on men promiscuously for recruiting their regiments without examining of what country or nation or religion they are soe as they [have] taken the covenant’. As a result, Ware and Roscommon were concerned about the growth of Presbyterianism in the region and the recruitment of anti-Royalist forces there. Those Catholic and native Irish therefore cast ethnic, religious and communal ties aside to fight with the Covenanters. What factors motivated others to partake in the crisis that had erupted in the Three Kingdoms?

I: The Outbreak of Rebellion in Antrim

Whispers that the O’Neills had risen in Armagh and Derry reached Gilduffe O Catháin, a Dunseverick community leader, at Dunluce on 23 October 1641. Many Highlander and Irish natives who identified with the MacDonnells were concerned about what Argyll would do. They feared that Argyll would launch a campaign against the MacDonnells in Ireland. As a result O Catháin and Alexander MacColla, a newly-arrived commander from the Highlands, decided to seize Dunluce Castle in a pre-emptive strike against the Campbells. Gaelic ties between Highlanders and Irishmen were evoked to organise resistance to a potential invasion from Scotland that stoked fears of the Lowland Scots. Traditional power structures, however, prevented an outbreak of violence. The earl of Antrim, trying to show his loyalty to the lords justices, demanded that this Gaelic troop should hand over Dunluce Castle to two of his clients, his brother Alexander McDonnell and Archibald Stewart, a Protestant. Thus ended the first, albeit brief, phase of the rebellion in Antrim. Although evidence is sketchy it appears that this network of Antrim’s tenants, clansmen,
and clients, which transcended ethnic and religious divisions, maintained the peace in the area for a considerable amount of time, at least up until Christmas 1641. In the first days of 1642, however, this alliance appeared increasingly unsteady and many of Antrim’s tenants and clients took up arms. Jane Ohlmeyer suggested that Antrim’s Catholic tenants delayed their involvement awaiting sanction from their lord and that their eventual participation grew out of their desire for toleration of the Catholic faith.19 David Stevenson blamed other factors for the outbreak of rebellion in Antrim, arguing that the influx of refugees from over the river Bann exacerbated sectarian tensions in east Ulster and prompted Catholics to take arms.20 On closer inspection, however, very few of the examinations from the 1650s mentioned religious grievances or sectarian tensions as causes for the outbreak of rebellion in Antrim. Instead, they alluded to age-old ethnic tensions between Gaelic Highlander and native Irish on one side, and Lowland Scottish and English on the other.

The first military encounter between Gaelic forces and colonial troops occurred at Portnaw, a garrison beside the river Bann on the Antrim/Derry border. Fearing the arrival of Monro’s army from Scotland, the O Catháins and MacColla planned a surprise attack on one of Archibald Stewart’s ‘British regiment’ stationed there. The force consisted of the O Catháins of Antrim and the O Catháins of Armagh who had sent on a number of recruits. Then Alexander MacColla and Tirlagh Óg O Catháin (Gilduffe’s son) called upon Highland and Irish soldiers fighting in Archibald Stewart’s militia for reinforcements. To avoid detection these Gaelic troops wore ‘British’ military colours as a disguise. They then launched a pre-emptive strike on the garrison at Portnaw, which comprised of English and Scottish soldiers.21 In the middle of the night they descended upon the camp and began killing soldiers stationed there. Estimates vary, but most agree that sixty to eighty people lost their lives during this assault.22

Why did the massacre at Portnaw occur? Coll McAllester, who did not participate in the attack, argued that after the Portnaw massacre:

> The Irish being jealous of the English & Scots and the English & Scots jealous of the Irish, without any difference or distinction the Irish

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19 Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 100–103.
21 Examination of Fergus Fullerton, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 56); Examination of Robert Futhy, 2 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 59v).
22 Examination of Robert Hammill, 4 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 64); examination of Donnell Crone McCart, 15 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 78).
kill'd all the English & Scotts they could lay hands on, & the English & Scotts did the like vnto the Irish, except some few Irishmen who shewed mercy vnto the English & Scotts.23

In reality, however, distrust between various ethnic groups had existed prior to this moment. McAllester later claimed that he always feared the ‘British’ as ‘the British & Irish durst not trust one another’.24 As recorded in the examination of Neil Óg O’Quinn: ‘And being demanded why the Irish & Britiss at that tyme quarrelled he saith he did not much enquire but heard that it was by reason the Irish would not pay for drink.’25 Magdalen Guilyme, who considered herself English, alleged that Irish people envied Protestant wealth.26 Surprisingly, religious identifiers are rarely used in the Antrim depositions. Many examinants blamed deep-seated ethnic tensions as opposed to religious hatred. Participants in the Portnaw massacre all confirmed this point. For example, Brian O’Haggan claimed that he and his cousins, ‘were afraid of the Scots’ stationed at Portnaw and so his kinsmen took part in the raid.27 James MacDonnell, a Catholic officer, later blamed Archibald Stewart’s ‘cowboy’ Scottish commanders for jeopardising ethnic relations in the area.28 Evidence would suggest, however, that MacColla and the O Catháins evoked Gaelic identities to rally troops to their cause. MacColla’s troops spared Highlanders stationed at Portnaw in the hope that they would join the rebellion.29 Ethnic tensions in Ireland and baronial rivalries that spanned the three kingdoms were clearly influencing the outbreak of violence in east Ulster.

One deponent suspected that Archibald Stewart positioned a garrison at Portnaw to protect English and Scottish settlers in the area, suggesting his awareness of the fraught ethnic situation.30 After Portnaw the rebels allegedly published a proclamation banning the use of English, thereby raising the Gaelic standard.31 It appears that Portnaw provided the catalyst for further butchery on the behalf of MacColla’s and O Catháin’s troops. This Gaelic alliance

23 Examination of Coll McAllester, 14 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 32v).
24 ibid., f. 33.
25 Examination of Neil Óg O’Quinn, 17 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 38v).
26 Examination of Magdalen Guilyme, 8 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 145).
27 Examination of Brian O’Haggan, 12 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 31v); Examination of William O’Sheile, 16 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 36).
28 David Stevenson, Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates: Scottish-Irish Relations in the Mid-Seventeenth Century (Belfast, 2004), 100.
29 Examination of Donnell Crone McCart, 15 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 78).
30 Examination of James McConnell, 12 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 75v).
31 Examination of Fergus Fullerton, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 56v).
was spurred on by the belief that Stewart’s retribution would be particularly bloody and violent. From Portnaw, their forces moved through Antrim, burning Ballymena, Ballymoney and Cross and allegedly murdered many innocent men, women and children. Jennett Neaven witnessed MacColla’s assault on the parish of Billy where ‘they murdred [sic] all the British they could lay handes on’. Neaven may have been exaggerating here but there is evidence to suggest that some people were murdered. For example, Phelomy Boyle witnessed the murders of Marian Campbell and Jennett McCormack.32 James McConnell claimed that they ‘killed all the British they could lay their hands on’ in Ballymoney.33 From here MacColla and his fellow commanders regrouped at Dunseverick and attempted to seize Ballintoy, which housed a Scottish garrison and a church full of Scottish settlers. The O Catháins, largely armed with sledges, pick axes and other agricultural implements, failed to storm the church at Ballintoy. One of the occupants within managed to hit Gilduffe O Catháin with a stone and frightened him away. His later efforts to seize Ballintoy house were even less successful. Despite having a cannon, Gilduffe’s forces were deterred by a barrage of musket shot.34

After Ballintoy, the force of Highland and Irish troops made another attempt to seize Dunluce Castle. This required further reinforcements, which duly arrived from the O Catháins in Armagh.35 At this moment, in the first two weeks of January 1642, Captain Digby and Archibald Stewart commanded Dunluce.36 Digby, understandably, refused to hand the castle over to MacColla and O Catháin. In retaliation Gilduffe ordered the firing of the town of Dunluce, a move that caused considerable tension among the Gaelic coalition. Calls from the O Catháins to burn Dunluce town and to prohibit the speaking of English irritated MacColla, although he urged those under his protection to obey it despite ‘being ready to fall out with the Irish that such a proclamacion was made’. The rift was short lived as soon after both the O Catháins and MacColla’s Highlanders marched side-by-side to

32 Examination of Jennett Neaven, 9 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 74v); Examination of Phelomy Boyle, 9 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 75); see also, Stevenson, Highland Warrior, 79.
33 Examination of James McConnell, 12 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 75v–76).
34 Examination of John Kidd, 28 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 45); examination of Isabell Kerr, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 51); examination of David Gray, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 52); examination of Thomas Boyd, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 52v).
35 Examination of Gilduffe O Catháin, 10 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 25v).
36 Ohlmeyer, Civil War and Restoration, 106.
Oldcastle. Other local leaders buoyed by MacColla’s and O Catháin’s initial successes launched further assaults on Scottish and English settlers. Neil Óg O’Quinn rallied to the Gaelic banner and captured Sir Thomas Staple’s house and the town of Lissan, and defeated ‘British’ troops at Garvagh. Staple’s house contained considerable stores of ammunition and goods and its capture probably victualled most of O’Quinn’s troops.

The massacre at Portnaw set a precedent for the butchery that was to follow. It further complicated the already fraught ethnic situation. Irish and Highlanders feared the arrival of Scottish forces who would seek vengeance: ‘After that murder [at Portnaw] the Irish heareing of the newes were flying to & fro, lest the Scott should fall vpon them & revenge that Murder & that the Irish heareing that the Scots had kill’d many Irish in the upper & lower Claneboyes they durst not trust one another.’ Rumours abounded of a proclamation from Scottish forces that allegedly sanctioned the ‘slaying of all Irish papists’; this encouraged local militias to engage in a campaign of extirpation of Irish soldiers and civilians. Near Templepatrick Lieutenant Henry Upton sought vengeance against the native Irish. Prior to this Upton had commanded a militia of both Scottish and Irish troops (many of whom were his tenants) but ordered his native Irish to stay behind prior to an ethnically motivated assault. Garvin’s men attacked Ballymartin, near Templepatrick and killed the Irish occupants of four houses leaving one survivor who hid under a tree and witnessed the atrocity. The attack on Islandmagee eclipsed that on Ballymartin, however, as an estimated 100 native Irish people were murdered. William Graham, a Scottish settler, avoided Islandmagee having been warned that ‘strangers’ would descend upon the area to ‘murther’ the Irish. Despite this, survivors of the atrocity could identify some of the leaders. John O’Shiel, the son of an Irish landlord, remembered his father being disturbed by the sound of shot outside their house. His father accompanied the local constable to investigate. They were then killed by a group of ‘Scotch men’ known to

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37 Examination of Fergus Fullerton, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 56v); Stevenson, Highland Warrior, 79.
38 Examination of Margaret Armstrong, 18 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 80v).
39 Examination of Lawrence O’Cullen, 7 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 66v).
40 Examination of Donnell O’Cahan, 14 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 33v).
41 Examination of Brian Magee, 27 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 200); Examination of James Mitchell, 1 June 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 223).
42 Examination of Daniel McIlmartin, 31 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 179); examination of Brian Mulhallen, 9 June 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 181).
43 Examination of Knougher O’Greene, 31 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 183).
44 Examination of William Graham, 1 June 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 213).
O’Shiel. Brian Magee an inhabitant of Islandmagee, blamed some of his Scottish neighbours for murdering members of his family. After the Scots had left Magee returned to find ‘women and children and found their all killed and weltring in there blood and wounded in seuerall places.’

In 1662 a pamphlet published to discredit the Restoration land settlement claimed that Islandmagee witnessed ‘the first massacre committed in Ireland on either side’. Evidence for this is scant, as many survivors date the massacre to early January 1642 and after the massacre at Portadown (November 1641). Either way this pamphlet estimated that ‘all the Inhabitants of the territory of island Mc Gee to the number of above 3,000 men women and children, all innocent persons, in a time when none of the Catholicks of that County were in Armes or Rebellion’ were ‘murdered in one night’. Several of those who managed to escape the initial attack were pursued through the Antrim countryside by Scottish soldiers. Bryan Boy Magee died at Carrickfergus after been beaten with a cudgel. A corporal at Carrickfergus witnessed an attack on a group of survivors from Islandmagee by Scottish soldiers who had chased them out of the area. The slaughter of civilians prompted the Gaelic camp to begin negotiations about the conduct of war. James MacDonnell, a kinsman to Randal MacDonnell and MacColla, wrote to Archibald Stewart, complaining that ‘as for the killing of women none of my soldiers dare doe as for his life but the comon people that are not vnder rule doth it in in spight of our teeth’. Stewart’s reply does not survive, yet MacDonnell’s next letter suggests that Stewart denied such killings occurred. MacDonnell retaliated by blaming ‘those captains of yours (whom you may call rather cowboys) were euery day vexinge our selves and our tennents of purpose to pick quarrells’.

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45 Examination of John O’Sheale, 21 April 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 151–151v); examination of Richard Magee, 22 April 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 156).
46 Examination of Bryan McGee, 21 April 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 198).
49 Examination of Elizabeth O’Gormelly, 31 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 214); examination of Elizabeth Gormally (presumably the same person), 3 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 235) confirms she witnessed the murder; confession of John McOwen (denies this), 3 April 1643 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 215).
50 Examination of Richard Kelly, 31 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 216–216v).
51 James McDonnell to Archibald Stewart, 11 Jan 1642 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 240v).
52 James McDonnell to Archibald Stewart, undated (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 241).
None the less, some examinants believed that the use of excessive force by the native Irish was meant to intimidate English and Scottish forces.\(^{53}\)

On 11 February 1642 the Highland and Irish forces scored further successes against the ‘British party’; locals later referred to this battle as ‘Black Friday’. George McLaughlin, an Irish soldier who fought in Archibald Stewart’s army, narrowly avoided death after his troop were routed, losing up to 600 men.\(^{54}\) One of the main reasons for MacColla’s and O Catháin’s success was the deployment of the ‘Highland Charge’, a devastatingly effective military tactic. When faced with an approaching army they fired a volley shot, dropped their muskets and charged their opponents with sword and shield to engage in hand-to-hand combat.\(^{55}\) ‘Black Friday’ therefore witnessed a ‘Celtic’ effort with a Highland commander in charge of a troop of Irish forces who employed a Gaelic-style military tactic.\(^{56}\) It is clear that close Gaelic ties that bound the Highlanders and native Irish together gave the rising in Antrim a distinctive ethnic dimension. Many of the Antrim examinants believed that Portnaw signalled the ethnic cleansing of Scottish settlers from the region, not a purging of ‘heretical’ Protestants.\(^{57}\) Without the arrival of further aid settlers had two choices: flee or work for the rebels. The arrival of Monro’s forces, however, began a period of reprisals and tit-for-tat atrocities that took considerable time to abate.\(^{58}\) For the second phase of the war close ethnic ties between the Gaelic Irish and the Highland Scottish facilitated the success of the rebel movement up until the spring of 1642. That said, the rebels failed to possess Carrickfergus, Coleraine and Dunluce, which would have provided much needed additional cover now that reinforcements from Scotland were on their way. Monro, a veteran of European wars and versed in European codes of military conduct, stationed his forces at Carrickfergus and over the course of the 1640s he was de facto commander of the Scottish forces. In

\(^{53}\) Examination of Brian Modder McHenry O’Cahan, 11 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 29v).

\(^{54}\) Examination of George McLaughlin, 3 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 61v).


\(^{56}\) Examination of William O’Sheile, 16 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 26v).

\(^{57}\) Examination of Elizabeth Campbell, 7 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 68); examination of Ellen McRee Cart, 9 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 73); examination of James McConnell, 12 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 76); examination of Margaret Armstrong, 18 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 80v).

August 1642, Monro held command over 10,000 men and by the end of 1643 he controlled large parts of east Ulster with the help of local militias.\(^{59}\)

The arrival of Monro’s forces precipitated retaliatory attacks on the Gaelic community in Antrim and prompted their exodus west, across the river Bann. Alice, countess dowager of Antrim, and the mother of the earl of Antrim, claimed that Monro’s troops were her enemies, ‘because the Scotts Army took her sonne Randell Earle of Antrim Prisoner out of his own house of Dunluce’. Troops sent by the earl of Argyll, her family’s archenemy in Scotland, to Ireland forced her to abandon her home at Ballycastle as they ‘were always Enemies to the McDonnells’.\(^{60}\) Clearly the 1641 rebellion offered an opportunity for dynastic rivalries to be played out, which had drastic effects on the local Irish population in Antrim. Henry McHenry one of the leading insurgents, however hinted at ethnic tensions when he pointed to the march of Monro’s forces toward Coleraine as the reason for his flight: ‘Upon the Scotch Armyes March in May 1642 Into the Root towards Colerane, all the Irish fled over the Bann.’\(^{61}\)

Donnell Gorme McDonnell similarly fled ‘feareing they would revenge themselves for the said Blood fled vp to the woods’. Most of the Irish who had fled into west Ulster joined forces with Sir Phelim O’Neill.\(^{62}\) Ferdoragh Magee stayed in his house until he learned that the Scots had ‘killed all the Irish as they came all along, and for that the Scotts had kill’d 500 Irish or thereabouts in Island Magee whereof the most part were Magees’.\(^{63}\) Many left because they feared that ‘there was noe pardon of proteccion for any of the Irish’.\(^{64}\) Art McCormacke believed that Phelim O’Neill ordered Irish natives to move west of the Bann to protect them from becoming embroiled in a Scottish war.\(^{65}\)

The bulk of those who partook in the rebellion in Antrim did so under a broad Gaelic alliance between the native Irish and Highlander communities.


\(^{60}\) Examination of Alice Countesse Dowager of Antrim, 9 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 22); see also examination of Shane McVickar who also blamed the McCallins for the flight of the Irish across the Bann, 14 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 34).

\(^{61}\) Examination of Henry McHenry, 11 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 28v); see also the examination of Brian O’Haggan, 12 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 31v).

\(^{62}\) Examination of Donnell Gorme McDonnell, 11 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 30–1).

\(^{63}\) Examination of Ferdoragh Magee, 15 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 35).

\(^{64}\) Examination of Alexander McKay, 16 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 36).

\(^{65}\) Examination of Art McCormack, 23 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 41).
The violent campaigns they conducted in January 1642 against their Scottish rivals revealed the fraught ethnic situation in east Ulster prior to the rebellion as well as the feud between the MacDonnells and the Campbells. Despite the fact that the mid-seventeenth century witnessed a conflict that encompassed various political and religious movements across the three kingdoms, this was lost on Lady MacDonnell. She still interpreted the rising as the latest bout in the Campbell/MacDonnell rivalry and supported those who had rallied to the Gaelic cause. A question remains, however: in the midst of this exodus of native Irish and Highlander communities, what about those who remained behind enemy lines? How did they survive?

II: Surviving the 1641 Rebellion

The outbreak of rebellion exacerbated ethnic tensions, Scottish rivalries or religious hatred; however, whole populations were not cleansed from the Antrim countryside. People, families, and communities survived. On the one hand, Gaelic, English and Scottish leaders were honour bound to protect their tenants. Patrick Moder O’Donnelly, an Irish landlord who claimed to defend the lives of many ‘British’ settlers, negotiated the safety of this ‘poore tenants & followers’ with local militias under Lord Conway’s command. O’Donnelly also maintained that he served as a negotiator between Conway’s agents and those of Phelim O’Neill. For much of her interrogation Lady McDonnell defended her record during the 1640s and maintained that she consistently protected her tenants and local residents. That said, she curtly reminded her inquisitors that ‘she was no soldier to defend them’. On the other hand, settlers were not always adequately protected. Andrew Stewart sheltered ‘24 British young & old’ in his house. Two of Stewart’s servants, ‘Irish boyes’ betrayed their hideout to the local rebels, who duly ‘robbed the British of their packs & fardells & all of their goods & moneys whatsoever to the Clothes vpon their backs’. Similarly, Ann O’Kelly collected rent on Lord Caulfield’s estates and maintained many ‘Englishe’ in her house until she grew ‘wearie of them, and hearing that her brother was killed at Lisnegarvie, she caused

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67 Examination of Patrick Modder O’Donnelly, 30 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 42).
68 Examination of Alice Countesse Dowager of Antrim, 9 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 22v).
69 Examination of Andrew Stewart, 4 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 63).
her servants [to] take them & drowne them’. The statements of those who claimed to have protected settlers must be treated with caution, however. They may have exaggerated the role they played in saving settlers in order to exonerate themselves in the eyes of the Cromwellian authorities.

Some of those who could not rely on their masters for protection left Ireland. After the massacre at Portnaw a party of refugees attempted to get a boat from Antrim, but were accosted. William Graham escorted one of his friend’s daughters late at night to Islandmagee so that she could sail to Scotland. A group of Scots who were attacked in Andrew Stewart’s house later fled to Scotland. Both Gaelic and Scottish families in Antrim exhausted clan, kin and local networks to secure their own safety. Donnell Magee an Irish gentleman reported that after Portnaw numerous ‘Scotchmen’ fled to his house ‘& told him that the Irish were killing the Scotch all along through the Country’. Upon hearing of an assault on Old Castle he attempted to ‘save some British acquaintance of his who [had] departed the place before he came thither’. Throughout the 1640s, Magee claimed he stayed in his house and ‘never joined with the Irish in besieging or assaulting any Townes or holds held by the British’. Magee’s brother, Ferdoragh, corroborated his claims and insisted that he had helped ‘to preserve the British who fled thither for succour’. If Magee’s account of his actions is true, it is significant that Scottish settlers fled to his house for protection, suggesting prior acquaintance.

Gaelic and Scottish people utilised friendships and social networks that transcended ethnic and religious divides to survive. Many of the native Irish, fearing reprisals from Scotland, escaped to Derry, Tyrone and Armagh for protection and relied upon their extended family networks. Those who stayed behind exploited local connections. James McIveagh, after learning of the outbreak of rebellion in Tyrone (thanks to his connection with the registrar of the ecclesiastical courts in Armagh), ran to the house of his master, Sir Thomas Staples, for protection and to assure him ‘of his innocence’. It must be pointed out, however, that Lawrence O’Cullen named McIveagh as rebel and claimed he murdered somebody, although Patrick Modder O’Donnelly testified to McIveagh’s innocence. Examination of James McIveagh, 17 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 40); examination of Patrick Modder O’Donnelly, 30 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 43); examination of Lawrence O’Cullen, 7 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838,
Service and her husband, John Hunter, a former servant to Lady McDonnell, returned to his former employer for safety. Thomas Giffen, a settler living in Billy, utilised his brother’s connections with Murghy McDuffee to save his life. Another Scot, Gilcomey McHallgar called upon his family’s foster ties with Ferdoragh Magee to save his life, “he having been fosterer to his Mother’s brother and tenant to his Mother’s kindred”.

Some of those who managed to survive in Antrim utilised a range of resources that allowed them to survive behind enemy lines. They managed to blend into rival camps by disguising themselves as either Scottish or Irish. John O’Shiel, who lived in Islandmagee, escaped the clutches of the Scottish forces by donning the ‘habbitt of a Scotch boy’. Not all of those who fought in the rebellion let ethnicity dictate their loyalty. Take for example, George McLaughlin, a defeated soldier who fought in Black Friday for the colonial authorities. He subsequently encountered ‘a Party of the Irish standing in the way he intended to goe’. They immediately suspected that he formed part of the ‘British’ troop, but McLaughlin ‘having Irish & being an Irishman went forwards coming neere them he mett with one of his acquaintance’. He subsequently wore Irish-style clothes in order to blend in. This survival strategy was not unique to Antrim. In other parts of Ireland settlers disguised themselves as Irishmen to survive. For example, Raph Griffin, a gentleman from Longford, swapped clothes with his servant as a disguise and thus escaped. Likewise, John Dickenson avoided detection by the rebels by wearing an ‘Irish capp’.

Skilled workers survived through being forced to work for, or by offering their services to, the rebels. David Gray from Billy parish worked as a miller for Archibald Stewart prior to the rebellion. The O Catháins captured Gray and subsequently offered him an ultimatum: ‘goe backe with them … or be there killed’. Needless to say Gray agreed ‘to keepe the said Mill’. James McColl McDonnell’s men captured Murdogh O Mullary, part of the garrison

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76 Examination of Jennett Service, 28 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 46).
77 Examination of Thomas Giffen, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 50v).
78 Examination of Gilcomey McHallgar, 3 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 61).
79 Examination of John O’Sheale, 21 April 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 151).
80 Examination of George McLaughlin, 3 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 61v).
82 Examination of David Gray, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 52).
at Coleraine that repelled the advances of the MacColla and O Catháin alliance, and set him to work as a ploughman.83 George Tomson, mentioned in the introduction, similarly joined Sir Phelim O’Neill’s forces after his capture.84 James Steile faced certain death upon the outbreak of rebellion. He and other English and Scottish tenants fled to the woods of Lissan after it became clear that Neil Óg O’Quinn had ordered their executions. Steile had served as a herdsman to Owen O’Cannill until one of the cows he was responsible for drowned. Luckily, ‘a Priest called O’Donnelly saved his life to cutt wood, make fires & keepe his cowes’. There Steile remained until the arrival of Monro’s troops facilitated his escape.85 Intriguingly, O’Quinn testified that no threat to settlers existed as they were valued for their ability to work for the Irish. He himself employed ‘the fforegemen in making of Iron at Sir Thomas Staples Ironworkes & the Brittish carpenters & Smiths who dwelt at Lissan & in the Countrey about in making pikes & pikeheads’.86

To survive the outbreak of violence in Antrim after 23 October 1641 required a craft, powerful social connections, or a route out of the county. As much of the county appeared relatively stable until Christmas of 1641, settlers, natives, Irish, Highlander, Lowland Scot and English pragmatically co-operated, thereby preventing an outbreak of violence as seen west of the Bann and ensuring the maintenance of order. Simmering ethnic tensions and dynastic rivalries undermined this seemingly peaceful equilibrium. When violence erupted and rival ethnicities were identified as targets, civilians had to adopt a range of survival mechanisms to protect themselves and their families. Tomson’s apparent loyalty to the native Irish, however, presents another key question about the nature of the uprising in Antrim: to what extent did ethnicity dictate loyalties during the rebellion? Did all Irishmen and Highlanders fight as part of MacColla’s and O Catháin’s Gaelic alliance?

III: An Ethnic Riot?

Evidence in the 1641 depositions for the rest of Ulster suggests that Irish natives selectively targeted English people during the initial stages of the

83 Examination of Murdogh O’Mullary, 4 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 65).
84 Examination of George Tomson, 8 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 69v – 70v); Donnell Gorme McDonnell, 11 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 30v – 31).
85 Examination of James Steile, 14 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 76v – 77).
86 Examination of Neil Óg O’Quinn, 17 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 39).
rebellion. The fact that MacColla and O Catháin joined forces would suggest that prominent leaders of Catholic society in Antrim exploited traditional Gaelic links to raise support and men for their war effort. MacColla’s main interests, however, lay in defending his family and securing their landed interests. After the arrival of Monro’s troops, much of Antrim was under the control of their bitter Campbell rivals. He therefore sought out Alexander Leslie, the earl of Leven, to reach an accommodation that protected his estates. He agreed to end his Irish alliance in return for the restoration of his lands and the release of imprisoned members of his family. Despite this, MacColla later had a change of heart and reneged on the agreement. Just how strong were these ethnic ties and identities?

While Lady MacDonnell acquiesced in this Gaelic alliance some of her servants and clients may not have shared her views. Her two Cromwellian inquisitors believed that she had sanctioned the murder of Jennett Spier in her house at Ballycastle. From an unknown witness her interrogators had heard Spier pleaded for her life by desperately pulling on Lady’s MacDonnell’s skirt, which she denied. Upon being asked whether she owed Spier money, Lady MacDonnell answered ‘shee never in all her life did owe her one penny but that the said Jennett Spier did owe her 15li.’ Ballycastles locals heard of Spier’s death but were unsure who killed her and why. MacDonnell’s servants, unsurprisingly, exonerated their mistress from any blame. Her chef claimed that Spier died after being assaulted near Ballycastle, but not in MacDonnell’s house. Jennett Service, the wife of one of MacDonnell’s former servants, claimed that Donnough McAlester murdered Spier in the grounds of MacDonnell’s house, but that McAlester’s motives were monetary – Spier had £11 hidden in her tights. At some level people were being killed as a result of their wealth, not because of their ethnicity.

Frustratingly, many of the Antrim depositions lack the detail contained in accounts from other counties. In statements taken during the 1650s, the

88 Examination of Alice Countesse Dowager of Antrim, 9 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 23v).
89 Examination of Edmund O’Haggan, 12 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 32v); examination of James Allen, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 50).
90 Examination of Murghy Oge McMurghy, 16 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 38).
91 Examination of Jennett Service, 28 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 46); confirmed by the examination of James Gray, 28 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 46v) and the examination of Thomas Giffen, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 50v).
interrogators’ remit did not include an investigation of the words, deeds and actions of all the native Irish as had been the case in the 1640s. Instead these later testimonies focus on a small number of named rebels implicated in the slaughter of Protestant settlers. Pieces of the puzzle may be pieced together, but the riddle of why people partook in popular violence during the rebellion in Antrim may never be solved fully. Opportunistic bandits plundered some Scots fleeing the massacre at Portnaw.92 Henry O’Haggan allegedly murdered a Scottish man living in Lissan after spending the evening drinking with him.93 Jane Todd accused Rory Duffe McCormack of killing her first husband, John Hilhouse, as Hilhouse was responsible for ensuring McCormack followed the terms of his bail for a crime committed before 1641.94 To some extent some of these individual killings were as a result of ethnic rivalries. For example, Toole McAllester and Donnell O Catháin killed Patrick Collier (an Englishman) and his wife.95 Gilduffe O Catháin’s sons murdered one of their father’s Scottish tenants for no apparent reason. This murder was unprovoked and unsanctioned by Gilduffe who ‘kneeled downe upon his knees & cursed them for killing his servants’ after hearing of this attack.96

The tit-for-tat killing of Irish, Highlander, English and Lowland Scottish revealed the extent of ethnic tensions throughout the 1640s and 1650s. In September 1651, John Kennaday refused to give some corn to Rory Duffe McCormack having heard that he had killed John Hilhouse.97 Kennaday asked McCormack ‘how could he aske a helpe of Corne from a Scotchman when he knocked all Scotchmen in the head’. McCormack denied partaking in any such activities.98 As noted earlier, the influx of soldiers from Scotland prompted many Irish people to flee west of the Bann. What of those who remained? Residents of Kilclief in Antrim were exposed to considerable threats from

92 Examination of Alexander McKay, 16 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 35v).
93 Examination of James McIveagh, 17 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 40v); Patrick Modder O’Donnelly, 30 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 43). Although Lawrence O’Cullen believed that McIveagh was responsible for Young’s murder. Examination of Lawrence O’Cullen, 7 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 66v).
94 Examination of Jane Todd, 18 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 79v–80); The petition of Jane Todd, undated (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 81).
95 Examination of Robert Futhy, 2 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 59v); examination of Cutbert Fulton, 4 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 64v).
96 Examination of Brian Modder McHenry O’Cahan, 11 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 29); examination of Gilduffe O’Cahan, 10 March 1654 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 26).
97 Examination of Jane Todd, 18 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, ff 79v–80); The petition of Jane Todd, undated (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 81).
98 Examination of John Kennaday, 19 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 82).
soldiers stationed nearby. One of whom, Captain Alexander Adair, regaled local Irish natives with stories of how he had killed innocent Irish civilians during the massacre of Islandmagee. Adair boasted that he murdered a small child by hitting it on the head '[t]his blowe did cause the head of the child fall to the ground lyke a ball'. He justified the slaying of the child by claiming that 'not one of them [Irish was] to be spared, that they would all goe into Rebellion whey they saue [saw] their opportunity'. Adair clearly used this story to frighten Irish locals. A mother of a young child complained that:

oftentymes the sayd Capten Adayre did speak of his killing of the sayd child, upon occasion of his looking upon a young child of this examinats, who the sayd Alex Adaire used to say was very lyke and of the same age vnto the child which he killed as aforesayd And that he was putt in mynd of the sayd Act by looking upon this Examinants child.99

A neighbour witnessed Adair promosing a soldier of his a shilling for every Irishman he killed but confessed that he knew not whether they 'spoke in jest or in earnest'. 100 Throughout the 1640s, the maintenance of ethnic tensions was paramount and ensured the cooperation of local populations through fear.

Prior to the massacre at Portnaw, Turlogh Óg O Catháin served as part of Archibald Stewart’s regiment of English, Scottish, Highlander and Irish soldiers. The decision to attack Portnaw, however, meant that Highland and Irish soldiers formed a Gaelic alliance. Despite this, not all Irishmen and Highlanders joined the Gaelic alliance. Donnell McGillmurtin served in Captain Upton's forces during the winter of 1641. On the night of the massacre at Islandmagee McGilmurtin kept watch. Coming to the end of his shift his fellow soldiers returned with some trophies of war:

The examinent vewing the Cloathes: hee knew his mothers: Coate and her Bracken: & his sisters Bracken: & the cloathes of one Bryan: O Moylon & his wives, & one Rore McCarnes: cloathes: with Seuerall others vpon sight whereof the examinant went to the Sergeant Comanding the guarde, called Sergeant Wondrum & asked him what the reason was that those cloathes ware taken by the souldiers hee answereed him that the parties which [br]ought them ware kild & that soe the examinet &

99 Examination of Anne Fitzsymons, 6 June 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 189); examination of Brian O’Kelly, 6 June 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 190).
100 Examination of Brian O’Kelly, 6 June 1853 (T.C.D., Ms 838, f.190).
the rest of the Irish would be unable: they looked well to themselves (which he was sorry for).

The fact that clothes became trophies was not unusual in Ireland during the 1640s. John Murghlan testified that after Fearragher McKay and Patrick McAhoy murdered Thomas Robinson, McKay wore Robinson’s doublet and McAhoy ‘confessed he had bestowed the said Thomas Robinson’s breeches upon his whore’. McGillmurtin later managed to escape Upton’s company without harm after other commanders tried to purge the troop of Irish soldiers. McGillmurtin was not the only Highlander or native Irishman who refused to join the Gaelic alliance. Shortly after the assault on Portnaw, Thomas Boyd witnessed the approach of the Irish and Highlander forces to Ballintoy house. Upon their arrival it became clear that the house was resolutely defended and so their offer of quarter to ‘all bootemen & highland men’ if they surrendered was rejected. Presumably these Highlanders then formed part of the troop that successfully repelled their advances. Similarly Anye ne Mallan’s husband fought for Lord Conway’s troops against his fellow native Irish and died in his service. It appears that in some cases, not even clan networks could draw upon full co-operation from its members. The alliance of Gilduffe O Catháin and Manus Roe O Catháin formed the backbone of the MacColla-O Catháin force. One of their kin, Donnoghy O Catháin, refused to fight with the rest of his family members, and instead formed part of Sir John Borlase’s English company that defended Coleraine. The O Catháins captured Donnoghy while he attempted to gather food supplies. Donnoghy ignored Manus Roe O Catháin’s proclamation that ‘all the Irish should come & ioyne with them’. Similarly, the earl of Antrim’s Protestant tenants turned to Argyll, his greatest enemy, for aid after their Catholic neighbours took arms. Even traditional client networks were abandoned in the hope of survival. For some people the side they chose in the 1641 rebellion was dictated by more than familial, clan or ethnic ties. Some fought perhaps to defend their own possessions, to line their pockets, or because of their loyalty to the colonial order.

101 Examination of Donnell McGillmurtin, 6 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 139).
102 Examination of John Murghlan, 28 February 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 47v).
103 Examination of Donnell McGillmurtin, 6 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 139).
104 Examination of Thomas Boyd, 1 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 52v).
105 Examination of Anye ne Mallan, 2 May 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 164).
106 Examination of Donnoghy O’Cahan, 8 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 70v); examination of Donnell O’Cahan, 14 March 1653 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 33v).
IV: Conclusion

The grievances of Antrim rebels differed considerably from those who partook in the rebellion in west Ulster. The centuries-old feud between the MacDonnells and the Campbells meant that many of the native Irish became embroiled in a dynastic dispute at a time when religious and ethnic relations in east Ulster were particularly tense. Fearing an onslaught from Scotland, the O Catháins joined their Gaelic brothers from the Highlands and to defend against a Scottish invasion force (as opposed to an “English” army sent by the colonial authorities). Not all rallied to the Gaelic banner, however. Many decided to settle old scores, out of sheer opportunism, others joined out of fear or through coercion. This article captures the range of motivations, many of which did not fit neatly into the ethnic grounds for the rebellion advanced by the O Catháins and MacColla. The rebellion in Antrim differed considerably from the national movement in that it was characterised by distinctly Scottish, as opposed to Irish concerns.

Close ties between the Highlanders and native Irish in Antrim suggests that ethnic rivalries between Gaelic, Scottish and English communities were to blame for the outbreak of the rebellion in Antrim. There is a marked difference between the statements of Antrim rebels and the reported speech of rebels from west Ulster. There is no mention of religious grievances as a factor in the forging of this Gaelic alliance in Antrim. Antrim had seen numerous Scottish settlements from the fifteenth century onwards, therefore, native and newcomer societies were more integrated there than anywhere else in Ulster. As a result there is no mention of plantation or new settlements as a cause for the rebellion in Antrim. Irish, Highlander, Scottish and English forces fought side by side in local militias prior to 1641. Fears of a Scottish invasion prompted many native Irishmen to take arms and thus many became involved to protect their lives, their families and their property; put simply they partook in order to survive. To do so they called upon clan and client networks or they manipulated the Campbell/MacDonnell rivalry in order to protect themselves from rebels in their areas. It must not be forgotten, however, that some of the examinations taken in the 1650s from Antrim locals were survival strategies themselves. Many of those who deposed were also under suspicion. Perhaps these prisoners portrayed the rebellion in Antrim as ethnically motivated to deflect attention away from their real grievances. Perhaps Antrim rebels were motivated by an anti-Protestant and anti-colonial agenda, but preferred to manipulate ethnic rivalries and play upon Cromwellian distrust of the Scots in order to survive.
Regrettably, events in Antrim have been lost in broader overviews of the outbreak of rebellion in Ulster. This article suggests that Mark Stoyle’s characterisation of the wars of the three kingdoms as an ethnic conflict has particular resonances in Antrim.\footnote{Mark Stoyle, \textit{Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War} (London, 2005).} It remains to be seen however, whether further studies of the 1641 rebellion on a national scale can add to our understanding of its ethnic dimension. Furthermore, this article has hinted that Ellis’ view that Gaelic ties between the native Irish and Highlander had been dismissed in favour of a prototype ‘national’ identity of Scottish and Irish may need some revision. The 1640s witnessed an outburst of Gaelic pride in Antrim, which suggests the existence of strong ethnic and cultural ties between these communities that cannot simply have vanished by 1650, as Ellis suggests.\footnote{Ellis, ‘The Collapse of the Gaelic World’, \textit{passim}.} Finally this article has shown how the Antrim rebellion may perhaps be better understood in a Scottish, as opposed to an Irish, context. The native Irish who took part cared little for the ideals espoused by Phelim O’Neill and were more concerned about the arrival of troops from Scotland and the earl of Antrim’s rivalry with the Campbells which had existed for generations. While they may not have received support from their local lord, this Gaelic alliance fought Randal MacDonnell’s war and subscribed to the political, economic and religious goals that he pursued throughout his career. Events that occurred during the 1640s in Antrim, therefore, may be better understood as part of an ancient dynastic rivalry between two Scottish families that spread west from Scotland and as part of Gaelic and Scottish rivalry where locals drew upon a range of strategies to survive the harsh conditions of the wars of the 1640s and the suspicions of Cromwellian interrogators in the 1650s.

\textit{NUI, Maynooth}
Routine Appropriation: Women’s Voices and Women’s Experiences in the 1641 Depositions
Barbara Fennell

The 1641 Depositions is the name given to a collection of manuscripts held by the Library of Trinity College Dublin, which contains approximately 1.2 million words recording the experiences of witnesses to the Irish Rebellion that started as an attempted coup d’état in October 1641, but quickly escalated into widespread, often vicious and bloody episodes of violence, theft and criminal damage, pitting native Irish Catholics against Protestant settlers.1 The manuscripts were digitized between 2008 and 2010 by a team of researchers—mostly historians with the aid of computer scientists—from Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Aberdeen and Cambridge University. A number of different types of account are represented in the depositions. Some are fairly immediate witness reports collected in the early years of the uprising, 1641–1642, by commissioners assisted by a variety of clerks. During the 1650s, however, further records were drawn up, based on the interrogation of witnesses and suspects, with a primary purpose of ascertaining the identity of individual wrong-doers and bringing them to justice. Thus, while the intent of the first commission was to document the material losses sustained by the Protestant settlers, later commissions were convened to gather evidence on violent and other serious crimes: murders, massacres and apostasy.2

In the course of a one-year AHRC-funded project, Language and Linguistic Evidence in the 1641 Depositions,3 an interdisciplinary team led by the author of this article4 had occasion, amongst other things, to examine closely,

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1 See Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641–1660 (Cambridge, 1995).
3 The grant was funded as part of the AHRC Scheme: ‘Digital Equipment and Database Enhancement for Impact’ (DEDEFI). It was for a total of £334,000 AHRC contribution, £418,000 full economic cost and was for a period of twelve months from 1.3.10–28.2.11.
4 The Aberdeen 1641 team comprised Barbara Fennell, PI, Project Management/Sociohistorical Linguistics/Discourse Analysis; Dee O’Regan, Software Developer; Nicci Macleod, Forensic Linguistics/Discourse Analysis; Mark Sweetnam, Early-Modern Prose/Religion/Politics; Elaine Murphy, Early-Modern History/Depositions.
both manually and with the aid of computers, the nature of the language documented in the 1641 Depositions and some of the significant features of seventeenth-century linguistic usage. Members of the Aberdeen 1641 Depositions team have published a number of articles and presented papers elsewhere illustrating what they have been able to document about language and language use in this particular quasi-legal seventeenth-century context and about the analysis by computers of linguistically relatively unstable text. Given the theme of this current volume of the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, however, I wish to focus less on what the depositions can tell us about the formal characteristics of the legal language they contain, and more on what they reveal about seventeenth-century perceptions of status, authority/voice and credibility, with particular reference to the testimony of female deponents.

The language of the 1641 Depositions falls squarely into the period historians of the language refer to as late Early-Modern English (1500 – 1650/1700), with all of the variability that the language at that time displayed, as the following sample text from the collection amply illustrates:

**Deposition of Joane Linge**

815373r425

Joane the Relict of Samuell Linge late of Rahinderry in the Queens County **Chapman sworne and examined saith** That about Candlemas 1641 her said husband and she at Rahinhinderry aforesaid, were forceibly **deprived robbed & dispoiled** of their meanes **goodes and chattells** worth at Least 100 li. and hadd their howse and Corne burned by & by the meanes of the Rebells Brian Dempsy a great Comander of them and his souldiers and complicees being very many that alsoe

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6 The number and letter sequences provided here are the identifiers used for individual depositions in both the Aberdeen University CLRLE web research interface for the 1641 depositions: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/1641-depositions/ and the TCD digitized version of the depositions http://www.1641.tcd.ie
beseeged the Castle of Ballylynan And further saith that an old woman vizt the wife of Tho: Goslin being not able to fly to the said Castle to saue her life was by the Rebells murthered in this deponents garden And about the same time another old woman was alsoe in the same towne murthered

This example illustrates that, on top of the formal differences in the language of the depositions (orthography, lexicon, morphology and syntax) we need to take into account the fact that, as depositions, they are a special type of text, not representative of general Early-Modern English, but written in legal or quasi-legal language that is very often stylized and constrained by both context and purpose.

Throughout the depositions there occur predictable features that are typical of the legal English of the period, including the following:

1. Lexical doublets/multiples
   a. deprived robbed or otherwis dispoyled of their
   b. goodes & chattells
2. Formulations
   Joane the Relict of Samuell Linge late of Rahinderry in the Queens County Chapman sworne and examined saith
3. Abbreviations
   100 li.
4. Passive constructions
   her said husband and she at Rahinhinderry aforesaid, were forceibly deprived robbed & dispoiled of their meanes goodes and chattells
5. Complex syntax
   Joane the Relict of Samuell Linge late of Rahinderry in the Queens County Chapman sworne and examined saith That about Candlemas 1641 her said husband and she at Rahinhinderry aforesaid, were forceibyl deprived robbed & dispoiled of their meanes goodes and chattells worth at Least 100 li. and hadd their howse and Corne burned by & by the meanes of the Rebells Brian Dempsy a great Comander of them and his souldiers and complicees being very many that alsoe beseeged the Castle of Ballylynan
Though the above text is typical of the depositions, there are copious other features of legal English which are not present in this extract but appear elsewhere in the depositions (such as specialist terms from Latin and French; e.g. *Copia vera Exr per Valentinu Savage Dep Clin Corone* (840016r007)). These formal features clearly characterize the depositions generally as legal texts, and as depositions they represent out of court oral accounts of witnesses reduced to a written form. But unlike typical depositions of the present day, they were not simply intended for later use as evidence in a court of law, as we said in the introduction: they were used first as a kind of inventory of losses and injustices, when it appeared there might be the chance of indemnification, while the 1650s depositions were used rather for the purpose of identifying wrongdoers and to justify retaliation and suppression of the Irish Catholics by Oliver Cromwell. Another significant feature of the 1641 depositions is that they contain many complementary or competing ‘voices’ and scribal ‘hands’. Indeed, given that many of the witness accounts were recorded several years after events actually took place, we can hardly consider them as verbatim or spontaneous retellings of events, adding to our scepticism about their credibility.

I have written elsewhere on the issue of whether the accounts of witnesses to the events of the Irish rebellion give us clues as to whether they are hearsay or eye-witness evidence, based on the language used to introduce reported episodes. However interesting the question of the validity of third party evidence may be from a legal and historical point of view, the ways in which credibility, authority and authenticity are encoded in these texts are equally compelling from a socio-historical and historical pragmatic standpoint, since they provide insights into the social order and generalized social behaviour of the time and reveal institutionalized means of indicating status, credibility and authority—or the lack of it—in the socially transformative conditions of seventeenth-century Ireland. In other words, looking beyond these more formal Early-Modern English legal and linguistic characteristics, a number of other characteristics of the depositions provide glimpses into social and legal behaviour and the general world view prevalent in Ireland in the seventeenth-century, taking us into the realms of custom, usage and ideology.

In a recent article on the social order of the 1641 Rebellion, Eamon Darcy discusses the relationship between status and credibility, and particularly the

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Debates over the reliability of the depositions began almost immediately. Understanding contemporary perceptions of their reliability should not focus simply on the eye-witness versus hearsay debate. Those involved in their collection were keen to stress that some hearsay evidence came from reliable sources. These were either people of higher rank, or those who had been taken prisoner by the rebels. In his preface to the \textit{Irish Rebellion}, a history that substantiated its arguments through providing printed (and edited) abstracts of the 1641 Depositions, John Temple, the author, described the standing of the deponents: “The persons examined were of several conditions, most of them British, some of Irish birth and extraction, very many of good quality, and such as were of inferior rank were not rejected if they were known sufferers, and came freely in to declare what they speak of their owne knowledge… The Confederation of Kilkenny charged Jones and his colleagues with ‘taking every hearsay as positive truth’; Jones responded (albeit privately) that ‘neither do we take hearinge for positive truth to but leave to the reader to consider of it as is presented; neither are all hearsays to be cast off, especially being delivered by credible persons and upon oath’.\footnote{Ibid., 107.}

\footnote{Ibid.} Darcy discusses Temple’s further assertion in the introduction to his account, that deponents often heard what had been described as hearsay ‘out of the Rebels own Mouthes while they were in restraint among them’,\footnote{Ibid.} thus indicating that either social rank or personal experience were considered sufficient to render hearsay evidence credible. Indeed, in my own reading of Temple, I have come across examples that suggest that persons of good standing in the community who had themselves been held captive were deemed particularly trustworthy:

How far their Madness, Fury, and most implacable Malice, did, after the Manner of Brute beasts, transport them towards the Destruction
of those miserable, harmless Souls they detained among them, doth
clearly appear by several Particulars expressed in several Examinations.
I shall here insert some of them taken upon trust from Persons of
good Quality and Credit, who were long Prisoners among them.\textsuperscript{12}

Darcy goes on to say that in this colonial period in Ireland social rank was
not always easy to determine, as the social order was based upon sometimes
competing old and emergent systems. Given, then, that so much evidence was
‘credibly reported’, what made this testimony credible and are there indicators
of how status and authority are encoded in the language? My primary focus
here is on the testimony of women, in order to determine the particular ways
in which their words and experiences are framed and appropriated by the legal
authorities, by commentators on the rebellion, and by the women involved
themselves. In doing this, I hope to shed light on the ways in which the ideology
surrounding women and women’s place is encoded (most often routinely and
unselfconsciously) in the text of the depositions and texts derived from them,
and what this tells us about the validity of women’s testimony and the uses to
which it is put.

Marital Status and Credibility

The depositions illustrate how women’s marital status and credibility are
inextricably bound together. Most male deponents are identified in the
transcripts according to the formula:

\textbf{Name, Geographical Provenance, Occupation,} [sworn (deposeth)
(and) saith]

This reflects the fact that a man derives his status and standing in the
community from where he comes and from what he does for a living and
this, alongside the fact that he has sworn a sacred oath, forms the basis of his
credibility as a deponent.

Women’s testimony, on the other hand, is typically framed by extra
information about their position in society. The most important determiner
is their status vis-à-vis men, that is, as a wife, late wife, widow, relict, spinster,

\textsuperscript{12} Sir John Temple, \textit{The Irish Rebellion} (London, 1646), 217.
daughter or mistress. This marital status renders the first part of the typical formula for identification of women as follows:

Name, Marital Status, Geographical Provenance

The following extracts illustrate the various manifestations of this formula:

**WIFE**

8732204
Anne Dukes the wife of William Douckes of Kilnacorra in the parische of Dyne in the Countie of Cavan yeoman who lyeth her in this Towne Dublin Extreame sicke, who beinge dewly sworne deposeth and sayth

834004
Elizabeth Hankin wife to james Hankin of dundalke sadler which said James was killed in Trim with Thomas Pressick sworne & examined sayth

**RELICT**

833081
Joane Baylie the relict and wife of Edward Baylie of Drumlum within the Barrony of Glankie County of cavan sworne and examined deposeth and

**LATE WIFE**

832188
‡Grace Carinton aged ffortye yeares or theireabouts late of the parish of drvmlane in the County of Cavan & late wife vnto Richard Carinton whoe as hee was Travelling vp Towards Dublin was stobed striped & Killed by the Ireish Rebells of the County of Cavan, And the said Grace being Duely sworne & examyned saith that…

832191r182
Jane Bordman late wife of Thomas Bordman Weaver an English protestant lately dwelling upon the half pole of Carry=crenah of Mr Castletons proportion in the parish of Urnay 7 county of Cavan deposeth that
WIDOW
834006
Luce Spell of Drogheda, in the County of Lowth widowe sworne and examined deposeth and saith

834030
The Examinacion of Margarett Cesar widdowe taken the 26th day of Aprill 1653
The said Margarett Cesar aged 48 yeares or thereabouts being duly sworne & examined by virtue of her oath saide That

SPINSTER
834108
Elizabeth Northope late of the parish of Clownish and County of Monaghan Spinster in the behalfe of her ffather in law Richard Squyre of the same parish lately & about Alhollantide last past most inhumanely slayne by the Rebe{l}s being duely sworne sayth

MISTRESS
838189r235
The Examination of Mistriss Anne Fitzsymons being aged about fauty foure years taken the 6th of June 1653
Who being dewly sworne sayeth

While a woman/wife's status is normally linked to that of her husband, a daughter's status is usually marked in relation to the mother (or father):

DAUGHTER
834150
The Examinacion of Anne Bull the younger Daughter to Anne Bull alias ffergusson taken the 23th day of Aprill 1653
The said Anne being aged 17 yeares or thereabouts and being duly sworne & Examined by vertue of his oath saieth

839105
Jeane Pebles daughter to the aboue deponent dwelling in the same towne with her mother being likewise duely sworne saith
Although the majority of women are defined in terms of their relationship to a man, there are occasions when they are defined only by their dwelling place:

**DWELLING PLACE**

832812
An Borrell of Curgarra in the parish of Ballyhayes and County of Cavan deposeth that

Finally, there are strikingly few examples of women who are only identified by their name and geographical provenance, or whose status is indeed not qualified at all; these constitute exceptions to the overall formula used in the depositions, and they often occur when the woman is corroborating the assertions of others, not making her own independent assertions:

**WOMAN’S NAME ONLY**

838143r292
The examination of Felice Waller who sayeth that as she did hear by the report of the country about Charlemon this above wretten deposition of Turlache o Hamill is trew & further she sayeth not

Mary niGuirke of Glanavy being lykewayes examjned [dothe] affirm bY report of the country that the examination is trew & further she says

In many of the depositions by women, their status is in fact defined twice in relation to their man; that is, first by their marital status, and then by their husband’s occupation which is also embedded in the qualification:

834004r004
Elizabeth Hankin wife to james Hankin of dundalke sadler

It should come as no real surprise that women are identified in this way in the mid-seventeenth-century, given that they were at that time regarded as ‘belonging’ to their husbands along with children, goods and chattels, and given the central role marriage plays in the construction of female identity in that period.13 In an article on the portrayal of vulnerable women in

the 1641 Depositions, Nicci MacLeod and I examined the role and place of seventeenth-century English women in some detail. ¹⁴ We pointed out that in the atrocity propaganda related to the Irish Rebellion Irish women were depicted as barbarous, active and empowered, while the discourse around Protestant women centred around their disempowerment and victimhood: ‘…in stark contrast to the active construction of Irish women as aggressor…the Protestant settler woman tends to be represented as the passive recipient of the rebels’ “despicable” actions’. ¹⁵ The focus of that article was on the relative disempowerment or victimhood of Protestant women in the depositions, and their general subordination to men was a given. Here, however, I wish to stress that women’s testimony is officially framed by and finds its admissibility at least partly in their marital status and the occupational status of their men, which in itself is an act of disempowerment, at one and the same time recreating and reinforcing women’s subordinate role and relegating their testimony to a substitute for men’s. Indeed, in a striking number of cases a woman’s testimony is prefaced by an explanation about the death or indisposition of her husband, as in the following excerpts, indicating that the woman was only giving testimony because her husband for good reason was not able to:

**HUSBAND’S ABSENCE**

832188

I Grace Carinton aged forty yeares or theireabouts late of the parish of drvmlane in the County of Cavan & late wife vnto Richard Carinton whoe as hee was Travelling vp towards Dublin was stobed striped & Killed by the Ireish Rebells of the County of Cavan, Ad the said grace being Duely sworne & examyned saith

832204

Anne Doukes the wife of William Doukes of Kilnacorra in the parish of Dynne in the Countie of Cavan yeoman who lyethe her in this townne Dublin Extreame sicke, who beinge dewly sworne deposeth and sayth

832210

Jane Gates the wife of Richard gates of Ballinah in the Parish of

¹⁵ Ibid., 261.
Lurgan Banorie of Castlerane & Countie of Cavan {her said husband being sicke} duely sworne

Anne Howten of Dartery in the town & parish of Dartery in the County of Managhan whose husband was lately employed in his Maiesties service towards Drogheda, being duely sworne deposeth

This scribal formulation, a routine characteristic of the depositions, encodes the institutional subordination of female witnesses’ voices. That this legal formula for introducing women’s testimony was standard practice both reflects and enshrines the early-modern Protestant male view of women as adjunct to men both within the legal system and within society in general.

While women’s testimony may be regarded as a substitute for men’s, their suffering is a further commodity of the rebellion that is appropriated by men and used for their purposes. Protestant English men’s retelling of women’s experiences of the uprising in pamphlets and books served to advertize the cruelty of the Irish and justify subsequent brutal campaigns to suppress them. In these publications (the prime example beng Sir John Temple’s *The Irish Rebellion* (London, 1646) the most lurid and goriest accounts of the treatment of women were reported. Indeed, a number of particularly gruesome examples, of babies being ripped from their mothers’ stomachs, of women being killed while in labour and of babies being murdered at their mothers’ breasts, persistently recur in the writing of a number of male authors and pamphleteers. In Temple, they are certainly not intended as faithful accounts of the actual facts of the rebellion, but ultimately serve as mythologized symbols of women’s suffering and victimhood. In this way, women’s traumatic experiences are not recounted for the sake of the women themselves, but are subordinated to the purposes of men:

…when women’s words are taken out of their original context, and incorporated within a male-authored text (especially one with such strong implied male readership), women’s experiences come to speak for men and not for women themselves… So even if Temple records women’s depositions verbatim, by recording them in his text they come to speak for the trauma of the Protestant men in Ireland. In doing so, women’s experiences are appropriated to serve the psychic needs of men. Moreover, Protestant women’s trauma is also exploited for
political ends, with Temple using the experiences of female victims to characterize the perpetrators as monstrous and barbaric, in order to advocate a radical policy that would ensure that Irish Catholics could never rise again.\textsuperscript{16}

Indeed not just women’s words, but women’s bodies, their maternal and biological functions all are used as icons of the rebellion and propaganda tools in the struggle between Protestant English and Catholic Irish men. *Tears of Ireland* (1642) an exaggerated account of the violence of the Irish against the English, features numerous graphic images of naked women with their wombs ripped open or strung up or roasted over hot coals. Even the less lurid written accounts, as in the following examination of Adam Glover, cited by Temple, serve to reinforce women’s, and indeed children’s, total vulnerability and dependence.

**Deposition of Adam Glover**

This deponent further saith that he saw upon the high way a woeman left by the Rebells stripped to her smock, sett upon \{by\} 3 woemen and some children being Irish whoe miserably tore and rent the said poore English woeman and stripped her of her smock in bitter frost and snow soo that she fell in labour in their hands and presence and both she and her child there miserably died. \textsuperscript{17}

This process of appropriating women’s suffering is by no means unique to the 1641 rebellion: it has been, and still is, observed in the course of many different conflicts throughout the ages and throughout the world. Purkiss argues that ‘Such rhetoric was reassuring because it assigned passivity, disorder and dismemberment of the feminine corpse, releasing the male identity of the soldier for military action on her behalf and reassuring him that his own being was different.’\textsuperscript{18}

The vulnerability of women and children is thus recorded throughout the depositions and the brutal and usually fatal separating of the dependent infant from its nurturing mother is a recurrent trope:

\textsuperscript{16} Naomi McAreavey, ‘Re(−)membering Women: Protestant Women’s Victim Testimonies during the Irish Rising of 1641’, *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, 2 (2010); http://www.northernrenaissance.org

\textsuperscript{17} Temple, *The Irish Rebellion*, 66.

\textsuperscript{18} Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics during the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 2005), 43.
This Examinant farther saith: That on the first of May 1642, Collonell Tegel Driscoll of the barony of Carbery with a party in the night forced an house belonging to this Examinant about pistol shot from this Examinant's Castle of Glandore before mentioned, in which were about 30 English who fled thither for refuge, not being enlisted as soldiers in the army who were all put to the sword except about 7 or eight men that & women who breakeing out of a windore escaped to the castle adjoining; & two women & one man who having also escaped out of the said house fled to a church adjoining; where being found the next morneing by the rebells, they caried them to Ballerevin about 2 miles from Glandore aforesaid, & leaveing them with the wife of McCarty Reagh then there inhabiting, after 2 dayes she caused them to be hanged, as this Examinant was credibly informed: & that both those women were greate with child: & one of them had her belly ript up after she was deade, & the child taken out alive. And farther saith not.

Deposition of Ellen Adams

... the deponent further saith that the said Rory Magwires Confederates, or some of them (whose names she doth not remember) finding one Tary Brunt the wife of Geo: Brunt at Waterdrum aforesaid, she being bigg with child and at the very last of her time, did barbarously murther the said Tary, first stripping of her naked and then seriously examining where her mony was, one of the said Rebells draweing his skyne swore a greate oath that vnles she confessed where her cash Lay, he would with his said skyne ripp vpp her belly, which he accordingly performed, for he presently vppon that ran the skyne into her body and the child dropped from her gasping Twice or thrice vppon the ground.

The Examination of Katherine Bretnogh taken the 9th of June 1653 aged 40 yeers & vpward

Being duely Sworne sayth
That in May about 9 or 10 yeeres since her husband Patricke mc
Gillugh hauing bene out with the Irish in rebellyon was received into Protection by Captain Wooll then comanding in Arglasse in the County of Downe and after he had remayned about a Weeke in Arglasse and serued the said Captain Wooll for two or three dayes in leading out wracke to donnge his land, that upon the Sabbath day three Or ffoure of the said Captain Woolls souldiers came into the house and slew her said husband then lying by her in their bed The cause of her knowledge of her husbands protection as shee sayth Is that her husband tould her soe ffurther shee sayth the said Captain Wooll tooke from her after her husbands death two Cowes which was all her stocke and that her brother & a child then sucking at her breast therby dyed for want of food ffurther shee sayth not

While there is undoubtedly a basis of truth in many of these narratives of suffering, there is also clear evidence of exaggeration: Temple himself does not shy away from recounting tales of ghostly apparitions and supernatural experiences, all of which add to the mythology surrounding the rebellion and women’s roles in it:

Master George Creighton, Minister of Virginia, in the County of Cavan, deposeth, among other Particulars in his Examination, ‘That divers Women brought into his House a young Woman almost naked, to whom a Rogue came upon the Way, these Women being present, and required her to give him her Money, or else he would kill her, and so drew his Sword; her Answer was, You cannot kill me unless God give you Leave, and his Will be done: Whereupon the Rogue thrust three Times at her naked Body with his drawn Sword, and yet never pierced her Skin; whereat he being, as it seems, much confounded, went away and left her; and that he saw this Woman, and heard this Particular related by divers Women, who were by, and saw what they reported’.19

By concentrating on this appropriation and mythologizing of women’s experiences in the 1641 Rebellion by men I do not wish to imply that female deponents were never allowed to speak for themselves; nor will I claim that women themselves were not complicit in developing and spreading the myths

surrounding the more extreme episodes associated with the rebellion. There are many examples of female deponents narrating gruesome stories about women killed in labour, babies murdered and ripped from their lactating mothers, etc. And a number of female deponents’ accounts suggest that they were aware that they were witnessing attempted genocide of the English by the Irish:

816228\text{r}142

Deposition of Ann Painter

And further saith that the Rebells after they hadd about Christmas 1641 suffered some of the English to goe out of the towne of Navan aforesaid seemed to bee very sorrowfull for the same: Saying that thenceforth noe English man shold passe from them nor Live: Becawse they shold not ryse nor joyne with the rest of the English against them And thereupon they the Rebells most cruelly fell vpon her said husband & her soon as aforesaid and murthered them & 4 more English Protestants at Navan aforesaid: And the Rebells alsoe killed one Mr Robert ffisher Register of the Consistory of Meath as he was comeing towards Dublin. This deponent further sayth that she hath heard the Rebells commonly say that they repented they suffered any English to passe safe to Dublin for that thay then hoped that the stripped English would have gone directly toward England and not joynd together in a body to fight against them

Indeed there is ample evidence that women told and retold the same atrocity tales many times, often relaying the experience of other women.\textsuperscript{20} But it would appear that this kind of storytelling perhaps served a different function for women than it did for men. McAreavey suggests that depositions containing such vivid atrocity narratives might be regarded as a form of therapeutic event for the female Protestant victims of the rebellion (and indeed she notes the absence of such opportunities for Catholic women to work through their trauma by telling their violent experiences to an official third party). Naiomi McAreavey argues that the overall value of women’s stories from the

\textsuperscript{20} Nor indeed could I argue that women are not (consciously or subconsciously) perpetuating the dependence of women on men for their standing in the community. Elizabeth Price refers to an Englishwoman involved in the Portadown atrocity as ‘an Englishwoman nere [th]e bridge of Portadown…by name the wife of one Arnold Taylor’ (836101r054).
depositions is not as fact or eye-witness truth, but rather as trauma narratives that develop in response to women’s suffering. She emphasizes ‘Protestant women’s fundamental role in the creation and circulation of stories of the dismembered female, and argues that for these women they represent complexly gendered post-traumatic responses to their experiences during the rising’.²¹ Linking with the work of Kali Tal,²² McAreavey argues that if we look at the depositions as ‘literature of trauma’ (as ‘cultural representations of psychic trauma’, in Tal’s words),²³ we can ‘bridge the gap between literary and historical approaches.²⁴

There is no doubt that the authority of a survivor narrative as accurate fact is often more questionable than its authenticity as experience. Many of these vivid accounts of atrocities that appear in the depositions are more indicative of survivors attempting to convey the danger of death and the extreme violence of the situations in which they found themselves, rather than an attempt to provide an accurate, factual account—appealing to authenticity, not accuracy. Most sociolinguists would be sympathetic to such an appeal: William Labov developed a technique for eliciting unguarded, more spontaneous ‘authentic’ language from informants who were being observed and recorded.²⁵ It involves asking the ‘danger of death’ question: ‘Have you ever been in a situation in which you were in serious danger of being killed?’ Informants are consistently found to be so involved in convincing the speaker of the danger of the situation that they pay little attention to the formalities and accuracies of speech. McAreavey cites Tal as saying that ‘literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it “real” both to the victim and to the community’. Given all the conventions we have observed in the gathering and dissemination of depositions, it would not be going too far to suggest that authenticity was perhaps a much more valued characteristic of evidence in the mid-seventeenth-century than it is today, and suggests that our preoccupation with accuracy is perhaps misguided and inappropriate at such a far temporal remove.

In general, then, the emphasis of both the deponents and the users of their testimony would appear to be on authenticity of experience, rather than accuracy of report. Although we might use the digitized corpus to work out,

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²¹ McAreavey, ‘Re(-)membering Women’, 3.
²² See Kali Tal, Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma (Cambridge, 1996).
²³ Ibid., 30.
for example, whether an individual perpetrator could have been in places A and B on the same day or not, and therefore whether a particular account is reliable, such evidence would, in a sense, miss the point of the reported narrative. Our preoccupation with accuracy and reliability, so prominent in contemporary legal processes, would appear to be inappropriate in the context of the depositions, where both style and content are used to confirm atrocity narratives not as unique events but as confirming narrative patterns that were widely circulated in Europe at the time, and which, in their published versions, were often accompanied by illustrations taken from European publications.

The fact that women themselves told and retold stories of extreme atrocity would suggest that they, too, were not above appropriating testimony for different ends than simply telling the truth. Rather, they were used to illustrating suffering, indicating common experience and with it solidarity with fellow sufferers, and in some cases also perpetuating men’s versions of events.

Another therapeutic aspect of women’s retelling of trauma narratives in general, however, is the way in which it reinforces their solidarity with other women and allows them to put their own traumatic experience into context, often recognizing that they survived where others did not, or were not hurt as badly as others, rationalizing their experiences, making them more ‘bearable’ and imbuing the women with a sense of personal strength. The therapeutic power and potential for peace-making of women’s narratives are very much recognized almost 400 years after the Irish rebellion, particularly in war-torn areas of the world and those where women are the victims of violent and oppressive male-dominated regimes. Journals such as Critical Half, particularly in its special edition Women’s Narratives, War, and Peace-Building (Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall, 2007), stress the potential role of women as agents of social change and the transformative power of their stories of violence and survival. The trauma narratives included in the depositions of the female victims of the 1641 rebellion were indeed appropriated by men as a justification for further bloodshed and violence, but one can also see glimpses of their use for other, more positive purposes: narratives of survival and courage, of healing, miraculous escape and of faith and resilience in the face of adversity:

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She further saith that they also attempted to kill her this deponent, but god spared her so as they spared her life, takeing all she had & let letting her goe. She farther saith that the chiefe of the said Rebells who acted the said murther with the rest was John Barry one of
the Lo: of Muskerry party & of Captain Maho troope as be himselfe told her & that this Examinant about five weekes since did mee{t} the said Barry at Carigadruit & challenged him of the said fact, who thereupon tooke her out of Company, & as{ked} her whether the man then slaine were her husband she answered noe: then (said he) do not you take a{ } my life for I saved youres.

University of Aberdeen
As the congeries of hapless clergy that clog the pages of comic literature reveal, the social position of those in holy orders has historically been ambiguous. Most frequently it is the impecunious curate that is the butt of the joke, and the object of humour. More broadly, though, the ministry presents significant challenges to any attempt to locate it neatly within a social hierarchy. The economic and theological implications of the office and its responsibilities make it very problematic to assign it a niche, in the way that we might for any other profession. If this was true in Georgian, Victorian, and even in Edwardian society, it was, a fortiori, the case in the rigidly hierarchical society of early-modern England.

This was undoubtedly the case from an economic standpoint. As Keith Wrightson has pointed out, the clergy were, effectively, the most middling of the middle sort.

Formal education at university of the Inns of Court was by no means essential for entry to any of these professions in this period, but it was necessary to those who aspired to reach the higher echelons of their profession. Since education cost money it is scarcely surprising that studies have revealed some three-quarters of common lawyers and half to two-thirds of civil lawyers to have been of gentry origin, most of the remainder being the sons of prosperous tradesmen and professional men. Only the clergy provided something of an exception, many being of yeoman stock, though the proportion of gentry sons entering the clergy rose steadily over the course of the seventeenth century.¹

But the uniqueness of the ministry went beyond economic considerations. Ordination set these men apart from the mainstream of society in a way that was unique. Some of these distinctions were very practical. Those who had

been ordained had their Convocation—their own assembly, with the power to self-regulate and to set their own taxes.

Something of the social implications of ordination was captured by John Donne, in his late poem ‘To Mr Tilman after he had taken orders’. Donne was by no means the Laudian poster boy that some of his biographers have imagined. Yet, even as a moderate conformist, who self-consciously cleaved to the middle of the English ecclesiastical spectrum, Donne had a high view of ordination:

Thou art the same materials, as before,
Onely the stampe is changèd, but no more.
And as new crowned Kings alter the face,
But not the monies substance, so hath grace
Chang’d onely Gods old Image by Creation,
To Christs new stampe, at this thy Coronation
...
These are thy titles and preheminences,
In whom must meet Gods graces, mens offences;
And so the heavens which beget all things here,
And the earth, our mother, which these things doth bear;
Both these in thee, are in thy Calling knit
And make thee now a blest Hermaphrodite.

But Donne, who had spent a long time resisting the urgings of James I, among others, to enter the ministry, also stresses the social consequences of the step that Mr Tilman has taken. At the beginning of the poem he refers to ‘lay-scornings of the ministry.’ A little later, he returns to, and expands upon, this theme:

Why doth the foolish world scorne that profession,
Whose joyes passe speech? Why do they think unfit
That Gentry should joyne families with it?

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As if their day were onely to be spent
In dressing, Mistressing and complement.
Alas! poore joyes, but poorer men, whose trust
Seems richly placed in sublimed dust,
(For, such are clothes and beauty, which though gay,
Are, at the best, but of sublimed clay)
Let then the world thy calling disrespect,
But goe thou on, and pitty their neglect.3

In contrast to this disesteem for the ministry Donne asks: ‘What function is so noble, as to be / Ambassador to God, and destiny?’ Clearly, then, for Donne at least, the ministry was not the profession for the social climber—to enter it was to face worldly scorn. Yet, at the same time, when Donne took his place in the rotation to preach to the king at Whitehall, he did so from a pulpit that placed him at the same height as the king, eye to eye across the crowded chapel, as potent a symbol as any of the social ambivalence surrounding the role of the minister in early-modern England.4

These considerations were equally important for the Protestant ministry in Ireland during the seventeenth century. To them were added all the concerns implicit in the process of plantation. The ministers were, even more than their lay fellow-planters, strangers in a strange land. Like the other planters, they were divorced from the Irish population by background, language, religion and loyalty. That estrangement was only emphasised by the fact that this native population supported the ministry financially—directly by paying tithes, and indirectly through the profits of money lending. And the process of proselytisation, however intermittently carried out, only deepened these differences. Though theoretically all about the ‘sameing’ of the other, and though predicated upon a commonality of need and provision, the attempt to convert Irish Catholics had the effect of throwing religious differences into sharper relief. Thus, Protestant ministers in Ireland faced a double estrangement—from the planters and from the Irish. And, paradoxically, their links with both societies served to divide them from each other, rather than drawing them together.

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4 See, for a discussion of the dynamics of Stuart court preaching, Peter E. McCullough, Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching (Cambridge, 1998).
Ministers in the Depositions

Finding evidence to support this state of affairs is not a trivial exercise. As Raymond Gillespie has pointed out, while administrative records of the ministry are a rich source of historical information, there is a shortage of sources that record the everyday details of the lives of individual ministers:

[T]he parish clergyman… was preoccupied with the daily round of collecting tithes, maintaining church property and carrying out his pastoral functions to Protestant communities of varying sizes across the island. In addition such clergymen had to make a living for themselves and their families and as such they became part of the secular world of commerce and agriculture. It is difficult to reconstruct this world because most clergy regarded their lives as ordinary and therefore not worth recording.5

Indeed, it was only when the steady tenor of these ministerial lives was disrupted by the events of the 1641 rebellion that their lives became material for recording. The testimony gathered by the commissioners appointed by the English parliament to gather evidence from the victims of the events of the 1641 rebellion are particularly valuable to us. Though they are not an unproblematic source of information, and though it would be foolish to lose sight of the layers of mediation through which the material they contain has passed, the depositions do, none the less, provide us with unparalleled insight into the lives and experiences of individual ministers in Ireland before and during the events of 1641. Nicholas Canny’s summary of the depositions as a whole is apposite:

A close study of the depositions … suggests that they might prove more useful than would at first appear because the deponents themselves, and those who collected the information from them, were concerned to identify those who had attacked them, and they recorded the gist of the justifications for the onslaught offered to them by their assailants. In the course of these summaries the deponents sought to distinguish between political, economic, and religious legitimisations … One of the

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5 Raymond Gillespie, ‘The Church of Ireland Clergy, c.1640: Representation and Reality’ in T. C. Barnard and W. G. Neely (eds), The Clergy of the Church of Ireland 1000–2000: Messengers, Watchmen and Stewards (Dublin, 2006), 68.
attractions therefore of the depositions as a historical source is that they make it possible for us to unravel the complex of motivations that the Protestants attributed to their assailants.⁶

It is at the level of the individual minister that the depositions are most useful as a source. While they seem to offer the prospect of more comprehensive analysis, in reality the exigencies of the gathering of depositions mean that any attempt to draw general conclusions from them must be thickly hedged about with caveats and qualifications. To understand why this is so, it is helpful to consider in some detail the process by which the depositions were gathered.

As recent scholarship on the depositions has emphasised, the more than 8,000 statements that make up the collection are not to be regarded as parts of a homogeneous whole. The fact that the library of Trinity College Dublin had the depositions bound into thirty-one volumes arranged by county tends to obscure this fact. In reality, the depositions can be divided into eight discrete sections, which differ in date, location, and purpose. The first of these, ‘the core element’,⁷ comprises

the sworn statements of Protestant refugees taken by a group of eight clergymen, headed by Henry Jones, acting on the authority of three successive commissions issued by the Dublin government: the first, dated 23 December 1641, required the collection of information about robberies and spoils committed against the Protestant English; the second, dated 18 January 1642, extended the scope of the inquiry to include murders and massacres; and the third, dated 9 June 1642, replaced a deceased member and altered the legal status of the Commissioners.

These depositions were mostly taken in Dublin, before two or more of the commissioners, and date from 28 December 1641 to late 1647. In the online edition of the depositions whose terminology this article will follow, these depositions are designated ‘Dublin Originals’.⁸

⁷ Aidan Clarke, ‘The 1641 Depositions’ in Peter Fox (ed.), Treasures of the Library, Trinity College Dublin (Dublin, 1986), 112.
⁸ The 1641 depositions website can be found at http://www.1641.tcd.ie. More recently, the Depositions have been made available as part of a new digital research environment developed by the CULTURA Project (http://cultura-project.eu).
of deposition of interest to us here are the ‘Bysse depositions’. These were taken by Philip Bysse, the recently appointed archdeacon of Cloyne. Bysse’s commission was motivated by the fact that very few deponents from Munster had been able to appear before the Dublin Commission. Bysse operated throughout Munster and the depositions that he took deal largely, though not exclusively, with the events in that province. The last Bysse deposition is dated 13 August 1643; by the end of October in that year Bysse was dead. These two collections are the most immediate in time to the events of 1641, and the most relevant to our present enquiry.

Three other categories exist. The ‘Waring copies’ are copies of the Dublin Original depositions made in the late 1640s by Thomas Waring, the clerk of the Commission. Another collection is the Informations—‘sworn statements made by individuals, captured Irish and Old English as well as refugee Protestants, by coercion as well as by choice, before an officer of state: most frequently a judge; occasionally a Privy Councillor; sometimes, a local garrison commander.’ These are ‘concerned almost exclusively with public affairs’, and so are not especially useful for our present purpose.9 The fifth group, the Commonwealth depositions and examinations date from April 1652, when the English parliament established special High Courts of Justice to ‘hear and determine all murders and massacres of any English or other person … done or committed by any person or persons.’10 The specific focus of these depositions and their chronological distance from 1641 make them considerably less useful for our purpose than the two early collections: the Dublin Originals and the Bysse depositions.

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<th>County</th>
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<td>Kerry</td>
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10 Ibid.
An evident implication of these processes of deposing is that the depositions are patchy in their geographical coverage. Table 1 illustrates this. It summarises the results of searches for deponents whose occupation is listed as either ‘clergy’ or ‘ministry’ in the two collections of depositions that our investigation focuses on. The distribution of deponents also reflects the difficulty of travelling to Dublin to depose, especially for ministers in the more remote recesses of the island. The figures also reflect the fact that some of the clergy had fled to England—a task that was easier for those in the South and East. Overall, then, this table neatly highlights one of the reasons for the futility of attempting to construct a comprehensive picture of ministerial life in Ireland in the 1640s. Another difficulty arises from the form of the commission under which the depositions were taken. Each deposition broadly follows a format based on the commission under which it was taken. In the Dublin Original and Bysse depositions, the financial losses are listed, in varying
degrees of detail. This is followed by a listing of crimes and perpetrators. The final section is less structured, and is effectively a compendium for anything else the deponent wishes to report. Thus, while financial losses are reported with a reasonable degree of consistency, the details that offer us glimpses into the quotidian detail of the deponent’s life are much more unevenly spread.

For these reasons, the depositions are best approached on an individual level. Abandoning an attempt at synthesis—which is doomed to fail in any case—allows us to see the depositions as a series of vignettes, capturing snapshots of the life and experience of the ministers as they lived through changeful and traumatic times. In this article we will seek to highlight some of the more suggestive of these glimpses.

**Life before 1641**

It is the economic aspect of the ministers’ life that the depositions capture in most detail. Each deposition contains lists of the nature and amounts of the losses suffered by the deponent and this allows us to reconstruct something of the individual minister’s wealth. This information emphasises the variation in resources enjoyed by the clergy. At the lower end of the scale is the loss of £4 10s, made up of a cow, household stuff and hay, suffered by John Potter, curate of Affane in Waterford. A number of clergy reported losses of nearly £2,000, and on a few occasions, even larger amounts. For the most part, though, the losses reported are well below £1,000.

The makeup of these losses is as revealing as their amount. What is striking, reading through the depositions, is the fact that the sort of losses reported by ministers are almost indistinguishable from those reported by most of the other deponents. It is unsurprising that almost all deponents report the loss of the ubiquitous household items. More striking is the lack of differentiation between the agricultural losses reported by the ministers, and those that feature in the depositions of other individuals. Richard Pickering, vicar of Tartoe, in Kildare, is typical of many other deponents—clerical and lay—in his reported losses of ‘corne and hay’ to the value of £110, ‘horse and cattle, £25 and ‘other goods’, £10. His colleague William Golburn, archdeacon of Kildare, reported a variety of material losses, on a rather grander scale than the average. Included in his inventory, in addition to a carefully itemised list of

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11 Deposition of Randall Dumvill, 3 June 1644 (T.C.D., MS 838, f. 9v).
household furnishings, were forty-nine cows and a bull of superior ‘English streyne’ valued at £150, 230 sheep ‘with certayne English Ramms’ to the value of £40 and ‘garrans and saddle naggs’ worth £30. He also reported the loss of corn in the ground, worth £150, and of seventy carts of turf and ‘a quantity of Mault and corne’ along with butter, wool and flax. Like his fellow ministers, Golburn was no ivory tower cleric.

Golburn’s list of losses does contain one item that serves to differentiate his from most, though not all, lay deponents. Amongst the losses that he suffered was ‘his library with other things contayned and left in his study seased by [ ] Enemies to his dammadg of 100 li’. Golburn may have had plenty agricultural possessions, but he was not unequipped for his ministerial work. He is not unique in this regard.

Of those who reported losses of books in their depositions roughly half were clergy, suggesting their practical engagement with print. Using the valuations provided by the clergy for their book losses it seems that their books accounted for between 3 and 16 percent of their total losses, with most being above 5 per cent which is substantially more than the losses of books noted by the gentry.

The obvious and immediate question to ask is what books were the ministers reading? Sadly, ‘no list exists of an early seventeenth-century parish minister’s library’, and very few of the deponents mention any specific books. One of the very few exceptions to this rule is Robert Browne, the vicar of Sutton Benger in Wiltshire. Browne became embroiled in the events of the rebellion and, in his attempt to escape by boat to England was blown into harbour at Skerries, County Dublin. Here he was relieved of ‘his bookes vizt a bible whiche afterward he burnt, a greek newtestam{ent} and Baker upon the penitentiall psalmes to the value of tenn shillings’. Browne was travelling at this time, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that he had any very large proportion of his library with him on the journey. It is, moreover, disappointing, and not a little frustrating that the one minister who mentions a specific author should not be a member of the Irish ministry at this time.

12 Deposition of William Golburn, 8 January 1642/3 (T.C.D. MS 813, ff 273r – 274r).
13 Ibid.
14 Gillespie, ‘The Church of Ireland Clergy, c.1640’ in Barnard and Neely (eds), The Clergy of the Church of Ireland, 75.
15 Ibid.
16 Deposition of Robert Browne, 5 January 1642/3 (T.C.D. MS 834, ff. 103r–103v).
Another category of loss specific to the ministry is the loss of income from church livings. And here, as elsewhere, the constant is variation. The size of living, the income produced and the amount of livings held by an individual all vary widely. Most ministers valued their living at less than £100, and the income it provided was often a relatively minor element of their finances. Michael Smith, archdeacon of Clonfert, who claimed one of the highest losses of any minister estimated that his living was worth £100, while ‘future proffitts of his lands tythes & temporall estate’ were ‘clerely worth’ £700. Smith is admittedly an extreme example, but it remains the case that few of the ministers relied solely upon the income from their livings. This was just as well, perhaps. There is evidence that a gulf could—and often did—exist between the nominal worth of a living, and the amount that could be taken from it in tithes. And there is evidence of difficulty in persuading parishioners to pay their tithes. Elizabeth Hatherington, deposing on behalf of her husband Richard, listed among the debts outstanding to him, in his role as minister of Modelligoe, County Waterford, the sum of nine pounds from the previous year’s tithes.17 Similarly, Hugh Morrison of Trim listed losses from outstanding tithes in two parishes:

Item thirtie pounds sterling due vnto him from Philip McMmulmore ô Rely of Lismore for the tithes of Castle Corre this yeare 1642 whoe is a gran rebel
Item the Tithes of the vicarage of Galtrim sett for this yeare vnto the said Daniel Wilson for fiftie pounds sterling soe disabled as aforesaid.18

William Holyday, incumbent of Bruheny, County Cork, deposed that ‘he lost in the benefitt of his tithes fiftie pounds the last harvest & forty pounds the last this presente yeeres.’19 This context explains why, in 1642, the disposed ministers petitioned parliament:

That it would please this honorable house for preserveing of peace for abolisheing of Popish Customes & for furthering the worke of the Ministry, that Ministers may have noe occasion to Contend with their parishoner, nor be diverted from their studies, by followeing suites of Law, occasioned by diverse popish Customes, and severall manners

17 Deposition of Ellizabeth Hatherington, 23 June 1642 (T.C.D. MS 802, ff 91r–91v).
18 Deposition of Hugh Morison, 8 July 1642 (T.C.D. MS 816, ff 180r–180v).
19 Deposition of William Holyday, 17 February 1643/4 (T.C.D. MS 825, ff. 72r–72v).
of Titheing, To settle one sette forme of Titheing through out the
kingdome and that to be (if it may be) according to the Late Table of
Ulster.\textsuperscript{20}

In years of poor harvest, like those leading up to 1641, we can only
suppose that tithes must have seemed an imposition even to devout members
of the Protestant flock. In Protestant England, tithes were an ongoing source
of grievance. To the Catholic Irish who owed no loyalty to the Church of
Ireland, they must have seemed intolerable. The limited pastoral care provided
for the native Irish, and the use of bailiffs to extract payment, meant that the
relationship between Protestant clergy and Catholic Irish was perceived as
‘uniquely exploitative.’\textsuperscript{21} In 1629, Sir John Bingley, a Protestant layman, claimed
that the ministers of the Church of Ireland ‘do exact of their parishioners
more fees and duties than is taken in England which is a great scandal’.\textsuperscript{22}
Such sentiments found their expression in the depositions. When Robert
Maxwell, rector of Tinan in County Armagh, asked Sir Phelim O’Neill what
his demands were, the answer included ‘All tythes payable by papists to be paid
to popish preists. Church lands to be restored to theire bishopps.’\textsuperscript{23}

Joseph Smithson, ‘Minister and Preacher of Gods word in the Parish of Clonekeene
in the Countie of Dublin’ reported the central role that tithes seemed to play
in a local rebel leader’s sense of grievance:

And this deponent further saith that the said Mr Woolverston told him
this Examinant that hee would pay noe more tithes but to the Masse
Preist And this deponent is like to be deprived of the same tithes which
the said Mr Woolverston since the Rebellion beganne hath deteyned
from him And saith alsoe That about a fortnight after alhollantide last
Mr Nicholas Rochford of Rochestowne aforesaid gent a wilfull Papist
kept from this deponent soe many tithe furrs as came to 5 li. and said
to this Deponent that hee kept them in hope to see Protestants burne in
them And this deponent is like to be deprived of those tithes Alsoe the
sai{d} Rochford since the rebellion beganne peremptorilie denyedinge
to pay them.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Petition of the dispoyled ministers, 8 March 1642 (T.C.D. MS 840, ff. 36r–36v).
\textsuperscript{21} Alan Ford, ‘The Reformation in Kilmore before 1641’ in Raymond Gillespie (ed.),
\textit{Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish County} (Dublin, 2004), 86.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 86.
\textsuperscript{23} Deposition of Robert Maxwell, 22 August 1642 (T.C.D. MS 809, f. 7r).
\textsuperscript{24} Deposition of Joseph Smithson, 8 January 1642/3 (T.C.D. MS 809, f. 327 r).
When tithes were gathered they needed to be invested. Agriculture, as we have seen, was one option. To be sure, the *Articles given in Charge to be Inquired upon and Presented to Churchwardens* (1623) prohibited members of the clergy from engaging in ‘servile labour’, but, in practice that did little to limit the agrarian activities of ministers. Another avenue of gain specifically proscribed in the directions was usury. This prohibition, too, operated at the level of theory rather than that of practice. The depositions provide evidence that money-lending was widely practiced by the Protestant clergy in Ireland. Many of the deponents listed amongst their losses debts that the circumstances of the rising had rendered unrecoverable. Some of these debts were small, representing the lines of credit essential to the conduct of commerce in early-modern society. Others ministers, though, reported much more significant amounts—in both absolute and relative terms. Such debts can best be accounted for as part of a long-standing and well-established practice of ministerial money-lending. Debt was an important factor in the 1641 rebellion as a whole. Heavily indebted Irish saw the rising as an excellent opportunity to eliminate this burden. And the depositions of the ministers reveal that they too were affected by the same imperative. Indeed, as Nicholas Canny argues, the native animosity towards the clergymen ‘may be explained as much by the ministers’ heavy involvement in money-lending transactions as by their religious profession.25

Such, then, were the economic and financial circumstances of the ministerial life in Ireland during the first half of the seventeenth century. 1641 found them a heterogeneous group, marked by striking disparity in means and position. Some were poorly provided for, doing their best to eke a living from small and costive livings. Others possessed considerable wealth, and were engaged in large-scale farming and extensive financing. Most existed between the two extremes, engaging in agricultural activity on a medium scale and increasing their capital through money-lending.

The sort of life that emerges from an examination of the economic information furnished by the depositions is predicated upon close ties with the lay population, and with both English and Irish communities. Ministers participated fully in the agrarian economy, buying and selling, sowing and reaping in a way that was largely indistinguishable from their neighbours. Their involvement in money-lending, again, indicates close interaction with local communities. But this was a link that separated, as well as connected. As

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the *Articles* implicitly indicated, involvement in usury was a risky business for a cleric who wanted to secure the hearts and minds of an Irish population. Money-lending all too easily allowed for the construction of a grievance.

The system of tithes, too, though always chaotic, and both poorly and patchily implemented, was an active source of grievance to those who found themselves required to support the foreign ministers of a religion—never mind denomination—that did not command their loyalty or allegiance. This did not pass unnoticed by contemporary ecclesiastical authorities. Bishop Bramhill reported that, in parts of Down the clergy ‘never use tithing for fear of scandal.’

The picture that emerges from the depositions, then, gives us much information that we would struggle to discover from other sources. Man, however, does not live by bread alone, and it is hardly unreasonable to hope that the depositions would tell us something about the ministers’ activities in pursuit of their calling, rather than the subsidiary interests that we have been considering so far. In these terms, the depositions are something of a disappointment. These activities are simply not the focus of their interest, in the way that they might be for records of episcopal visitations or for session and presbytery minutes. This notwithstanding, the depositions do shed some, admittedly incidental, light on the ministerial activities of the Protestant clergy in Ireland.

The deposition of John Gouldsmith, a minister from County Mayo is a particularly rich source for information of this sort. Gouldsmith had been a Catholic. His deposition contains a wealth of information about the beginning and conduct of the rising in Mayo. Gouldsmith’s brother was a Catholic priest in Antwerp, and had alerted him to the imminence of an armed uprising and urged him to flee with his wife and children. Gouldsmith failed to heed the warning, and remained in Ireland. When Gouldsmith did seek refuge, he found that his religious history counted against him:

> [A]bout the first of November 1641 When the proclamation against the Rebellion came downe from Dublin, & that many of the Cleargy fled to Gallway the deponent desired the said Sir Henry Bingham to receive him into his castle of Castlebarr: there being as he conceived, noe other secure place of refuge within forty myles (And the deponent haveing beene formerly a Romish *papist* preist, and converted to the

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26 Quoted in Gillespie, ‘The Church of Ireland Clergy’, 72.
protestant religion by the light of gods truth being therefore more hated by the papists then any other) The said Sir Henry Bingham answered him That if he this deponent were in his Castle it would be the more eagerly assaulted for his sake and therefore he would not receive him: And thus having no place of refuge within the said County of Mayo the deponent was exposed to the merciless rage of those his virulent enemies the Rebels Who coming to his house at Midnight after the day of 1641 (all his men servants being fled from him) Presented their sharpe skines to his throate robbed him.27

Gouldsmith suffered heavy material losses, but escaped physically unscathed to the house of the Lord of Mayo, where he took refuge, along with ‘one Mr Gilberte a distressed minster and his wiffe & family & 3 other distressed gentlemen protestants.’ Gouldsmith’s account does not tend to underestimate his own importance and ability. So, he provides considerable detail about discussions that took place at Lord Mayo’s table, and the way in which he provided the definitive religious position. He also details his—usually successful—engagement in controversies with Catholics, who sought to ‘seduce’ the few remaining Protestants in the county.

In addition, Gouldsmith provides a lengthy account of his activity as a minister in County Mayo, which is worth quoting in its entirety:

And this deponent further saith That although Mr Bringhurst aforenamed turned and went to Masse: yet of this deponents knowledge he had awhiles severall men about him consulting to fling him over the Walle at Castlebarr as the deponent hath heard And this deponent (becawse he still kept vp and maintained the ministry whilst he stayd in the said County) was therefore much malignd and hated soe as he was in continuall danger of his Liffe, and the rather becawse his religion was persecuted and dispised by the papists on the one side and either contemped or at Least sleighted by all or the most of the English left within both the said Counties of Mayo and Sligoe And before the Rebellion began (becawse this deponent whoe had formerly bee a papist popish preist, too well knew in what blindnes & ignorance the poore children of the irish papists in his parrish and in other parts of this kingdome were brought vpp, and that not they alone but

27 Deposition of John Gouldsmith, 30 December 1643 (T.C.D. MS 831, f. 192v).
28 Ibid., f. 193r.
their parents (otherwise morally honest) were totally ignorant of the
grounds and wholesome precepts and rudiments of gods true Religion;
Therefore hee (as became one of his function) vsed all the faire gentle
& prevalent perswasions & arguments he could to draw them to leare
& understand the same, & to resort to the protestant Church
deponents house to gaine instrucccion there, and Likewise to converse with him
the same privately in matters of Religion tending to their salvation
By which meanes and by divers good turnes & curtesies done vnto them by him (to his noe Little cost) hee drew divers to their Cathachism
become protestants : some of which (to his great greefe suffered since
by the Rebells) And becawse this deponent would the rather invite and
draw the poore children of his parrish to bee Catechised & instructed
by them him As alsoe the children of the richer sort (though papists)
hee did by all wayes and gentle meanes seeke by gentle meanes to draw
dem vn to him By which way he brought many to be Cathechised every
sabboth day & at other tymes: And often their parents (though papists)
would be present and approve of his labours with their sonns, and say
there is nothing amisse in this that yow teach them: wishing that
their preist would doe as much And for the poorer sort this deponent in the
Countie s of Westmeath and Mayo gave the parents of the children seuerall
sumes of some money and Lent them divers Cowes freely somtymes by
about 22 at once for [ ] yeres for a good time together and other somtyme
for a milch Cow { for } tymes 22 yeres seuerall sometimes for a yere, divers Cowes
by 13 at once to suffer their children to come to him to be cathechised
& instructed in the grounds of the true protestant Religion: Where
by very many were drawn to vnderstand gods words & truth : & the
Church whereof he had the Cure began to florish & be accomodated
and furnish ed with a faire and competent auditorie.29

This is, manifestly, not the account of a disinterested witness. Moreover,
Gouldsmith’s deposition repeatedly emphasises a sense of isolation and
embattledness that should cause us to proceed with caution. None the less,
the deposition provides us with a unique account of a minister in operation.

One of the distinctive features of Gouldsmith’s account is his dependence
on catechising as an evangelical tool. In the context of his time, though, his
use of this method is unremarkable. Nor does his use of the catechism give us

29 Ibid., f. 196v.
any indication of his churchmanship. The catechism was regarded as a crucial pastoral tool across a wide range of Protestant opinion, especially, as in this case, when children or the unlearned were in view. The use of catechising as a handmaid to the sermon, and a preparatory course to preaching received broad agreement. This is reflected in the ‘petition of the dispoyled ministers’ presented, on their behalf by Henry Jones. Amongst other things, the ministers petitioned parliament:

To establish one Catechisme to be taught in Schooles; Schoole{s} to be erected in meet precincts some little meanes to be allotted to the School=masters were it but the profits of the County Schooles (wherewith hitherto little good hath been done) to be devided among them, and that Catechisme to be taught and explyaed by the Ministers, to the ignorant in every parish, and they under some penalty to be compelled to learne the same, not to exclude preaching at any time, but to prepare them the better for heareing sermons and by Gods blessing to banish Ignorance the sinne of this Land.30

In any case, it appears that Gouldsmith’s was a preaching, as well as a catechising, ministry for it was presumably to his sermons that his ‘faire and competent auditorie’ listened.

Gouldsmith’s account is unmatched by any other in the depositions. Thus, how well his experience matches that of his ministerial colleagues is a matter of surmise. Yet, it seems likely that the approach taken to his pastoral and evangelical activities would be likely to recommend itself to his colleagues. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Gouldsmith’s report of Catholic regard and hatred is an inaccurate reflection of the response of the Irish. Indeed, a similar dynamic may be witnessed in the deposition of Henry Boyne. Boyne reports how, at the outbreak of the rising, ‘hee was come home to his house hee found there an Irishwoman that was come (out of goodwill) from Donoghmore about 6 miles distant, to tell the Deponents wife that it were best for him too bee gone Least hee might bee killed, (for as the said woman related) the rebells had cutt of one Mr Madders head a Minister, & that their cheife malice was against Churchmen.31 This woman’s risky undertaking indicates a particular sense of goodwill towards the Protestant minister, as well as a keen sense of the reality of the risk that he faced.

30 Petition of the dispoyled ministers, 8 March 1642 (T.C.D. MS 840, f. 36v).
31 Deposition of Henry Boyne, 16 February 1642/3 (T.C.D. MS 839, f. 10r).
The Experiences of Ministers in 1641

For Henry Boyne’s well-wisher there was no doubt that the violence being perpetrated by the rebels was not random—‘their chiefe malice was against churchmen’.32 The ministers’ depositions make it clear that they shared this sense, and believed that their calling singled them out for special attention. Determining whether this was, in fact, the case is not straightforward. Gillespie’s warning is useful: ‘The anecdotal character of the evidence for the nature of violence in the early months of the rebellion makes it difficult to identify motivation in any meaningful quantitative way, but it is clear that a wide diversity of motives was operative.’33 None the less, the view that Protestant ministers were being singled out by the rebels was shared by many contemporaries. Henry Jones certainly subscribed to it: ‘So in chief and above all others do we finde it with the deadliest venome spit against the persons of us the Minsters of the Gospel, towards whom their rage is without bounds.’34 Similarly, in Cavan, Dr Teate warned fellow minister George Creichton that ‘the whole north was risen and that of all men the ministers were like to be in greatest danger.’35 The aftermath of the rebellion, too, seems to support this perception. ‘Petitions to the House of Lords by the Ministers of the Gospel in Ireland suggest that close on half of their members ended up in distress in the early 1640s.’36 On this basis, it seems that the ministers’ sense of victimhood and persecution was not without some basis in fact.

Whether or not the objective evidence endorses their view, the depositions given by the ministers clearly express their subjective belief that they were exposed to particular hazard. The atrocities that they record lend colour to this belief. So, for example, John Walcockson, of County Laois reports his being singled out by the rebels:

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32 Ibid.


34 Henry Jones, A Remonstrance of the Beginnings and Proceedings of the Rebellion in the County of Cavan, within the Province of Ulster in Ireland, from the 23 of October, 1641 untill the 15 of June, 1642 (London, 1642).


But on a sudden visit the xxjth of January 1641 The Rebell Barnaby Dempsey of Knockardagurr in the same County Esquire & Colonell of Rebells, and Captain Dempsey his sonn together with about 3000 of other Rebells forceibly & rebelliously came and besett the said Castle & Church and [] tooke and surprised the Church only and this deponent and the rest of the protestants there and forceibly then and from thence halled dragged and carried all the men them away prisoners along with them: & pynioned and tyed fast their armes behynd them: but haveing stript the women and children of their clothes they lett them goe, And such was the mallice of those Rebells to this deponent becawse he was a minister, that they stript him stark naked & soe he contynued about an howre in snowy frosty & windy weather & then at length they returned vnto him a poore short wascote only which they had taken from him which did hardly couer his privy parts.37

John Gouldsmith, who we have already met, believed that, but for the intercession of a friar on his behalf, the rebels would have carried out their design of cutting out his tongue. That act, though grisly enough in its own right, gains added symbolic significance as the silencing of a preacher of the Protestant gospel. Thomas Bingham was less fortunate. After he was killed, his head was taken, with those of six other English to Kilkenny where:

the Rebells then and there putt a gag & a carrot in the said Mr Binghams mowth & slitt vpp his cheeks to his eares and lay{} the leafe of a Bible before him bade him preach for his mowth was wyde enowghe open.38
And the Rebells then and there putt a gag in the mowth of the said Mr Bingham the minister & laying the leafe of a bible before him bade him preach saying his mowth was open wyde enowghe.39

Richard Bourk, minister at Enniskillen, also reported events that were laden with anti-ministerial malice:

this deponent was likewise informed that Mr Lodge the archdeacon of Killalow being buried about Eight six yeres since, His H is and divers other ministers bones were digged out of their graves as patrons of heresies

37 Deposition of John Walcockson, 8 January 1644/5 (T.C.D. MS 815, ff. 367r–367v).
38 Deposition of William Lucas, 16 August 1643 (T.C.D. MS 812, f.220r).
by direction of one Melone titulary Bishop of Killalowe: One Robt Jones minister & preacher of godes word (whom the Rebells seemed to favour and speake well of) was not admitted Christien buriall after hee was dead, by directcion of the some popish preists; Albeit some of his frendes being Rebells (in regard of the goodnes of the man) much solicited that he might haue Christian buriall: but were denyed: Because (as they said, Hereticks must not be buried in hallowed ground).

Ministers’ persons were only one element of the infrastructure of Protestantism in Ireland. Churches, whether they were commandeered Catholic buildings or new Protestant constructions, were important symbols of Protestant power, and their destruction had important symbolic value. The deposition of Francis Sacheverell highlights how they were targeted by the rebels:

And the Deponent lastlie obserued that the malice of the Irish to the English protestants did not onely satisfie it selfe in the destruction of their lives and estate{s} but did alsoe extende itselfe to the detestacion and destruction of these Churches wherein the Englishe had Celebrated the worshippe and service of god and in Testimony thereof the Irishe haue destroyed and burned downe to the ground the seuerall Churches followeing vizt the Cathedrall Church of Armagh the Church of Loughgall the Church of Tamlaregy or Ballymore the Church of Charlemon and moste parte of the Church of Monaghan.

Equally telling is the rebels’ focus on the Bible as a symbol of the Protestant faith. This view of the Scriptures is given expression to in a number of accounts of the desecration of Bibles. A large number of lay deponents report the burning or mutilation of their Bibles. At times, this becomes the catalyst for martyrdom:

fflorence fitzPatricke his wife demaunde Mris Nicholeson to bring in her bible or otherwise shee would burne the same, vpon which grose termes Mris Nicholson tould her shee had rather loose her life before her bible should be burned.
[John Nicholson’s] wife euen shewing greater resolution when they much pressed her to burne her bible but her answer was most peremtorye that before she would burne her Bible or turne against her countrie shee would die upon the poynct of the sword which they both made good uppon the saboath day in the morneing next after the 12th day last at which time they were most cruelly butchered & murthered before Masse time that morning 44

The words spoken by the rebels as these acts were carried out indicate the closeness of the identification between the Protestant faith and Scripture. So, Elizabeth Hooper reported:

But soone after this deponent among the rest) being sent downe to Passadge aforesaid she there obserued one of the rebells (whose name shee knoweth not) teareing the singeing Psalmes out of this deponents Bible or Testament & shee reproueing of him for doeing soe, one Mr Butler then presente said to this deponent I am sory (honest woman that you are soe deluded, for there is nothing in that booke but the devills Inventions45

Similarly, Edward Slack, from Fermanagh, reported a telling incident:

The said Rebells tooke this deponents byble opend it, and laying the open side in a puddle of water lept and stampt vpon it, Saying a plague ont this booke hath bred all the quarrel, saying & they hoped that within 3 weeks all the bibles in Ireland shold be vsed as that was or worse & that none should be left in the Kingdome.46

Slack had already listed his books, worth £20, as losses suffered at the hands of the rebels. It is telling that he singles out this incident for special mention.

Other instances displayed even more contempt for the Bible. John Parrie reported that, after the burning of Armagh, the Irish ‘layd the sacred bible on their privy parts of some of [the dead] in contempt of the same.47 He also reported a hearsay account that ‘one Patrick Carragh ô Cullan opening the

44 Deposition of John Glasse, 8 April 1642 (T.C.D. MS 815, 197v).
45 Deposition of Elizabeth Hooper, 1 February 1643/4 (T.C.D. MS 820, f. 50v).
46 Deposition of Edward Slacke, 4 January 1642/3 (T.C.D. MS 835, f. 170r).
47 Deposition of John Parrie, 31 May 1642 (T.C.D. MS 836, f.63 v).
sacred bible pist vpon the same, saying if I could doe worse with it I would.’48

These accounts of the desecration, defilement, and destruction of the Bible are significant. They identify the Bible as a crucial symbol of Protestant faith—something to be valued above and protected by the life of the faithful, and the target for the depredations of the heathen. The propaganda value of such accounts should not be ignored, nor should we disregard the importance normally attached to the Bible in Protestant martyrology. None the less such accounts provide us with important evidence about Bible possession and reading in Ireland and they tell us a good deal about how Irish Protestantism and the ministers who preached it were perceived during the early decades of the seventeenth century.

More broadly, the experiences reported by the ministers, in their depositions, almost univocally describe violence that was, to some extent at least, motivated by the ministers’ position, and by their identification with a foreign religion. But, as we have seen, economic motivations also featured, and had particular relevance when ministers were in view. It is impossible at this remove to disentangle the various threads of motivation—probably it would have been difficult even for the rebels to do so. But the accounts do present the ministers as an isolated and embattled caste. This sense of isolation is echoed again and again through the depositions as ministers list the names of those who have ‘turned to the mass’, who converted to Catholicism. That English Protestants thought it expedient to do so must, in itself, tell us something about the nature of the violence that erupted in 1641.

These events and—just as importantly—the ministers’ perception of these events, seem to clamour for an explanation that made meaning of these traumatic events. As we have seen, the ministerial deponents were quick to develop a narrative of religious persecution, aimed particularly at them as the symbols and standard bearers of the Protestant faith in Ireland. It is noteworthy, therefore, that, on the whole, ministers are slow to attempt to provide an overarching apocalyptic or providential reading of events. There are exceptions to this. Most notoriously, Robert Maxwell’s deposition, which later formed part of Sir John Temple’s *The Irish Rebellion* (1646), was peppered with especial actions of divine providence protecting the elect Protestants of Ireland.49 But Maxwell was the exception, rather than the rule. In general,

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48 Ibid., f. 64 r.
49 See, for a discussion of Temple’s work, T. C. Barnard, ‘Crisis of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641–1685’, *Past and Present*, 127 (1990), 50–51. For Maxwell’s deposition see John Temple, *The Irish Rebellion: or, An History of the Beginnings and First*
providentialist or apocalyptic explanations were offered in publications about 1641, rather than in the depositions themselves. Daniel Harcourt’s pamphlet, *The Clergies Lamentation* (1643), and John Puttock’s *Good and True News from Ireland* (1642) provide examples of this sort of reinterpretation of history going on outside of and parallel to the depositions. For the most part, though, deponents tended to limit themselves to expressions of thankfulness for divine deliverance from threatened danger.

We began this article by noting that the social position of the ordained minister had often, and for a number of reasons, been problematic. These reasons were relevant to the Protestant ministers in Ireland during the early decades of the seventeenth century. The context of plantation exacerbated and added to the complexities of the minister’s social status. But the depositions capture for us a moment of unparalleled confusion during which ministers became martyrs, when their relationship to a social order that was being turned upside-down pushed them to the forefront of events. There is much that the depositions do not tell us, but they do provide a unique insight into the experience of these men before and during the catastrophes of 1641.

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The Conundrum of Marginality: *Mercurius Politicus*,
Order and the Politics of Glencairn’s Rising

Kirsteen M MacKenzie

Recently there has been an increased interest in print culture and how the Cromwellian regime used propaganda to justify its own position, actions and existence in the face of immense hostility after the execution of Charles I. These studies have led to a better understanding of how the English Republic understood itself. Historians now have a clearer picture of the English Republic, its image and how it promoted its values through the printing presses in London and Edinburgh and how it distanced itself from the Stuart monarchy. The republic created its own political culture by forming new civic institutions, ceremonial events, imagery, and the political organisation of government.¹ In particular, there has been an interest in how the regime used propaganda to justify the conquest of Scotland: either as an evangelical promotion of liberty of conscience to liberate the country from the Presbyterian kirk or as a form of republican imperial expansion inspired by classical writers.² Indeed, many of these analyses are overtly dominated by the dissemination and control of propaganda surrounding the immediate conquest of Scotland by Oliver Cromwell in 1650 or the Protester and Resolutioner controversy within the Scottish kirk.³ There have also been significant developments explaining how news books and pamphlets were written and controlled by the government during the 1650s. Jason Peacey has uncovered the growing complex and

comprehensive system of press regulation and censorship which originated in the early 1640s under the Long Parliament, reaching its peak under the ever watchful eye of John Thurloe, Cromwell’s Secretary of State for most of the 1650s.4

During the 1650s intelligence gathering and the responsibility for the suppression of disreputable pamphlets had shifted from the local courts to the office of Thomas Scot, Thurloe’s predecessor as head of intelligence. Plans were made for a reform of press control in 1653 and it was Thurloe who was appointed to oversee the reforms. After the establishment of the Protectorate, press control was enacted with more aggression. Indeed, many of the ordinances passed to control press regulation by parliaments and the Protector began to restrict the success of new titles, leading to the ‘effective monopoly’ of Mercurius Politicus, ‘the most important single newspaper of the 1650s’.5 Why were the governments of the 1650s increasingly keen to tighten their grip upon the news books?

Barry Coward has stated that the English regime had a collective feeling of victimisation and defensiveness due to the hostility towards its existence from all sides, both at home and abroad, in effect a ‘siege mentality’.6 English policies were therefore equally driven by the insecurities and fears of the English regime, not just the fortunes of providence and godly zeal.7 Some of the reasons for this insecurity lay in the conquest of Scotland, a nation subjected to military occupation for the whole decade and, despite Scotland’s own internal divisions, the English regime became extremely unpopular amongst significant sections of Scotland’s elite. This was something the English government was painfully aware of and in 1655 it established a council to give government a more civilian character and presence in the wake of Glencairn’s Rising—a Royalist rebellion which took place in the Highlands between January 1653 and September 1655.8

Arguably, Scotland was caught between two ‘orders’ during Glencairn’s rising, on one hand an English military occupation seemingly determined to strip Scotland of her identity through incorporation, riding high on its own providential destiny and benevolence and, on the other, side, a committed but divided and at times fearsome force of marauding Highlanders determined to

5 Ibid., 179–180, 185–186.
7 Frances Dow, Cromwellian Scotland (Edinburgh, 1979), 14–34.
8 Ibid., 162–168.
restore the Stuarts to the throne.\footnote{David Stevenson ‘Cromwell, Scotland and Ireland’ in John Morrill (ed.), Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution (London, 1990), 165.} Indeed, the rising was a serious challenge to the regime in Scotland, directly challenging the legitimacy of English rule, not just by guerrilla warfare in the Highlands but effectively setting up rival chains of military command, tax collection and organisation, in direct competition with the English military apparatus in Scotland. Throughout the rebellion the Scottish people were torn between the two sources of authority, a government based in London and Dalkeith with a distinctly ‘English’ hue and ‘unnatural’ policies and the Highlanders whose authority was rooted in the old order but with the main protagonist, Charles II, being exiled in France.\footnote{Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, 74–160; Coward, The Cromwellian Protectorate, 139–158.}

The source of the English regime’s discomfort and insecurity is brought into sharper focus if we consider the wider ramifications of the rising across all three kingdoms. Indeed, the English government had to face a fractured but fully operational alliance of foes across all three kingdoms from 1649. The regime’s foes may have been defeated but they had not completely disappeared. During the rising, the English government, gathering intelligence, were fearful of an outbreak of violence and rebellion in the north of Ireland. The Protestant Royalist gentry and the Ulster-Scots were put under surveillance. Glencairn’s rising contributed to the plans for the transplantation of the Ulster-Scots, the English government hoping that with their removal to the south of Ireland it would create a ‘break’ in Royalist communications with Scotland. In addition, the government was eager, after the establishment of the Protectorate, to include English Presbyterians as valued members of the church system in England, perhaps to offset another three kingdoms accommodation.\footnote{David Menarry, ‘Rebellion, Transplantation and Composition: The Ulster Scots Landed Elite and the Commonwealth’ in William P. Kelly and John R. Young (eds), Scotland and the Ulster Plantations: Explorations in the British Settlement of Stuart Ireland (Dublin, 2009), 137–159; Ann Hughes ‘The Public Profession of these Nations: The National Church in Interregnum England’ in Christopher Durston and Judith Maltby (eds), Religion in Revolutionary England (Manchester, 2006), 100–101.}

It is no surprise then that the 1650s saw an increased tightening of press censorship and regulation, with a regime determined to ‘inform’ and shape the opinions of its citizens about life at home and abroad on a weekly basis with newspapers such as the dominant Mercurius Politicus whose job it was to admittedly ‘quell, rather than foster public debate’.\footnote{Jason Peacey ‘Print and Public Politics in Seventeenth Century England’, History Compass 5 (2007), 99.} As Jason Peacey has commented: ‘The production of newspapers involved a range of tactical...
decisions and political acts, from the selection of stories for publication
to the overall editorial direction, and such decisions were susceptible to
influence by sources outside the editorial office.\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Mercurius Politicus} was
very much subject to ‘outside’ influence where ‘producing newspapers was
integrated with intelligence gathering’.\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, both Thomas Scot and John
Thurloe freely admitted that the intelligeners filled the papers with news.
However, as Jason Peacey acknowledges, it is difficult to know at which
point the editing took place—either before the intelligeners handed over
the material or when it was dealt with by the editor himself, Marchamont
Nedham. It is clear, however, that the independence of Nedham’s opinions
is questionable considering he had financial security from the government
due to his role as newspaper editor. The government could remove official
editors at a whim. Testimony to this is Nedham’s removal when the Rump
was restored in 1659 because of his association with the Protectorate.\textsuperscript{15} For
our purposes we know that intelligence gathering and the news regarding
Scotland in \textit{Mercurius Politicus} were very closely linked, Thurloe worked
closely with agents in Scotland, including George Monck and Henry Whalley,
to obtain information and as Peacey comments Thurloe was Marchamont
Nedham’s ‘best and most reliable informant’.\textsuperscript{16}

To what extent and in which method was the intelligence coming out
of Scotland regarding the rising manipulated and used by the government
and editor alike? What does this tell us about the English regime itself?
Anthropologist Victor Turner commented that in prolonged periods of
liminality, that is to say ‘in between situations and conditions which are
characterised by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of
hierarchies and uncertainty regarding future and traditional outcomes’,
that self proclaimed ‘ceremony masters’ emerge and assume leadership
positions in an attempt to ‘Perpetuate liminality and by emptying the liminal
moment of real creativity, turn it into a scene of mimetic rivalry’.\textsuperscript{17} These

\textsuperscript{13} Jason Peacey, ‘The Management of Civil War Newspapers: Auteurs, Entrepreneurs and
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 108, 109, 115–116.
\textsuperscript{16} Peacey ‘A Propaganda State, 181, 196.
\textsuperscript{17} A. Hovarth, B. Thomassen and H. Wydra ‘Introduction: Liminality and the Cultures of
Change’, \textit{International Political Anthropology}, 2 (2009), 16; A. Hovarth and B. Thomassen,
‘Mimetic Errors in Liminal Schismogenesis: On the Political Anthropology of the
and Experience: Structuring Transitory Situations and Transformative Events’
people have been labelled as ‘tricksters’ by anthropologists. A trickster is ‘an obscure … shadowy figure’. These are always ‘marginal characters: outsiders they cannot trust or be trusted … they are repulsive’. In a liminal state the trickster is very dangerous because ‘a trickster can capture the occasion and institute a lasting reversal of roles and values … Where certainties are lost, the imitative behaviour escalates, and tricksters can often be mistaken for charismatic leaders’. Highlanders for centuries had been considered as marginal figures living on the edge of civilisation. Indeed, some of the most critical comments came from their fellow Scots and were found in the English press during the 1650s. Was the charismatic leader Glencairn ‘tricking’ the Scots into the old ways again? Glencairn’s men provide an interesting case study in this particular anthropological context. What is even more interesting is the position of the English regime itself, arguably a regime on the ‘margins’ of Europe due to its political situation. This paper will explore statements made about the Highlanders in Mercurius Politicus and will analyse the use (and abuse) of intelligence received and ask how this reflects upon the position of the regime and in doing so it will unravel a conundrum of marginality and ask who indeed was the ‘trickster’—the Highlanders or the English Republic itself?

Sources of Intelligence: Letters from Scotland to the Printing Press

Before we examine the image of the Highlander in Mercurius Politicus we first have to determine and introduce the cast of characters and sources involved in the collation of intelligence, their strengths and weaknesses and by doing so will reveal the complicated nature of the processes involved in turning intelligence into printed news. It is important to remember that each ‘author’ or ‘editor’ in this process had their own agendas and their own natural ‘selective’ idea of what may have been important information to report. In effect it is likely that at each stage of the process the facts were likely to be embellished or distorted; either naturally or deliberately. As Jason Peacey has argued it is very difficult for historians to get the ‘truth’ from the newspapers. The truth

19 Ibid., 155.
in any historical source is very much subjective. Despite this, it is possible to comment on the processes involved and explore where bias may occur.

Indeed, producing news in seventeenth-century Britain, particularly for the news books, was very much a process. Much of the information contained in Mercurius Politicus about the rising is to be found in a small group of sources, each with their own problems for the historian. The first source to explore is the Clarke Papers, the papers of William Clarke, Secretary to the English Army in Scotland. The original manuscripts can be found in Worcester College, Oxford. However, the bulk of these papers have been transcribed by Charles Firth and, most recently, by Frances Henderson. For the period of the rising (1653) it important to note that the shorthand volume edited by Frances Henderson mainly confines itself to correspondence to William Clarke from London, informing him of events there. However, there is the odd letter and memorandum which discusses the rising, mainly with Colonel Robert Lillburne and General George Monck. Clarke also sent letters detailing intelligence to John Thurloe on the activities of the Royalists in Scotland and Thurloe informed Clarke of intelligence which he had received from Europe about the rising. It was a two-way process.

The bulk of Clarke’s manuscripts are to be found in Firth’s two edited editions, Scotland and the Commonwealth and Scotland and the Protectorate, which detail intelligence sent between Edinburgh and London. In addition, Firth’s volumes contain papers depicting the Royalist activities through the papers of Edward Hyde, the earl of Clarendon. These will, at times, act as a counter weight to assess distortion, withholding, or absence of knowledge about events by English intelligence or the London press. However, it must be borne in mind that these papers may reflect the personal prejudices of Clarendon, chief adviser to the king who disapproved of Charles II accepting overtures from the Scottish Covenanters in 1650. Clarendon believed English Royalism offered the king’s only hope of success. The papers of John Thurloe also

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22 C. H. Firth, Scotland and the Commonwealth (Edinburgh, 1895), lli. The bulk of William Clarke’s papers compose this volume and also its sister volume. C. H. Firth, Scotland and the Protectorate (Edinburgh, 1899) William Clarke’s shorthand notes were transcribed by Frances Henderson in the 1980s and 1990s, Frances Henderson, The Clarke Papers V: Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke (Cambridge, 2005), 10–12.


24 Firth, Scotland and the Commonwealth, liv–lv.

provide a useful benchmark from which to compare intelligence and printed news on Scotland.

The correspondence is broadly of two types. First, letters from Cromwellian soldiers serving in Scotland and in other impacted territories such as Ulster reporting on the state of affairs in those countries, in particular, informing Thurloe of the disposition of the regime’s enemies. The other kind of information is intercepted letters from Scottish Royalists and foreign correspondents from countries sympathetic to the Stuart cause. Additionally, if there was a sizeable exiled Royalist community in other countries such as France, Thurloe would often intercept the private correspondence of resident diplomats. He also received letters from England’s diplomats resident in European countries who reported back on any Royalist plans or intrigue. However, caution must be exercised since some of the intelligence was inaccurate. For example, a cavalier named Edward Wogan managed to travel from England into Scotland recruiting men along the way to join Glencairn. As Philip Aubrey states ‘faulty intelligence led to Thurloe’s failure to intercept this little band’.

English governmental knowledge of events can also be gleaned from the State Papers of the Commonwealth and Protectorate which give a detailed account of the Council of State’s proceedings and the letters and correspondence which came to its notice. This is of particular interest when considering the wider picture. The Calendar of State Papers allows us to see the weight of the workload and the priorities of the government in London during the period of the rising which may explain why certain information was withheld and certain information went to print. To what extent was the intelligence passed on to wider audiences; was it kept between private individuals or disseminated further to the Council of State, or to the public at large through Mercurius Politicus? It has to be understood that we are not dealing with just one conduit of information but many different sources which may not have made it into print. Each case will reflect the complicated nature of the news in seventeenth-century Britain. Often the withholding of information from the newspapers could be an equally important tool in

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27 Philip Aubrey, Mr Secretary Thurloe: Cromwell’s Secretary of State 1652–1660 (London, 1990), 71.
creating a favourable case for the English regime, just as much as an unattractive portrayal and caricature of its enemies.

The role and skill of the newspaper editor in writing propaganda is also worthy of consideration. At the helm of *Mercurius Politicus* was Marchamont Nedham, the most important editor and journalist of the 1650s. His ability to change sides and stay in favour with successive governments is well known and his pamphlets and newspapers were produced as quickly in line with the changing nature of the times. Blair Worden argues ‘the allegiances he [Nedham] projects can be less straightforward’.²⁹ In other words, Nedham was never consistent in his approach towards the subjects of his sharp tongue and witty comment. He was no uneducated hack but a man of learning, actively interested in politics and classics. The case for republicanism in his editorial was often well-structured, well-argued and compact, making a strong case in favour of the English Republic. Milton oversaw Nedham’s editing as licensor of the paper but as Worden states ‘that experience of collaboration has left no record’.³⁰ Both men promoted the regime’s own strengths and successes and attacked the government’s enemies at both home and overseas.

However Nedham’s approaches to English regime itself were never consistent—overtly praising the regime then indirectly attacking some of its actions. Known writers for *Mercurius Politicus* included Samuel Hartlib, Samuel Morland and Walter Frost and therefore it was not the sole preserve of Nedham, Milton and Thurloe.³¹ Joad Raymond comments:

Any editorial technique might be said to represent a polemical strategy, an act of distortion: at one end of the spectrum, selection, arrangement, inclusion, and omission, abridgements, translation; at the other interjected commentary and even fabrication. In general the organisation of *Politicus* is haphazard, suggesting that the material was


³⁰ Ibid., 60.

minimally edited. There is evidence, however of Nedham’s deliberate shaping of the news.\textsuperscript{32}

Luckily for a changing regime with a siege mentality beset by the ghost of the old order, Nedham believed ‘that men’s public behaviour is governed by their competing interests’ and he was suspicious of anyone who declared unswerving loyalty to ideas, persons and institutions.\textsuperscript{33} However, he was not backwards in coming forwards when attacking and satirising Scots in the early editions of \textit{Mercurius Politicus} and his treatise justifying the Republic’s existence \textit{The Case of the Common-Wealth of England Stated: or, the Equity, Utility and Necessity of a Submission to the Present Government}. (1650).

For some context and background to the propaganda on Glencairn’s rising we will take a brief look at these. Unfortunately, previous to Glencairn’s rising Nedham makes very little reference to Highlanders, although he does make reference to Royalists and Scots. In \textit{The Case of the Commonwealth} Nedham portrays Royalists as impoverished and desperate people, intent on self-destruction by following the king’s lacklustre plans in defiance of England’s providentially blessed government. While in \textit{The Case of the Commonwealth Stated} he confines his analysis to the Covenanting Scots, in \textit{Mercurius Politicus} Nedham again makes references to Scottish Royalists portraying them as an obstacle in way of unity between the godly Scots and the English. Another brief point to keep in mind is that most of the reports came from the Lowlands, at the time of the main theatre of war in the early 1650s. For Nedham, Scottish presbyters were ample subjects of ridicule and mockery with the kirk labelled as ‘the great whore of Scotland’. It was on this firm basis that Nedham continued to develop ways to attack and mock both Royalists and Scots during the mid 1650s creating unattractive traits upon which to contrast the godly order of the English regime.\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{Introducing the Trickster: Nedham and the Highlanders}

At the beginning of March 1653 \textit{Mercurius Politicus} announced ‘We were of late sufficiently threatened by an In-fall of the enemy … those wilde People of

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 10.

\textsuperscript{33} Worden, \textit{Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England}, 16.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{The Case of the Commonwealth Stated}, 41 – 43, 56 – 69; See for example, \textit{Mercurius Politicus} 1 May – 7 May 1651, 767; \textit{Mercurius Politicus} 8 May – 15 May 1651, 783 – 784; \textit{Mercurius Politicus} 15 May – 22 May 1651, 814; Greenspan, \textit{Selling Cromwell’s Wars}, 44.
the Highlands are dispersed to their severall habitations, after 2,000 of them had met together, with intent to attempt mischief upon us’. Nedham here introduces the ‘trickster’, the threat to the established order under the auspices of Glencairn’s rising: the wild Highlander. There are a few things to note about this brief passage. Notice how Nedham mentions the threat in the past tense, after it has been neutralised. It is also clear that Nedham is using his skills of caricature and portrayal to create propaganda in favour of the Republic. In using the term ‘wilde’ he follows a long line of propagandists before him who had portrayed Highlanders as uncivilised and unruly. As Éamonn Ó Ciardha has stated Glencairn’s men ‘provided a demonstration of the links between perceived ‘lawlessness’ and ‘dissent’. The Highlanders were the troublesome outlaws of the English Republic, living outside of established political and legal structures. We are given little knowledge about them except that they are anarchic bands of persons’ intent on destroying the established providential order. There are no details about specific persons involved nor what was said at the meeting and the motives behind their ‘mischief’. Nedham’s primary motive was to create a near-comic representation of the threat, avoiding any serious discussion of the details.

Mercurius Politicus continues with its commentary on the rebellion. It states the regime’s then enemies, the Dutch, are assisting these Highlanders with arms and ammunition, therefore claiming that the rebellion is a subplot within the Anglo-Dutch conflict. This comment infers a few points. It was an indirect jibe at the Dutch themselves suggesting that they had lowered their standards by consorting with such people. The Highlanders would have shown themselves if it was not for the defeat of the Dutch at sea. As such, Glencairn and his men are portrayed as cowards whose designs and actions were connected to the ailing fortunes of the Dutch. In doing so Mercurius Politicus managed to avoid any discussion on the Royalist nature of these disturbances. Its main objective was to allay fears of sporadic rebellion in Scotland and disguise the rebellion’s actual objectives from the public by attaching it to the Anglo-Dutch War. In doing so it channelled anti-Dutch sentiment and antagonism in England towards the Highlanders. In addition, these comments should also be read within the context of Andrew Marvell’s Character of Holland which was published to celebrate a Dutch defeat in February 1653. This is of particular importance because as Worden states

35 Mercurius Politicus, 3 March – 10 March 1653, 2277.
‘The Character of Holland [is] the satirical mode that characterized Nedham’s treatment of foreign enemies of the English Republic’. In this satire there is a comment referring to the ‘feign’d Treaties they invade by stealth our sore new circumcised Common-wealth’. It is clear that comments in *Mercurius Politicus* about the Highlanders fitted in well with anti-Dutch propaganda.

After a quiet spell during April, May, June and July 1653 the rising began to get off the ground. During this time meetings took place between clan chiefs and the Royalist army began to show some organisation with a military strategy and an acting commander-in-chief, William Cunningham, 9th earl of Glencairn, who was appointed until Lieutenant General John Middleton arrived in Scotland. Instead of a direct attack on the English army they decided to embark on guerrilla warfare tactics in the hope that Middleton would arrive to assume overall command and that assistance would arrive from abroad. In the meantime they concentrated their efforts on extracting money and supplies from friend and foe. Frances Dow comments:

> The rising was varied and complex. As a result the exact nature of Royalist activities and the strength of their forces were not always clear to observers. This introduced an element of uncertainty into the English army’s calculations on how to best counter the rebellion: what was done where and by whom was not always readily apparent—at least not until after it happened. Yet despite these difficulties the army had a remarkably efficient intelligence system working throughout Scotland and succeeded in reaping much information on the Royalists movements and intentions.

The English regime may not have been capable of knowing everything about the rising but just how much of its own intelligence was used to inform the public through *Mercurius Politicus*? Even in the quiet month of April, Nedham was engendering a climate of fear amongst his readers, declaring that the

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English army was being watched by its enemies who were ‘casting an eye upon the Highlands … watch and listen after all occasions and opportunities that may encourage them to act against us’. The trickster was still at work to encourage the Scottish nation to attack the English forces. Here is a hint of the paranoia and siege mentality that the English army was beset by, thinking the Highlanders would do mischief towards them. At the same time intelligence reports had been circulating between the English government in Ulster, Edinburgh and London suggesting a co-ordinated rising was being planned in Ulster and Scotland. It is clear that the government did not want to make this information public for fear of trouble. As David Menarry states, it was as if ‘they had been caught napping’ and Venables and the Ulster Commissioners from mid-March onwards had been acting quickly to contain the Royalist threat.

During these months, despite the increasing activity, there are no significant reports about the rising in Mercurius Politicus. Instead the news book is fixated on constitutional changes in London. The only news from Scotland throughout May worthy of note is a declaration of the army professing loyalty to Cromwell after the dissolution of the Rump parliament. In this particular case, it may not have just been down to the reluctance to print sensitive information but a more practical problem—the editor of Mercurius Politicus possibly had nothing to work with. At the same time he had few reports sent to London discussing the rising. In mid-April he reported that the Highlands were peaceful but also excused himself for his silence stating ‘there is nothing worthy of your view’. The concerns expressed in Mercurius Politicus at this time are reflected in Lillburne’s correspondence; worries about the dissolution of parliament, potential constitutional instability and the resultant threat of a breakdown in army pay and supplies. This had pushed any concern about a Royalist rising to the back of his mind and most probably those of his compatriots in London.

By the beginning of June the Royalists had been very active but Mercurius Politicus stated ‘We have nothing this week from Scotland’. The news agenda
was therefore not merely shaped by the actions of the protagonists but by the events surrounding those in government. Indeed, this also highlights how dependent *Mercurius Politicus* was upon the army in Scotland for its news.

By mid-June there are definite signs of a careful selection, omission and inclusion of information released to the reading public. Nedham reports the defeat of the Highlanders by the English and how this ‘hath much disturbed the Grandees in the Highlands’. The trickster was playing games: ‘These wilde creatures are up and down with every vain Blast of News, and had now great hopes of foraign parts, having newly received a commission fro Charls Stuart, directed to Glencarine, Glengary, Seafort and others of that Gang, upon which they intended to act and raise what power they could’. It is worth noting that these comments are made in the same issue as the publication of plans to transplant Ulster Scots.\(^4^6\) Thus, to the reading public the English army is seen to have the rising under control, but was this truly the case?

It is clear that the intelligence for publication had been very carefully selected. There is no reproduction of the intelligence reports that Seaforth’s men successfully captured English soldiers, nor any intelligence on the meetings of the Highland chiefs which took place throughout June, nor do we hear of the leading members of the Irish and Scottish landed elites declaring their loyalty to Charles II such as Sir Arthur Forbes and Alexander Lindsay, 1\(^{st}\) Lord Balcarres. We know these men wrote to Lillburne directly declaring their loyalty to Charles II, so at some level the English authorities knew what was taking place. In addition, significant details of the Highlanders’ movements were relayed to Cromwell himself but it appears that this information did not go far except to Ulster where William Clarke informed Venables of the current situation in Scotland.\(^4^7\)

In the edition dated 21 to 28 July the Highlanders were on the front page of *Mercurius Politicus*. The target of Nedham’s wit was the earl of Seaforth: ‘You have formely heard what a ranting declaration was set forth by Seafort, who plays Rex in Lewis-Island; but I suppose his reign but short, care being taken to root him out.’\(^4^8\) How dare the trickster declare himself king amongst his own dominions whilst he is under the rule of a providentially blessed

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\(^4^6\) *Mercurius Politicus*, 16 June to June 23 1653, 2517.


\(^4^8\) *Mercurius Politicus*, 21 July to 28 July 1653, 2597.
republican government! By informing the public of the alleged reasoning behind Cromwell’s soldiers’ invasion and occupation of Lewis it shows that even the last bastion of monarchy, albeit the little kingdom of one man, has to be crushed. Even in furthest reaches of Scotland the English Republic shall prevail over the old order. It was also an opportunity for the English Republic to display its strength against the Dutch, especially ‘to hinder Dutch fishing’ in addition to securing the regime’s ‘own rights there’. Notice how there is no discussion of contents and details of the declaration. Again Mercurius Politicus was avoiding discussion of the Royalist nature of the rebellion.

The use of the word ‘ranting’ can be interpreted in two different ways. The first is a general meaning that the declaration does not make any sense, that it is somehow haphazard and ‘crazy’ in its arguments, devoid of reason. This contrasts with Nedham’s very ordered, succinct editorials on republicanism. The second way is through reference to the Ranter. The Ranter was a very loose group of people, real or imagined, who as Andrew Bradstock states ‘became an “image” upon which to project... fears of social and religious deviance’. Contemporaries in London would have been familiar with the image of the Ranter though the pamphlets issued by the printing presses, with swearing, fornication and excessive drinking known to be some of their most common traits. By using the word ‘ranting’ Nedham was trying to connect the image of the ‘wild Highlander’ with that of the Ranter in his readers’ minds—both outsiders intent on causing trouble for the established order.

Front Pages and Back Pages

It was not until the middle of August 1653 that Mercurius Politicus officially announced a Royalist rising; a full eight months after the first stirrings of revolt. It was reported that the standard of Charles II was raised in Killin and

49 Ibid., 2598; W. C. MacKenzie, A History of the Outer Hebrides (London, 1910), 342–346. Lord Balcarres proposed to cede the Lewis and its fisheries to the Dutch in order to take advantage that the Anglo-Dutch conflict could be used to agitate the English Republic. Seaforth seized an English ship off the coast of Lewis and pressured the crew to change allegiance to the king, as MacKenzie states ‘marked the beginning of Seaforth’s undoing’.


51 Ibid., 78.
Royalists were gathered in the south ready to strike at English forces but the news book was careful to assure readers, ‘All possible care is used to receive him [Middleton] if he comes into these parts’ [Broughty Ferry and Tayside]. The Highlanders were planning attacks on Inverness and Angus and the Mearns. Pushed to the back page is a significant piece of intelligence which states that ‘The Highlanders are now certainly in a body, to the number of 4,000. Glencarne is their Generall’. The conformation that the English were facing a full scale revolt was stuck at the back pages of the newspaper. There is no mention of the successful tax collection by the Royalists which had made Lillburne so anxious.\footnote{Mercurius Politicus, 18 August to 25 August 1653 No 167, 2671 – 2673, 2660; Dow, Cromwellian Scotland, 83.}

Contrary to previous suggestions by historians, this suggests the editor was very conscious indeed of where to place information within the news book. In this case the assurances that the English Republic was defending the regime were put to the front pages whereas the reality that the regime was facing a full-scale revolt was stuck to the back pages, amongst many other sections of news, almost tucked away. The information was there but clearly the regime was not proud of the situation.

The following week a suspected planned attack by the Highlanders is reported on the English garrison near Ruthven Castle. However, according to Mercurius Politicus, the Highlanders decided not to attack due to the Dutch being defeated at sea. It is clear that the English press still connected the movements of the Highlanders to the course of the Dutch war with the Dutch having suffered a major defeat by the English at the end of July. It omitted to report rumours in intelligence received by Lillburne that men had come from Ireland and were travelling through Scotland to join the cause.\footnote{Mercurius Politicus, 25 August to 31 August 1653, No 168, 2687 – 2702; Firth, Scotland and the Commonwealth, 190 – 193; Gardiner, History of Commonwealth and Protectorate, 46; Ó Ciardha, ‘Tories and Moss-Troopers’, 151. Indeed in November 1654 this was to become reality when 500 Irish landed on the Isle of Skye to join Middleton.}

This explains why in the mind of the news books editor and after the major Dutch defeat he thought: ‘The Highland designings are now at an end’. This we now know was an erroneous assumption to make, although one made by Robert Lillburne himself in dispatches.\footnote{Mercurius Politicus, 1 September to 8 September 1653, 2703 – 2704; Firth, Scotland and the Commonwealth, 195 – 196.}

However the fallacy of this connection to the Anglo-Dutch War is proved by mid-September when Mercurius Politicus states that ‘small attempts’ had been made against the Stirling garrison but they were repelled. Although the
Highlanders are on the whole quiet they are ‘desparadoes’ who are working for their own private ends rather than the public good. By working for their own private ends we can safely assume they are no longer connected with the Dutch interest. The criticism is now crouched in terms of ‘private ends’ and ‘public good’. These are terms which the readers of Mercurus Politicus would be familiar with, used since the previous century to describe the ‘glue’ which held the body politic together to prevent descent into anarchy and chaos. The common good or the commonweal was in fact ‘a touchstone’ of English Republicanism. Indeed the urban and corporate roots of the Commonweal can be contrasted with the Wild Highlander perceived to be living outside the law and society, in the wide open spaces amongst the Scottish mountains. By 22 September it was claimed:

The Highlanders are indifferent quiet onely since they and others of this Nation cannot subdue that power of the English that is amongst them they destroy as many particular persons they can take advantage of, there has been lately severall cruel murders commited.

The trickster was up to his old habits of disturbing the peace and social order by committing unlawful acts of murder frustrated at his powerlessness in the face of the English military. Again the Highlanders are seen to be beyond society, eschewing all social norms and accepted moral behaviour.

At the beginning of October, according to Mercurius Politicus, the Highlanders had gone quiet. Nedham stated that:

Many persons of desparate lives and fortunes running into them and for their better provision steal horses throughout the Country. It is certain they intend much trouble and make all preparations possible for that purpose and in my opinion if not timely checked, the disaffections of many in the Lowlands will engage themselves in the same design, and carry them onto a desperate course.

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55 Mercurius Politicus, 15 September to 22 September 1653, 2735; Firth, Scotland and the Commonwealth, 220–222.
57 Mercurius Politicus, 22 September to 29 September 1653, 2731.
58 Mercurius Politicus, 29 September to 6 October 1653, 2767.
59 Mercurius Politicus, 13 October to 20 October 1653, 2798.
This is an indirect criticism of the regime and perhaps even of Lillburne himself. It was a warning that the situation was not under control. The trickster had begun to convince everyone that his behaviour was normal, socially acceptable and right, but as dispatch to the journal on October 16 stated ‘These troubles we may well expect to look for from a brute and savage people, who in the most peaceable times were seldom free from the like Turbulences’. Again Nedham, like generations before him, is playing up the violent nature of clanship and in doing so deploys age old stereotypes and caricatures of the Highlander. He also avoids a serious discussion of events. We do not read any specific details of known intelligence that the Royalists planned to attack various places including Stirling, Glasgow and Cardross. In addition, it is not publicised that the Highlanders’ meeting at Loch Lomond was so significant that Lillburne contacted Patrick Gillespie, Principal of Glasgow University, to prepare the city for a possible Royalist invasion. Clearly the situation was a lot more serious than had been reported in *Mercurius Politicus*.\footnote{*Mercurius Politicus*, 20 October to 27 October 1653, 2812; Firth, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, 240–242.}

In November the Highlanders still continued to ‘make a noise, but can yet affect no great matter’ and the ‘Highland Tories’ were full of ‘boldness’. The earl of Seaforth was encouraging people to bear arms and commit violence in the name of their king. Nedham adds ‘as they call him’ to infer that Charles II is not a legitimate monarch, in the eyes of the Republic at least. It continues: ‘They talk of gathering to a head, and this they have many times this year attempted, and then they let fall their design again. They are up and down in a very short revolution.’\footnote{*Mercurius Politicus*, 24 November to 2 December 1653, 2891–2892.} It is stated that Highlanders are getting nowhere, going round in circles, however, the reality was somewhat different for as Lillburne informed Cromwell, the security situation was not good for the English government. Lillburne was concerned that he had too few troops in the areas needed to prevent an outbreak of violence.\footnote{Firth, *Scotland and the Commonwealth*, 264–266.}

There was a substantial increase in the size of the insurrection at this stage and this situation only worsened throughout November.\footnote{Ibid., 265, 271, 275–276.} It was only at the beginning of December that the English Republic finally admitted its own weakness and realised that it was in for a long, hard struggle but defeating the Highlanders was not impossible. ‘The Enemy hath of late gathered like a snowball in the Highlands, and like a snowball may melt again the next rainy
day’. It was certainly a situation which was portrayed as an easy win for the English regime.64 Towards the end of December it was reported that English commissioners up and down the land were putting the country into a good posture of defence against this 'rude rabble'.65 However, there was a real cause for alarm when it was reported that Kenmore was planning to reach the borders and invade England, but again this was not the full story. There was no mention of the intelligence which suggested that bands of Irishmen were near the border too which, arguably, would have alarmed the reading public greatly, perhaps causing panic, with people recalling the propaganda and images from the 1641 rebellion.66

The Trickster shows his True Colours

From the beginning of 1654 to Lillburne’s handing over of the Scottish command in late April that year, *Mercurius Politicus* continued to show the Highland character in a bad light. In January the paper concentrated on violence meted out to English soldiers by followers of Huntly near Braemar. Furthermore, it highlighted Kenmore capturing a messenger and proceeding to set his feet alight ‘in a most barbarous and cruell manner’. Subsequent issues were full of stories regarding Glencairn’s cruelty, not just towards the English but also to the Scots, for example, the burning of Brodie of Lethen’s house.67 The regime also continued to put significant news on the back pages such as Middleton’s departure from the continent to Scotland and the English military’s struggle to cross the Spey. English successes were applauded and the main instigators of the rising were painted as cowards, for example, when the English army marched towards Lord Atholl’s house near Dunkeld, Sir Arthur Forbes and Lord Atholl fled and left the castle in the hands of a small

64 *Mercurius Politicus*, 2 December to 9 December 1653, 3008.
65 *Mercurius Politicus*, 16 December to 22 December 1653, 3042–3046.
67 *Mercurius Politicus*, 19 January to 26 January 1654, 3023; *Mercurius Politicus*, 29 December to 5 January 1654, 3155.
garrison. It was reported that the English took the house very easily without the loss of one man. There is certainly no mention of the slowness of the dispatch and organisation of English forces to tackle the rising. Neither was there any mention of Lillburne’s dispatches to Thurloe where he indicated that there was ‘an aptnesse in the people to rise’ nor the number of Royalist forces involved. 68

By early March 1654 in *Mercurius Politicus* there is the appearance of editorial double standards. It boasted that the English army captured and hung intelligence gatherers, however Kenmore was criticised for burning a messenger’s feet. These double standards are continued when a massacre of Seaforth’s men at Lewis is reported. This is confined to the back pages of the weekly and in reduced sized font compared to the other items on the page. It was not acceptable for Glencairn and his followers to kill English solders but it was acceptable for the English army garrison to massacre Seaforth’s Royalist clansmen of Lewis. These double standards have been seen in other conflicts, most notably Ireland. 69 During the final month of Lillburne’s command in April it was reported: ‘Notwithstanding the hand of God is so eminently seen in destroying these rude people, and that they are no sooner gathered together, but they are scattered, yet they are still breaking forth in the Lowlands’. 70 The fact that the Scots and English were deserting to join the rising was kept to the back pages. The news book seemed to


69 *Mercurius Politicus*, 2 March to 9 March 1654, 3321–3322; *Mercurius Politicus*, 16 March to 23 March 1654, 3343; *Mercurius Politicus*, 23 March to 30 March 1654, 3359, 3374; Firth, *Scotland and the Protectorate*, 58–59, 80; Thurloe State Papers, II, 3–4. The details of the Kenmore episode are to be found in a letter from Capt John Jill to Colonel Robert Lillburne dated 2 January 1653 [1654]; Thurloe State Papers, II, 183. William Clarke reports ‘The garrison of Lewis have made slaughter of the country people that joined with Seaford’. MacKenzie, *History of the Outer Hebrides*, 360. This is a report about the massacre of Seaforth and his men on the isle of Lewis by the English garrison, after Seaforth’s failed attempt to get the island back; Micheál Ó Siochru, *God’s Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (London, 2008); James Scott Wheeler, *Cromwell in Ireland* (Dublin, 1999), 83–88; John Morrill ‘The Drogheda Massacre in the Cromwellian Context’ in Edwards et al (eds), *Age of Atrocity*, 250–265. This is particularly the case regarding Cromwell’s apparently contradictory attitude towards the massacre of Protestants in 1641 and his effusion of blood at Drogheda in 1649.

70 *Mercurius Politicus*, 13 April to 20 April 1654, 3450.
now agree with Lillburne’s private dispatches that the rising was ‘universal throughout the land’.71

So who is the Trickster? Glencairn or the English Republic?

A trickster is ‘an obscure…shadowy figure’. These are always ‘marginal characters: outsiders they cannot trust or be trusted…they are repulsive’.72 In a liminal state the trickster is very dangerous because ‘a trickster can capture the occasion and institute a lasting reversal of roles and values…where certainties are lost, the imitative behaviour escalates, and tricksters can often be mistaken for charismatic leaders’.73 How does Mercurius Politicus treat and report the rising and what does this say about the English regime itself? The wild Highlander was the outlaw of the English Republic, the marginal figure. Glencairn and his men were charismatic figures who could encourage the Scots to rebel against the English forces. The Highlanders were working for their own private ends, rather than for the public good or commonweal. However on this occasion were the Highlanders truly the marginal group?

If we examine closely how the rising was reported in Mercurius Politicus we could argue that it was the English Republic which was on the margins. The English Republic was an unpopular regime at both home and abroad. It had to justify its own existence and this led to the London news books attacking the regime’s enemies and emphasising its own strengths. During Glencairn’s rising various methods were used by the team behind Mercurius Politicus to put the regime in a stronger position, even if this was not the reality at the time. On various occasions the news book omits details from reports; persons, places and actions. It tried to engender a dislike of the Highlanders on the back of anti-Dutch sentiment during the Anglo-Dutch War. It disguised or played down the true Royalist nature of the rebellion for a full eight months, at every turn it sought to praise the achievements of the regime and put down their enemies. The team carefully selected information to publish, even withholding information about the true extent of the rebellion. In truth Nedham, the trickster, sought to perpetuate a marginal regime by praising the work of the

71 Ibid., 3430; Mercurius Politicus, 20 April to 27 April 1654, 3440; Firth, Scotland and the Protectorate, 20–21, 66–67, 83, 86.
73 Ibid., 155.
Republic’s charismatic leaders and misrepresenting the strength and character of the Republic’s enemies.

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‘Male and Female He created them’: Counterfeit Masculinity and Gender Presentation as Social Structure in Scotland and England, c.1560–1707

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Among the various social paradigms of the early-modern period, few seem as concrete as gender. Sex, its designation and its role in society have both been well documented and well accepted, particularly in the last forty years of historiography. Women’s history of both Scotland and England has looked at the role sex played in queenship, in everyday life, and its use to subjugate women to the private sphere. There is no question that gender, in so far as the impact of one’s sex on their role in life, was a significant social structure. Less research, however, has been done to analyse those who chose to blur that perception and to disregard the need to both separate and easily identify the sexes. The use of clothing to regulate social status was critical in the seventeenth century; its importance to monarchs in presentation of wealth and regulation of their courtiers has been well researched. Clothing’s role in identifying gender, however, has been seriously overlooked. Transvestism has been traditionally discussed as a niche or anecdotal subject, and work which touches on the matter often examines men of high status or fantastic women, with emphasis on famous English or French cases. Primary evidence suggests


that transvestism was both more common than has been previously suggested, particularly in Scotland, and that it was considered a very serious crime: that of counterfeit identity. Furthermore, transvestism has often been associated in a modern context as a part of a gay and lesbian counterculture. This is a painfully inaccurate and anachronistic analysis for the seventeenth century, a period in which moral ideology rejected a concept of sexual orientation. This paper will examine the importance of a visual gender structure, its physical subversion through transvestism and the presence of a third sex and non-binary gender, focusing exclusively on females counterfeiting masculinity.

Visual Identity and the Law

For those living in early-modern Scotland and England, dress was far more than a means of personal expression. In fact, such a concept seems almost ridiculous in light of the crucial role costume actually held. Wardrobe acted as a Renaissance identification card and with social identification came privilege, or the lack thereof, thus judicial regulation of clothing was a necessity. The existence of detailed sumptuary law and other corresponding legislation demonstrate and concerted effort to regulate the visual communication of wealth, occupation and gender. In England from the mid-sixteenth century and in Scotland in the mid-seventeenth, sumptuary law formed such a specific and strictly maintained dress code that even the fabric of person’s cloak could display both socio-economic class and profession. It is no question, then, that


4 Humphrey Dyson, A Booke Contayning All such Proclamations as Were Published During the Reign of the Late Queen Elizabeth (London, 1618); Proclamation 1, Elizabeth I, 21 October 1559. Details which fabrics could be worn by which classes and which income brackets, specific to item of clothing; John Burton (ed.), Register of the Privy Council of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1877), series 3, vol. 8, 496–497. At the end of the seventeenth century, the Privy Council had a difficulty regulating women’s dress with regard to these sumptuary laws, specifically with the use of cloaks. Women in Edinburgh were going abroad using fabric in their cloaks which were inappropriate to their station, intending to avoid the bounds of sumptuary law, much to the Council’s outrage; another example of clothing acting as a specific means of identification, in this case a cloak and robe, comes from the RCP, Scot (series 3, vol. 1), 142, where a Dr Hicks is assaulted when a mob notices his social rank via the style of his cloak and robe.
clothing was also used as a means of simple sex identification, as well as more complicated means of identity.

With regard to sex, clothing was not meant as means to display either ‘normal’ or ‘deviant’ gender identity as a choice. More simply, those born as women needed to be easily identified as women as it was essential they performed the responsibilities inherent to their sex.\(^5\) Allowing women to tread the gender line could wreak havoc on a fragile and carefully maintained structure in which only men held jobs, owned land, inherited, and married women.\(^6\) In Scotland, only those deviant in society could escape the visual social order, as it would be destructive for any woman ‘except howris [whores]’ to dress above their status.\(^7\) Likewise, men ought not to dress as women. Not only did it violate the necessary system of dress identification, but it was seen to subvert the natural order. A great deal of emphasis was placed on the power of such subversion, claiming that the fabric of society could be unwound by such “men-women”. Once man places himself in the female role, the woman becomes the dominant, which had the power to shatter society.\(^8\) This same fear of woman’s domination can also shed light on the fear of women’s cross dressing, that she may become a man and rule over men. In his *Description of Britaine* (1577), William Harrison writes that such gender-bending women existed in Scotland and ‘wore doublets with pendant codpieces on the breast’. Some were so androgynous ‘it hath passed my skill to discern whether they were men or women’. This descent, he warned, transformed men into ‘monsters’.\(^9\)

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\(^5\) Margaret Cavendish linked personal dress to identification in her poem ‘The Epistle Directory’ in *Poems and Fancies* (1653). In it, she describes her thoughts as garments, as garments establish who she is; Ann Rosalind Jones & Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge, 2000), 59 – 85 for more on the significance of clothing in memory, identification, and hysteria in a much broader sense; Ibid., 32 – 33.


\(^7\) *Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1908), 41.


\(^9\) William Harrison, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles comprising 1 The Description and Historie of England, 2 The Description and Historie of Ireland, 3 The Description and Historie of Scotland: First Collected and Published by Raphaelle Holeynsbod, William Harrison, and Others: Now Newlie Augmented and Continued (with Manifold Matters of Singular Note and Worthie Memorie) to the Yeaire 1586. by Iohn Hooker alias Vowell Gent and Others. With Convenient Tables at the end of these Volumes* (London, 1586), 72 – 73.
Legal, medical, and religious discourse of the period placed women firmly below men, primarily via biblical justification. Sir James Balfour’s *Praticks*, a codification of Scots law, states that “The wife is entirely under the power and subjection of her husband.” The average woman of the period was her father’s legal property from birth and was deeded to her husband upon marriage. This position as property herself therefore excluded her from owning property, as anything possessed by her was ultimately the property of her father or husband. Few things could allow a woman, as long as she still was legally female, to ascend from the level of chattel; widowhood was the most common of these means. Rosalind K. Marshall argues that while women were wholly subjugated to their husbands, women’s lives were probably less ‘gloomy’ than traditionally assumed, due to the likelihood of having kind husbands. While her argument has validity, she disregards women’s awareness of their lack of capital and the arguable disadvantage at which this left them. It is probably more likely that regardless of the quality of their home life, some women grew weary of the impenetrable gender caste system, and that this was one cause of cross-dressing, as discussed below.

This system of subordination was reflected socio-economically in the relationship between land-owner and peasant. Although men were not technically property, they functioned in a wholly subordinate way to their lord, and in return, the lord had a certain level of responsibility in protecting them. The aforementioned sumptuary laws locked lord and peasant, man and woman, into their responsibilities by making who they were clear to the wider public through regulated dress. Public perception played a prominent role in seventeenth-century crime punishment, particularly in regards to anti-social activities. As discussed below with regard to transvestism in rural areas, it is highly likely that peer pressure played a significant role in the management of cross-dressing in general. Wardrobe, then, was a constant, public reminder of one’s own position of subjugation in work or life in the home.

If visual distinctions were crucial to establishing a social structure, then it is necessary to understand how such practices were standardised—literally, how people knew what to wear, and how these divisions in clothing came about.

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In the sixteenth century, one important means of this was the costume book, an atlas to the clothing of the world. Printed throughout Europe, these guides presented detailed, if not slightly xenophobic, descriptions of the wardrobes of other countries, with description of clothing, socio-economic class, and accessories such as jewellery and hair adornment. Although costume books differed greatly in structure, one of the most detailed of the books surviving from the sixteenth century was a French costume book printed in 1581, which made certain to list the gender and nationality of the individual pictured, if nothing else. This implies, as Ulrike Ilg argues, that gender and nationality were the two most important identifying characteristics of an individual. That assessment is certainly feasible, given the heavy amount of visual stereotyping which existed in this period in regards to nationality. However, this also makes the assumption that the viewer would have been able to instantly judge socio-economic class by viewing the garments of the subjects, implying a universal familiarity with the class-based visual cues. This is contrary to Ilg’s later point that dress could not function as a universal ‘language.’ In order for costume books to be internationally relevant, however, there must have been a degree of at least trans-European familiarity which allowed the viewer to gain a full understanding of the subjects they viewed.

Early-modern ideas of gender, and therefore gender classification, relied heavily on the essentialist ideals that dominated the early-modern period. Essentialism, a modern word for a very old concept, postulates that woman does not become feminine, it is inherent in her. From the early-modern standpoint she is essentially, and inherently, subordinate to the male, as made by their Creator. The Reformation church, specifically the Scottish Kirk, relied heavily on the concept of male superiority. Uniquely, the Kirk did feel that women ought to be educated to a certain degree. Women needed to be literate enough to read and to, at least marginally, understand the Bible, however, with the motivation that only then could women rear God-fearing children. Even as late as the twentieth century, the Kirk fondly remembered such women as

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15 Ilg, ‘Cultural Significance’, 40.
17 Ibid., 37, 47.
women who ‘knew where they stood,’ praising those women who in the face of religious persecution stood by their husbands and families, proclaiming scripture.¹⁹ John Knox, one of the foremost leaders of the Reformation in Scotland, made no secret of his dislike of women, also referencing the natural order when discussing why women ought not rule over men.²⁰ Michael Graham makes a strong argument about the degree to which the Reformation changed women’s lives, citing that ‘Scotswomen felt its sting in ways that men could not.’²¹

As the act of transvestism contradicted with the established societal norm, it often became a matter of legal dispute. As discussed below in reference to the distinctions in types of cross-dressing, Scotland and England differed significantly over punishments for transvestites. Both, however, had similar attitudes towards cross dressing which occurred alongside tribade, or lesbian, sexual behaviour. All cross dressing was seen as anti-social, although certain individuals, especially after the Restoration, were allowed to cross dress if deemed to merely be eccentric or somehow crucial to their social role as an actor. In both Scotland and England, the key distinction between those who were prosecuted and those who were not was the motivation with which the individual cross-dressed. With the exception of some individuals medically found to be hermaphrodites, all women who cross-dressed with the intention of passing as a man were prosecuted and punished, often brutally. Those who cross-dressed with a specific, non-criminal intention or who made no effort to actually pass as male often received a lesser punishment, or, like Moll Cutpurse, an English transvestite eccentric and actor, let off all together.²²

Similarly, in cases of female homosexuality, women committing the sexual act of tribadism, mutual stimulation without use of a prosthetic phallus, were punished less severely than those who used any type of hand held or strap-

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²¹ Michael Graham, ‘Women and the Church Courts in Reformation-Era Scotland’ in Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle (eds), *Women in Scotland c. 1100 – 1750* (East Linton, 2002), 188, 196; Graham makes the most concise and powerful argument for the unpleasant changes women faced during the Reformation in Scotland, however, for a broader look at this impact in other Reformation countries see also Raymond Mentzer (ed.), *Sin and the Calvinists: Morals Control and the Consistory in the Reformed Tradition* (Kirkville, 1994) and Michael F. Graham, *The Uses of Reform: ‘Godly Discipline’ and Popular Behaviour in Scotland and Beyond, 1560–1610* (Leiden, 1996).
on device. This double standard is partially derived from a general lack of legislation on women’s sexuality. One of the earliest British laws controlling homosexual behaviour was the English Buggery Act of 1533, a piece of legislation enacted under Henry VIII which banned anal penetration and buggery. Under this act, women could only commit buggery (or sodomy) if penetrated by an animal; there is no mention of female-to-female sexuality. In contrast, Scotland did try women for sodomy, as was the case for Elspeth Faulds and Margaret Armour, who were found guilty of sodomy by the Glasgow Presbytery. Their punishment was permanent separation under threat of excommunication, a much lighter sentence than what tribades on the Continent faced. Many examples from both France and Spain show women flogged for tribadism, and burnt or otherwise executed for possession or use of a dildo. Scotland’s comparative leniency in punishment was exemplified in a 1649 trial in which a woman found not only to have owned a clay prosthetic phallus, but to have attempted to rape her female servants with it, was charged with witchcraft but subsequently released without punishment or trial.

The double standard for female anti-social behaviour that existed throughout the early-modern period calls into question the motive for prosecution of transvestism. Lillian Faderman asserts that the obvious reason for condemning cross-dressing is its clear association and indication of homosexuality. In light of the wide spectrum of punishment for transvestism, however, that statement seems to lose potency. Figures like Moll Cutpurse were suspected of lesbian behaviour, although few knew her sexuality, and were allowed to continue their transvestism due to social notoriety. Cutpurse, also known as Mary Frith, lived and died before the Restoration, a period of religious and political unrest.

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25 Two Spanish nuns found to have used dildos were burned at the stake: Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, 1990), 123; Transvestites in Switzerland were led publicly in iron collars and banished: Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early-Modern Europe* (London, 1989), 60–61.


27 Faderman, *Surpassing the Love*, 17.

homosexuality, a grievous sin which was severely punished, especially when male imitation occurred, it is unlikely that Cutpurse would have been allowed to live so openly in London. There is no question that while cross-dressing sometimes connected to occurrences of tribadism, early-modern law did not condemn it for this reason. Transvestism became dangerous for society when it acted as a means to counterfeit identity and disrupt the standardised system of identification.

Culture and Occurrence of Transvestism

Despite the practical need to restrict cross-dressing in order to manage the established social structure, transvestism was widely discussed in popular culture. As an example, plays and poems featuring female to male cross-dressers, both casual and committed, were very popular at the beginning of the seventeenth century and served as a medium for discussion of the topic. Even in wider culture, however, the message carried to the general public was one of transvestism as utility, and was actively used as a tool to propagate the benefits of binary gender. Certainly in England, literature on both female cross-dressing and hermaphroditism abounded in the seventeenth century, and despite the regulation of both the practice of transvestism and the legal status of hermaphrodites, a full review of Early English Books Online and Medieval and Early Modern Sources Online has yet to reveal any restriction on this type of printing.29 Although the appearance of hermaphrodites in print, both art and scientific, displays both the high level of acceptance for a third sex as well as the public knowledge of it, by no means all, or even the majority, of the literature is complimentary. What it does show is that the wider public knew of deviation from the ‘normal’ established by the Kirk and church, an ideal which played a very important role in church functionality.

The vast majority of cross-dressed female-to-male figures in early-modern culture, with the exception of those found in pornographic literature, became transvestites for practical purposes. The majority of female transvestites of the early-modern period, both fictional and non-fictional, shunned the idea of women’s affection towards them while dressed as men, and most of those end up with well sought after male lovers. To the contrary, male garb was often a device for achieving authority temporarily in order to prove oneself to a man,

Although most of the surviving plays from the seventeenth century were written and performed in England, they still help to demonstrate present and circulating ideas in Britain, and for that reason are worth consideration. Comparison of English and Scottish broadside ballads throughout the seventeenth century demonstrates a clear trend of reprinting English literature in Scotland, and vice versa, and therefore it is not unfeasible to assume that residents of both kingdoms could be exposed to such entertainment. For the majority of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the practice of female transvestism flourished in the theatre. Both Shakespeare and his contemporaries took a liking to the idea of the female cross-dresser, as well as to the confusion in visual identity cross-dressing caused. One of the many Shakespearean examples of this is the figure of Viola/Cesario in the comedy *Twelfth Night* (1601). The female character of Viola, in love with the already lovesick Orsino, disguises herself as a man (Cesario) for her safety, and in the process infiltrates Orsino’s court and his company. Viola/Cesario quickly becomes embroiled in two courtships, hers of Orsino and Olivia’s, the countess Orsino had loved, of Cesario. Olivia’s accidental lesbian interest is used as an implied, but obvious, joke which depicts the laughable light in which female-to-female sexuality was held. Furthermore, Olivia/Cesario refers to her transvestite self as a ‘little monster,’ using the vernacular slang for hermaphrodite, further evidence for a common knowledge of hermaphroditism. Unlike other Shakespearean cross-dressing women, Viola seems the most comfortable remaining in her disguise, and her rationale for cross-dressing is the most fluid, choosing to stay a male as long as it continues to benefit her. Her subsequent sparks of romance between Orsino while dressed as Cesario, therefore seem to ring true as homosexually-based than heterosexually, given the fact that marriage between a hermaphrodite and a man was forbidden.

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31 A comparison of the Bodleian Library broadsheet collection and the ‘Word on the Street’ collection at the National Library of Scotland reveals a number of broadsheets printed first in London, then reprinted in Edinburgh. The majority are intact, but a few were edited for a Scottish audience.


34 Ibid., 50; Daniel Boyarin, ‘Are There Any Jews in “The History of Sexuality”?’,
Shakespeare’s other great comedic cross-dressing character is Rosalind, who becomes Ganymede in *As You Like It* (1600). Again the cross dressed female is fervently pursued by a woman, Phebe, who, like Olivia, is a medium for humour in regards to her ill-placed affections, and drops all romantic inklings once she discovers her love to be female. Rosalind initially becomes Ganymede in order to avoid persecution, a relatively common occurrence in the period, and its presence in popular entertainment of the period is striking. Many years later, Prince James, later James VII & II, cross-dressed for similar reasons and became a woman to escape the palace at Whitehall. Similarly, Portia of *The Merchant of Venice* (1596 – 1598?) and her handmaid cross dresses briefly and for a very specific need. Here, her need to save her beloved’s friend prompts her to assume male clothing, which therefore allows her to assume male privilege and practice law. The fact that while cross dressed neither woman’s fiancé can recognise them speaks a great deal to the importance of dress as an identifier in the period. Portia and her significant other carry on a lengthy, close-proximity dialogue, and it is not farfetched when he completely fails to recognise her. Immediately following this incident, she and her maid return home and go back to feminine clothing. This type of cross-dressing was not encouraged, but was more socially acceptable, as both women are aware of their female identity and make no attempt to pass as men for the long term.

Of the transvestite women of the early-modern stage, few are as well known as Moll Cutpurse. Otherwise known as Mary Frith, she was an actual woman who became the focus of two plays, John Day’s *The Madde Pranckes of Mery Mall of the Bankside* (1610), and more famously, Thomas Deckker and John Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl* (1611). Both were written during her lifetime, although only the latter survives. In contrast to the prior transvestite characters who were purely fictional and did not practice transvestism as a lifestyle, Mary Frith was a well known transvestite and bawd of the time. Her situation, both in fiction and reality, is unique but possibly sheds light on the overall social acceptance of transvestism. Despite linking her cross-dressing to her rowdy and sometimes criminal behaviour, *The Roaring Girl* is generally

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36 Thomas Middleton, *The Roaring Girl* (London, 1627) 1 – 10; the text of John Day’s play on Frith has since been lost.
complimentary, holding Frith in a heroic light. The play portrays a man and woman who would like to get married, but his father sees her as a less than ideal choice of bride. He instead tells his parents that he will marry Moll Cutpurse, citing her thievery and dress, to which his father responds by referring to Moll as a ‘man-woman’, a term more commonly used to refer to feminine men. By the end of the play, she is allowed to defend her honour by first duelling a man who claims all women are whores, and then by demonstrating a desire to protect honest individuals from those like her. In a sense, she transcends and overcomes her transvestism by proving herself to be more than her appearance. In life, she was investigated for her transvestism and her sexuality questioned, but she was never arrested.

A possible explanation for her acceptance, again postulated by Faderman, is that Frith was so unconventional, she became a type of character which urban culture became fond of, and understanding this the government hesitated to remove her. Concerning her sexuality, no concrete evidence has been found either way, and there is nothing to indicate that her dress habits had anything to do with a sexual identity, but corresponded more to her masculine, domineering personality. Frith is one of the few, if valuable, examples of women who cross-dressed as a lifestyle without persecution or prosecution for suspected tribadism, demonstrating that society as a whole did not necessarily automatically associate transvestite appearance with homosexuality, but, if anything, with generally anti-social behaviour.

Much of irony of having transvestite characters in theatre comes from the fact that until 1660 men played all women’s roles. Along with an understanding towards the female character who cross-dresses for a logical, need-based situation, the audience is then required to have an understanding towards male transvestism. As patrons of the theatre, they demonstrated a mild respect for the practice. After the Restoration, when women appear on the stage for the first time, this need for understanding disappears almost entirely. A sign of the changing attitudes towards transvestism in culture comes from this additional preface from a post-Restoration performance of *Othello*. In this edition, Desdemona’s actress appeared on stage before the beginning of the play and states:

> The woman plays today: mistake me not,
> No man in gown, or page in petticoat…

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37 Faderman, *Surpassing the Love*, 57–58; Faderman suggests that all actresses received special treatment if they cross-dressed, on account of their celebrity status.
… in this reforming age
We have intents to civilise our stage.\(^{38}\)

Her statement that they intend to ‘civilise’ beyond the use of transvestism is striking, as prior to the reign of Charles II, no one would have found male transvestism in entertainment uncivilised. This marks a mental change in cross-dressing from simply an eccentric practice to one linked to a particular type of person.

Not all fiction concerning tribades and transvestites was reputable, and the seventeenth century saw a host of erotica featuring such female deviants, indicating both a common knowledge of the practice and a carnal interest in it.\(^ {39}\) The pieces, many written in France then re-published in England, appeared equally before and after the Restoration, indicating no obvious connection between this sexual deviation and the loose moral structure brought about by Charles II. William Naphy, in his book *Sex Crimes from Renaissance to Enlightenment*, argues that women likely had access to this literature, despite men being its intended audience.\(^ {40}\) In a subsequent book, published four years later, he states that lack of women’s literacy probably barred them from viewing such things, and that a noted decline in lesbian erotica occurred in the nineteenth century, and must have been linked to a rise in women’s literacy. Although the later opinion may work for an extremely broad analysis, it fails to take into consideration the Reformation rise in literacy that occurred in Britain, especially in Scotland. The details common between these pieces of erotica is an aspect of older women ‘educating’ younger women on sex, as well as some use of a strap-on prosthetic phallus, something illegal and punishable by death in real life practice.\(^ {41}\) The presence of tribade erotica certainly does not prove that such women were reading it, or that it encouraged tribade behaviour, but it does suggest that tribade and gender-blurring behaviour existed in the period, at least in a large enough degree to inspire such authors and be vaguely known in common consciousness.


\(^{40}\) William Naphy, *Sex Crimes from Renaissance to Enlightenment* (Stroud, 2002), 157–159.

Of famous non-fictional transvestites, many of the period were boldly heterosexual, choosing to wear men’s clothing for convenience. When Mary Read, born 1690, joined the British military, her male exterior combined with a fierce fighting ability made it easy for her to blend into the ranks of her peers. Read’s origins in cross-dressing were rather unique. From a very early age, Read’s own mother had dressed her as a boy in an attempt to trick Read’s grandmother into believing that illegitimate Mary was her legitimate deceased brother. The ruse worked and Read remained in men’s clothing for the majority of her life, going on to become a privateer, and following a mutiny, a pirate. Initially, Read remained cross-dressed until she discovered one of her fellow pirates, Anne Bonney, to be female as well. The pair dressed as men when fighting and women when on ship, although Read seems to have taken to her male garb, even after marrying a male pirate.

**Counterfeiting the Office of Husband**

Although the majority of transvestism cases in both Scotland and England involved individuals proven or assumed to be heterosexual, this was not always the case. However, these cases were significantly lesser known. A handful of women did dress as men to pass as men and pursued women under the guise of masculinity. Some women clearly cross-dressed simply for the ability to marry women, such as one woman in London, who had obtained the hand and dowry of one woman, while pursuing another. This woman, unnamed but tried in 1694, was humiliated in court as her love letters were publically read aloud, her pursuits assumed to be aimed at collecting the dowries from as many women as possible. She was subsequently ‘well whipt’ and sentenced to hard labour. Regardless of her motivation, the comical light in which the court viewed the woman’s love of women speaks volumes for the general opinion of lesbian attraction, as nonexistent. Although the record of this woman’s case is scant, there is no mention that she underwent an examination for hermaphroditism, a sign that she probably perceived herself as female, and not as transgender.

Another such English woman, confident in her own womanhood but not her femininity, was Amy Poulter, who lived under the pseudonym ‘James Howard’ and married Arabella Hunt in 1680. For six months, Poulter and Hunt cohabitated as husband and wife, when at the end of the six months, Hunt ‘discovered’ that her husband was female. It is more likely that Hunt knew of her husband’s gender, but found out, instead, that Poulter was already legally married to a man. Like the unnamed woman, Poulter denied being a hermaphrodite, a claim verified by examination, however, she may have denied gender disparity to avoid legal action. By being female, Poulter managed to avoid punishment on the basis that as two women could not contract a marriage, she had not committed bigamy.\(^{45}\) Had she been a hermaphrodite, and thus legally able to marry a woman, she could have been charged with such. Whether or not she was punished for her transvestism by flogging, like her unnamed counterpart, remains unknown.

Between transvestism to pass as a man and legal hermaphroditism lay another category and another crime which had quite a different social connotation, and often a very different punishment for those found guilty of it. Female sodomy, a rare charge with few references in law, exclusively referred to the practice of a woman penetrating another woman with a foreign object, often a dildo ‘held around the waist by little belts like a man’s member’, as described by one English author.\(^{46}\) As discussed previously, women throughout Europe had been burned for possession of such prostheses, especially when used while cross-dressed. This specifically represents the idea of ‘counterfeiting the office of husband’, a type of deception in which the woman threatened to replace the man, not only economically but sexually.

Given the rather grim precedent for these women elsewhere, it is all the more surprising that in Scotland, a woman accused of attempting to rape her female servants with such a device seems to have faced no legal ramification at all. The woman, Maud Galt, was accused of witchcraft when her servant came before the Privy Council claiming that Galt had been ‘abusing ane of hir servants with ane peis of clay formed lyk the secreit member of ane man,’ bringing the artificial phallus with her as evidence. The charge, several pages long, describes the numerous instances in which Galt attempted to rape several servants, as well as the servants of her neighbours. The Privy Council chose to investigate it under the charge of witchcraft, although it appears they dropped


the charge, as no further legal action in regards to Maud Galt is recorded.47 Despite the unusual nature of Galt’s case, most Scottish transvestism cases were less fantastic than their English counterparts and therefore gained much less attention. Most Scottish transvestism was subtle, casual, and not necessitated by strife or profession. Instead, it most often occurred in everyday life, as part of a calendar of social events and revelry. Given the all-permeating nature of the Scottish Presbytery, viewed by those outside of Scotland as severe, it is surprising that Scotland generated such a casual relationship with cross-dress, and calls into question the nature of gender in Scotland.48 In comparison to occurrences both on the Continent and in England, Scottish cross dressing had a unique flavour, possibly owed to a unique and deeply-rooted view on sex and gender. Despite the generally more conservative nature of the Scottish Kirk, everyday transvestism was often punished less severely than in England.

While Scottish transvestites failed to get the public attention of their English brethren, they certainly got the attention of the Kirk and Presbytery. Throughout Scotland, focused primarily in the more densely populated areas of Edinburgh, Perth, and Aberdeen, the Kirk struggled to contain what appeared to be a rampant trend of casual cross-dressing. During each Christmas and Hogmanay, the Kirk braced itself for the annual onslaught of transvestite revellers who would fill the streets of Scotland’s cities. From the end of the sixteenth century through the middle of the seventeenth, the Kirk in Aberdeen fought a yearly winter battle with those celebrating Hogmanay.49 Revellers preferred to celebrate their holidays with dancing and guise, or costume, often preferring to wear the clothing of the other gender.50

In each of these urban areas, the Kirk did make significant efforts to control transvestism, however in comparison to the techniques used on the continent they are particularly mild, probably due to its widespread nature. In most cases of public transvestism, session members issued warnings at the time the act was committed, and occasionally called certain cross-dressing individuals, particularly the women, to appear before the session. One example

48 Anon., Calvinists Destroying Statues in the Catholic Churches (Engraving, 1566); Anon., “The Persecution of English Catholics by Calvinist Protestants” (Engraving, 1560s).
50 A group of women paraded through the down ‘under silences of night’ in men’s clothing, presumably still celebrating the Yuletide holiday; Selections from the Kirk Session, Presbytery, and Synod of Aberdeen (Aberdeen, 1846), 22.
was Maggie Morrison, who was found guilty of ‘abusing’ herself with men’s clothing in 1567 and received only a fine from the Aberdeen Kirk Session.\textsuperscript{51} Cross-dressing, which fell under the category of ‘guising’ when performed in this context, was one of a number of sins committed during the holiday season in Aberdeen, most of which, like drinking, singing, and dancing, are now almost synonymous with the idea of celebration, but were deemed hedonistic and unacceptable by the Kirk.\textsuperscript{52} The first attempt to regulate these practices was to ban dancing, singing, and general loud revelry during the most popular holidays, such as Hogmanay and midsummer. This had almost no affect on the actions in Perth or Aberdeen when imposed, as the male and female revellers protested, appropriately, all cross-dressed. The Kirk responded, in turn, by attempting to ban holidays altogether. None of these actions appear to have had any effect on the appearance of transvestism, however, because occurrences continued throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{53}

Rural areas and small towns outside of the more urban centres, show little to no evidence of such cross-dressing offences in their Kirk and Presbytery session records. The Kirk Session Records of the Kingdom of Fife, and Presbytery Session Records of Ellon show no record of transvestism, possibly an indication of later censorship by those editing and reviewing the records.\textsuperscript{54} The Presbytery Records of Ellon describe the excommunication of a group of whores, all women, who were banished from the town in 1602; however, it is almost devoid of any other reference to sex-linked crimes. Likewise, the records in Inverness and Stirling are spotty at best in their description of any gender-based crimes. In Stirling, May holiday festivities and the celebration of Beltane caused many in the town to journey out into the countryside in a practice deemed by the Presbytery to be a Pagan pilgrimage. Such celebratory acts, such as Maypole dancing and making pilgrimage to wells and woods, were thought to be linked to profane and often sexual acts, rhetoric often synonymous with cross-dressing. That said, no specific cross-dressers are.


\textsuperscript{53} Sometime after the bans come into effect, a very large group of men and women are charged with cross-dressing and by so doing, breaking God’s commandment admonishing transvestism; \textit{Selections from Aberdeen} 47–48.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Presbytery of Ellon}, vols. 1 and 2 are both devoid of any mention of cross dressing, and hold only one mention of a sex-based crime, the excommunication of a whore on 24 Mary 1602.
recorded to have been charged with this activity in Stirling, but the fear of the practice developing from the other types of sinful revelry lingered.

Inverness, while lacking any specific mention of transvestism in its Kirk Session records, does have a number of entries which deserve mention. From 1690 until 1697, a number of women listed by name were arrested for unspecified crimes. On 29 July 1690, ‘three scandlouse and Debaught persones’ were brought before the Session: Barbara Gray, Margaret Fraser, and Kathrin Sutherland. After being informed of their ‘base deportments by severall of the inhabitants’ of Inverness, and confessing to whatever crime of which they were accused, they were delivered to the hangman, scourged, and banished from the city. Initially, their treatment sounds very much like a charge of prostitution or adultery, however, both of these crimes were frequently recorded in detail in the records, describing the specific nature of the prostitution or adultery and listing both the name of prostitute or mistress and the name of their respective customer or lover. These details are completely absent from the repeated charges against Gray, Sutherland, and Fraser. On 5 April 1692, a woman by the name of Kathrin Fraser appears before the session, described only as ‘a base an vile persone’, but without a mentioned charge. She too is banished from the town and parish for her unspecified crime.

A third case, that of Marie McCowll appears on three separate dates, 10 May, 31 May, and 22 June, 1697. She is said to have committed a ‘sin’, although it too is never described. She appears three times before the session, each time appearing more remorseful, and the third time shedding tears. The record makes a point of stating that women were treated in a ‘tender and gentle’ manner by the session when they showed remorse, something McCowll may have discovered over the course of her three appearances. Nothing indicates that these were cases of tribadism or transvestism, but it is probable that they were not prostitution, fornication, or adultery, either, despite being described by similar adjectives, as such cases were consistently specifically mentioned. Given the complete lack of tribades and transvestites in these Kirk Session records, it seems a logical deduction that these women could have been transvestites at least, and tribades at most, and the nature of their crimes had been censored to protect community image.

56 Ibid., 5 April 1692.
57 Ibid., 10 May 1697, 31 May 1697, 22 June 1697.
What significance does this trend of transvestitism in higher population areas hold? Scotland may have had an advantage in the fight to restrain transvestism through both the Presbytery system, which through its higher ratio of church officials to parishioners allowed for the church to keep a closer eye on its people, and through its general lower population, which reduced opportunity for a cultural precedent to form unchecked and allowed easier restriction. Therefore, the outlying, lower-populace areas may have been able to restrict the practice through peer pressure, reducing the number of incidents. Cities like Perth, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh may have fallen victim to the ability of urban areas to nurture a sense of minority acceptance, in the way London fostered a sense of artistic acceptability of transvestism among actors and eccentrics. Michael Graham has argued that with many early-modern sexual crimes, which threatened to disrupt social order, community disapproval would be used to reign in individuals who ‘strayed too far from the norm.’ With regard to more densely populated areas, the opposite seems true. Either community indifference or approval seems to keep the practice going despite Kirk condemnation. In rural areas, however, where the occupants all knew each other and strain of peer pressure could be more harshly felt, this could have had an effect of stopping the problem of cross-dressing before it started.

A Third Sex

One final, but important part of non-binary gender in the early-modern period was the concept of a literal third sex, and how it related to this strict binary gender system. Somewhere outside the non-threatening transvestite and the socially destructive counterfeit husband, was the legal hermaphrodite. Unlike in most modern legal systems, where hermaphrodites are a legitimate scientific sex, but not a legally recognised one, hermaphrodites of the early-modern period were recognised by the government as a third sex, created by God. This conformed to the humours system of medicine, women were cold and men were hot. Hermaphrodites were women whose heat had gone too high or men whose temperature had dropped, causing the genitals to cease forming midway. Doctors of the period were fascinated by dissection,

60 Aristotle, The Problemes of Aristotle with other Philosophers and Phisitions. Wherein are contayned
as anatomical woodcuts of the period display, and one of the things they attempted to discern was the similarities between the male and female body that made hermaphroditism possible. Although hermaphrodites were recognised as a natural occurrence, the social position of the hermaphrodite in early-modern Europe is not a particularly positive one. First, obtaining legal status as a hermaphrodite was particularly difficult, as doctors differed on what physical characteristics qualified as true hermaphroditism. Further, once status was attained, the hermaphrodite faced a great deal of persecution concerning its gender. Most unpleasant of all, those women who failed to be granted hermaphrodite status were often sentenced to a remedy for the ‘lust’ for women that had usually triggered that woman to seek medical examination for hermaphroditism in the first place: female circumcision conducted with a pair of pliers.61

Considering the hermaphrodites’ ‘monster’ status and the difficulty in acquiring it, it is curious why anyone would desire to be recognised as a hermaphrodite. The vast majority, if not all, of recorded individuals who applied for hermaphrodite status were previously known to be biologically female.62 In early-modern Scotland and England, if one was proven to be a true hermaphrodite, then they were legally allowed to choose their gender. This decision was permanent and could be made only once. However, it gave biological women the possibility to gain capital by legal means if they could prove themselves to be hermaphrodites.63 The chances of this were not particularly high. If a definite gender could be determined by a medical doctor, then the individual lost any chance to be recognised as a hermaphrodite, as any excess genitalia not vital to the assigned sex would be removed. This was the common practice throughout Europe, one of the most dramatic examples

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being a Dutch transvestite called Henrika Schuria. Schuria had previously cross-dressed to join the Dutch army, and had since ‘grown weary of her sex.’

Before long, she was caught and tried for tribadism with another woman, which in Holland unlike in England and Scotland, was a capital offense punishable by burning. After an inspection, she was found to have a clitoris which ‘equalled the length of half a finger and in its stiffness was not unlike a boy’s member’, however, simply having a clitoris which resembled a penis did not qualify as hermaphroditism in the eyes of the examining doctor. The judge spared her life, however, he ordered she be ‘nipped in the bud,’ that is, given a female castration and sent into exile.

This gory example not only displays the downfalls of the hermaphrodite examination, but also sheds light on another reason why some women would choose to subject themselves to such an examination. Those women who were dedicated to another woman might risk the examination, but there was no way to be certain of what the outcome would be. Medicine was undecided on the topic of hermaphrodites and varied greatly, with the leading doctor an Italian called Paolo Zacchia. Following Aristotle’s views on hermaphrodites, he postulated that the visible traits of sex did not necessarily indicate gender, although his theories applied only to women. According to Zacchia, women could become men through overheating, but men could not become women, as their bodies lacked the space to tuck their penis and testes back inside of their bodies, unlike women, whose ‘penis’ (uterus) and ‘testes’ (ovaries) descend. While doctors were fascinated by hermaphrodites, they still regarded them as monsters, and this scientific interested was mirrored in a cultural and literary interest in such individuals.

Several pieces of literature were produced concerning hermaphrodites, although in a universally condescending or pitying sense. The Gallant Hermaphrodite, written in 1687 by François de Chavigny de La Bretonnière and

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65 Ibid., 122.
66 The chances of women who were attracted to men attempting to become hermaphrodites was likely very slim, as it was illegal for a hermaphrodite to marry a man. This was likely the case due to the fact that only women were deemed eligible to transition, therefore becoming men, and had they married a man, it would have been sodomy: Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, 50.
published in England, is a tongue-in-cheek piece depicting a hermaphrodite in pursuit of a woman who seems unimpressed by the hermaphrodite’s suit. It is clearly a mockery of the ‘masculinity’ of hermaphrodites, and reflects the more common, but not universal opinion of hermaphrodites as lesser than both other sexes.  

Francis Beaumont’s 1660 poem, The Hermaphrodite is unusually quite complementary, revelling in the figure of the hermaphrodite, referred to as a ‘he’, like Ovid’s description of Hermaphroditus. Beaumont’s figure is beautiful, although extremely feminine, being laid to bed by birds and kissed by roses. In the end, the female this hermaphrodite pursues is also less than interested, but because he is simply too beautiful. He faces a similar end as Chavigny de La Bretonnière’s, but in a much more complementary light.

This European literature, while there is no evidence it was republished in Scotland, was circulated there due to the frequent casual reference to the hermaphrodite monster in several Scottish broadsheet ballads. The comparative lack of authorship on the subject may be connected to the comparative low frequency of hermaphrodite status granted in Scotland, a product likely due to the strength of the church in legislation. While the Kirk may have had an issue restricting private practice, as demonstrated with cross-dressing, it could certainly have a hand in the legal status of an individual.

Conclusion

Seventeenth-century Scottish society was host to a number of social structures, some long engrained, others still evolving throughout the period. Despite the illusion of gender and sex as concrete social structures, sexual identity and perception were fluid and often controversial parts of society. Dress, wardrobe and its regulation were base elements to many aspects of society, and their regulation allowed for their use as a universal means of identification. As such, transvestism acted more as a means for rebellion from a set of societal norms rather than as means of sexual liberation. Female soldiers, pirates and swindlers could exist only when under male guise, and as such, several cross-dressed to pass as men. Their transvestism was not remotely linked to any type of homosexuality, and many carried on heterosexual relationships, dressing

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as men only when economically or professionally necessary. Tribades were less likely to cross-dress due to its conspicuous nature; unlike heterosexual transvestites, those caught practicing tribadism could be flogged, exiled or executed.

But despite its rarity, there were tribades who intended to pass as men and some even married other women. Although not an indicator of transgender identity, the mere presence of these women indicates that fluid gender and willingness to blur the established society lines are not concepts new to contemporary individuals. The seventeenth century, however, did accept and recognise a third sex. While hermaphrodites did not enjoy the same status and comfort of the other two sexes, legal hermaphroditism allowed for an individual to acquire privilege and status in a culture where such acquisitions were rare. More commonly, however, it appears that Scotland most often used transvestism simply as a means of entertainment, a practice wholly outside the control of Kirk, unlike the more serious cases mentioned above. Ultimately, this indicates that seventeenth-century gender occupied a much larger spectrum than previously understood, and that non-binary gender and transvestism deserve more serious consideration as a facet of early-modern social structure.

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