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1 For “inspired,” read “shamed.”
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Christopher P. Gillett
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Introduction

Jane Stewart had lived a rather comfortable life in Sligo before 1641. The wife of a relatively prosperous local merchant, for twenty-six years her husband had provided the people of their town in Connacht with, in her words, “all sorts of Wares and Merchandize.”¹ His business had been rather profitable and had ensured the couple’s financial security, with Thomas Stewart able to provide for his wife’s needs and wants with relative ease. The Stewarts’ domestic fairytale was cruelly interrupted, though, one day in early December 1641.²

News had undoubtedly reached the Stewarts of the boisterous uprisings in Ulster and the failed attempt on Dublin Castle a month or so prior. But then the Ulstermen had always been a rebellious sort, and after all, the Lords Justices had arrested the prime movers behind the attempt in Dublin. The Stewarts could be forgiven for feeling confident in their safety. The local magnate, the Earl of Clanricarde, had established an organized and highly structured plan of defense for Connacht.³ But despite the Earl’s best laid plans, the situation in Connacht began to deteriorate rapidly in December 1641.

The rebellion that had broken out to varying degrees in virtually every other region of Ireland had finally reached the Stewarts in Connacht. Things began in the way that one might expect they would. The native Irish, angered at being dispossessed by the New English settlers and the political and economic disabilities they suffered because of their Catholicism, had started

¹Sir John Temple, The Irish Rebellion or, an History of the Beginnings and First Progress of the General Rebellion Raised within the Kingdom of Ireland, upon the three and twentieth day of October, in the Year 1641 (London: R. White, 1646), 118.

²Ibid.

by extracting some measure of retribution by divesting the Protestant community of their wealth. Thomas Stewart was just one of a number of Protestant businessmen in Sligo to be “forcibly deprived, robbed and despoiled of their Household goods, Wares, Merchandize, Specialities, cattel, horses, plate, money, and other goods and chattels.” In the end the Stewarts had lost enough property that the estimated damage was something in the range of £1,200, a considerable sum.

The injustices did not end there, however. The Protestant denizens of Sligo—including the elderly, the young, the sickly, and pregnant women—were all detained and promised safe quarter. There was a catch, though. In return for their security, the rebels demanded that the prisoners convert to Catholicism. Anyone who refused to be initiated into the Church would be put to death. For any devout Protestant this was an agonizing decision. Catholics were, after all, the agents of the Antichrist in Protestant eyes. Still, in the interest of self-preservation many of the Protestant prisoners did convert to “popery” on the condition that they would be spared execution. The Stewarts were among the apostates.

Despite their reluctant compliance, the newly initiated Catholics were not released by the rebels. Instead, on 6 January 1642 they were interned at the Sligo jail. It was around this time

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4 Temple, 119.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
8 Temple, 119.
that Jane Stewart reports that “a Covent of Fryars of the Abby of Sligo”\(^9\) met for three days to discuss the fate of the former heretics. The decision that they came to horrified Stewart.

All the men, women and children of the British that then could be found within the same Towne…[were at] about twelve a clock in the night…stripped stark naked, and after most of them were most cruelly and barbarously murdered with swords, axes and skeines…and some of the women so murthered being big with child (by their wounds received) the very arms and legs of the children in their wombs appeared, and were thrust out.\(^{10}\)

Jane Stewart had only been spared from the butchery that had ensued because she had been too ill to join the rest of the detainees in the jail. The rebels’ indecency did not cease, however. Stewart explains that the Irish rebels took the corpses of the dead men and placed them on top of the bodies of the slain women and simulated the sexual act. After the desecration of the Protestants’ remains was complete, their bodies were disposed of in a mass grave. Stewart provides an idea of the extent of the carnage by explaining that “they of the Irish that came to bury them, stood up to the mid-leg in the blood and braines of those that were so murdered.”\(^{11}\)

In Stewart’s mind there was no doubt who was responsible for the massacre at Sligo. The Dominican Friars of the Abbey at Sligo had committed pre-meditated murder, if not by their own hands, as a result of their incitement of the rebels. Indeed, one particularly zealous friar had done the deed himself. Stewart explains that after a pregnant prisoner overheard “the lamentable cry” of the victims and escaped, she was pursued by one of the Friars “unto the River, where she was barbarously murdered, and found the next day, with the child’s feet appearing, and thrust out of her wounds in her sides.”\(^{12}\)

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\(^9\) Ibid., 119-20.
\(^{10}\) Ibid., 120.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., 121.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 120.
The preceding narrative is one of a number of similar relations included in Sir John Temple’s history of the Irish rebellion. Temple was the Master of the Rolls and a member of the Irish Privy Council in 1641. Temple’s version of events surrounding the outbreak of the Irish rebellion in 1641 became the authoritative version of events from the Protestant perspective, and serves as a useful repository for the accumulation of Protestant opinion concerning Catholic clergy for the years between 1641 and 1646. In *The Irish Rebellion*, he makes no secret of his own belief that the Roman Catholic clergy were responsible for the outbreak of the rebellion.

Great numbers of these wicked Instruments (the Laws against all of the Romish Clergy, being of late laid aside, and tacitely suspended execution) came over into Ireland: The main ground-work, and first predispositions to a Rebellion in generall, were most undoubtedly with great dexterity and artifice laid by them; their venomous infusions taking such deep roots in the minds of a blind, ignorant, superstitious people, as made them ready for a change, the great ones mischievously to plot and contrive, the inferior sort tumultuously to rise up and execute whatsoever they should command.

“These wicked Instruments,” as Temple refers to them, are the subject of this thesis. Particularly, this thesis will deal with how the perceptions of and reactions to the Roman Catholic clergy’s involvement in the rebellion affected the policies that developed to combat the insurrection in Ireland and helped shape the political crises in England and Ireland for the next decade.

This paper will focus on two competing versions of clerical involvement in the rebellion: the prevalent Protestant perceptions of the clergy as radical agents of the rebellion and the reality of the clergy’s moderating role in the rebellion. The Protestant perceptions and presuppositions concerning the Irish Catholic clergy, which are sometimes referred to hereafter as “radical clericalism,” are best summarized by four points drawn from Temple’s history of the rebellion.

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13 See chapter three.


15 Temple, 66.
Temple asserted that the Catholic clergy in Ireland were violent, responsible for the organization of the rebellion, were part of a universal Catholic plot designed to destroy Protestantism, and were responsible for the dissemination of information among the rebels. In reality, though the Catholic clergy did play a significant role in the administration of the rebellion, they were neither the rebellion’s prime organizers nor the violent participants they were accused of being by the Protestant authorities.

Generalizations about the behavior of entire subsets of the population are fraught with complications, however, and it is certain that there was an element within the clergy that conformed more to the Protestant perception. But one of the underpinnings of those Protestant perceptions was that they were a universal principle, and therefore, it would be virtually impossible to realistically consider this as a viable interpretation of the role of the Catholic clergy in light of the evidence available for review.

Despite the factual problems presented by the prevailing Protestant perception of Catholic clerical activity, including but not limited to its absolutist nature, it is still historically significant. Indeed, due to the entrenched nature of this view among the Irish and British authorities, the actions taken by these entities were based solely upon these perceptions to the exclusion of contemporary voices calling for what is, from a modern perspective, a more realistic view. The measures taken by both the Irish and English government in order to combat the rebellion in Ireland were ineffectual in the short term, because they relied on a misdiagnosis of the primary issue that needed to be addressed. The Irish government’s attempts to enlist aid from their masters in London, by presenting the rebellion as the result of clerical machinations, ended up being counterproductive. The Westminster Parliament responded to this news by attacking the popish plot at its perceived source, the King’s court. They imagined that once the head of the

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16 Temple, 31, 40, 60, 85. For a fuller description of the specifics of this model see chapter two of this thesis.
problem was dealt with, the body would wither and die. However, this strategy inevitably led to conflict with the King and was one of the main causes of the war that broke out between the King and parliament. The outbreak of hostilities in England also meant that the situation in Ireland was neglected because the Westminster Parliament, and indeed the King’s, energies were focused on their rivals at home. This conflict was brought to the public by the propagandists and pamphleteers on each side of the burgeoning conflict in England. This emerging new medium was also used to stir up fears of a popish plot, this time amongst those elements of the populace that would side with the parliament when things came to blows. The alternative interpretation, presented by the royalist propagandists, was that the real issue in Ireland was one of obedience versus disobedience to the King.\textsuperscript{17} In the end, the prevailing Protestant attitudes towards the Catholic clergy had more of an effect on how things actually turned out, even though it had less to do with the reality of the situation in Ireland.

An important distinction to keep in mind throughout this paper is the division between perception and reality. The episode that is explored in the following pages is an example of the political importance of perception. Those contemporaries that recognized the truth of the situation, namely that the Catholic clergy were not the villains they were portrayed to be by Protestant authorities, were in the minority. Men like the Earl of Clanricarde, who recognized that the rebels had been spurred to their actions by their desperate situation, could not disabuse those in authority over them of their reliance on tried and trusted stereotypes.\textsuperscript{18} In the political dynamics of 1641-2, the Protestant authorities’ perceptions of the role of the Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion were, in some ways, more important than the actual role the clergy played.


\textsuperscript{18} Earl of Clanricarde to the Lords Justices, 31 October 1641, in Bourke, 6.
Each of the above mentioned developments will be examined in the following pages. For the sake of clarity this thesis is divided into two parts. The first deals with the Irish rebellion as it was executed and perceived in Ireland. The first chapter in this part aims to give the reader a basic understanding of the narrative of the events leading up to the outbreak of the rebellion. Also in this chapter, the different groups with an interest in the affairs of Ireland are outlined. The second chapter in this part focuses on the role of the Irish Catholic clergy in the rebellion. It is here that the actual role of the Catholic clergy will be explored, taking into consideration the pertinent contemporary Protestant views of clerical behavior. The third and final chapter in this part will deal with the Irish governmental reactions to the rebellion. In this chapter, the ways in which the instruments of English government in Ireland constructed the rebellion are examined.

The second part of this paper deals with the ways in which the Irish rebellion was constructed in England. Again, the first chapter in this part is a narrative that explains the nature of the relationship between parliament and the King. In this chapter, the anti-Catholic nature of the Long Parliament is also established for the reader. The second chapter in this part addresses the English parliament’s perceptions of and reactions to the phenomenon of radical clericalism. Here, the consequences of the ways in which the Irish government portrayed the Catholic clerics’ role in the rebellion is examined, and the role this phenomenon played in the development of the political crisis in England is explained. The third chapter in this part concerns the role of the emergent political press in the shaping of public opinion. Specifically, the chapter investigates the ways in which this growing medium presented the role of Catholic clerics in the outbreak of the rebellion.
The study of this phenomenon must first be put into the context of the wider historiography of the political crises in England and Ireland. There has not been a study devoted purely to the role of the Roman Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion, let alone one that examines the issue in the context of Anglo-Irish relations. However, a number of secondary sources were synthesized to develop the analytical perspective in this paper. Perhaps the most authoritative volume on the Irish rebellion in general is Michael Perceval-Maxwell’s *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641*. It provided much of my basic understanding of the chronology of events that led to the rebellion, and the way in which the rebellion unfolded. Conrad Russell’s *The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642* helped place the rebellion within the context of the political crises in all three Stuart Kingdoms and was incredibly helpful in understanding how events in Ireland resonated in England. Caroline Hibbard’s study of court Catholicism during the reign of Charles I, *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, proved to hold a number of useful insights relating to perceptions of the popish plot in England. S.R. Gardiner’s classic, *History of England from 1603-1642*, served as an excellent reference for understanding the development of the political crisis in England, as did Austin Woolrych’s *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660* and Anthony Fletcher’s *The Outbreak of the English Civil War*. Toby Barnard’s *The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760* was a helpful resource for understanding the Irish rebellion in the context of the rest of Irish history. Both Nicholas Canny’s and Micheál Ó Siochrú’s books provided interpretive assistance. Ó Siochrú’s *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* demonstrated the ways in which the Irish Catholic clergy sought to reestablish order in Ireland through the construction of the Confederation of Kilkenny. Canny’s *Making Ireland British 1580-1650* was particularly helpful in providing a methodology for getting to the substantive truth of the Irish clergy’s role in the rebellion through the sources available.

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19 This methodology is outlined and employed in the chapter two.
The primary materials used in this project were determined primarily by their availability for study. Every attempt was made to access as broad a base of materials as possible. However, due to the limited scope of this project in time, space, and resources, not every source that could have benefited this project was obtainable. Still, for the chapters on governmental attitudes a number of official papers and correspondence were available for review, and provided an excellent resource for constructing a picture of the official reactions to the phenomenon of radical clericalism in the Irish rebellion, especially the letters of the Earl of Clanricarde. The memoirs and collections of letters for a number of prominent figures also provided context for personal reactions to the rebellion. Sir John Temple’s *Irish Rebellion* was a valuable source of information for the standard Protestant view of the role of the Catholic clergy and the rebellion in general. The depositions collected in Mary Hickson’s *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century or The Irish Massacres of 1641-2, Their Causes and Results* proved invaluable in the examination of the actual role of the Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion. The collection of the Thomason Tracts formed the basis for the study of the role of pamphlet literature in shaping public opinion towards clerical involvement in the rebellion.

Despite the fact that many of the Protestant sources are filled with polemical embellishments, for certain chapters in this study this is exactly the phenomenon that is being investigated and so exaggerations and hyperbole do not pose a problem. However, as a result of the virulently anti-Catholic bias in a majority of the sources available for review, there is a scarcity of primary material with which one can reconstruct the actual role of the clergy. It is in these instances that the methodology outlined by Canny proves particularly useful, as it enables the reader to identify the substantive truth behind the polemical language used in a document.
The story of the fate of the Stewart family is an example of the type of problem that the historian encounters in examining this type of source in an attempt to understand the actual role the Irish Catholic clergy played in the rebellion. Stewart, herself, saw nothing of the bloodbath that she relates in Temple’s book. She claims that she heard that this was the case from others. As such, her testimony is unreliable. Although, one cannot dismiss her testimony altogether, one imagines that this account was exaggerated to emphasize the role of the clergy. In the following chapters, special effort is made to try and separate true eyewitness accounts from secondhand retellings. It is the position of this paper that if one follows this process, then it seems clear that the actual role of the clergy differs quite substantially from the contemporary perception of clerical behavior among Protestants. Though, those perceptions had more of an impact on the development of the political crises in both England and Ireland.

\[^{20}\text{Temple, 120.}\]
Part I:

The Rebellion in Ireland
Chapter One

Context and Narrative of the Irish Rebellion

In order to understand the Catholic clergy’s role in the outbreak and perpetuation of the Irish Rebellion, it is necessary to first understand the other factors that played a significant role in the rebellion and to have a general understanding of the events of the insurrection. It was in reaction to the events described below that the role of the Irish Catholic clergy developed, and at the same time these events influenced the formation of Protestant attitudes in England and Ireland towards the role of the Catholic priests. The following pages only provide a brief guide to the most significant episodes that led to the sudden outbreak of rebellion, and the course the rebellion took until the beginning of significant clerical involvement shortly after the outbreak. More significant studies are provided by Michael Perceval-Maxwell in *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641,* ¹ Nicholas Canny in *Making Ireland British, 1580-1660,* ² and two of Aidan Clarke’s chapters in the third volume of Oxford’s *A New History of Ireland,* ³ among others. The narrative in this chapter relies heavily on these sources.

In any study of Ireland during this period, it behooves the historian to provide the reader with a description of the various competing political, religious, and ethnic groups present in Ireland at this time. It is particularly important to distinguish these groups clearly in the

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discussion of the events that led to the outbreak of the rebellion, due to the frequently shifting alliances of convenience that often sprang up between them. Perceval-Maxwell argues that there were seven groups with a stake in Irish affairs: the native Irish, the Old English, the New English, the Catholic Church, the Crown, the Protestant Church, and the Scots.\(^4\) Owing to the limited scope of this thesis, however, only five of these groups play a significant role in the following chapters: the native Irish, the Old English, the New English, the Catholic Church, and the Crown. Though the Protestant Church and Scots had important roles to play in the development of the tensions that led to the outbreak of the rebellion, they had less influence on the development and perception of the Catholic clergy’s involvement.

The native Irish were the descendants of the original Gaelic inhabitants of the island. They formed the largest ethnic group in Ireland, forming well over ninety percent of the population\(^5\)—estimated to be around 1,500,000 people in 1641.\(^6\) The vast majority of them retained their Catholic faith, but were not in line with the reforms of the Council of Trent.\(^7\) Their Catholicism, however, made the English government, its representatives in Ireland, and the Protestant settlers, suspect them of disloyalty. As a result, they were largely disenfranchised by the Protestant establishment in Ireland. Nicholas Canny suggests that by the early decades of the seventeenth century most of the native Irish had come to terms with the reality of the growing Protestant population in Ireland—who were shown favor by the Irish government—and were attempting to develop working relationships with the settlers in the decades prior to the outbreak of the rebellion. Canny writes that “it would be entirely wrong to suggest that Catholic people in

\(^4\) Perceval-Maxwell, 8-9.

\(^5\) Ibid., 30-1.

\(^6\) Canny, 456.

\(^7\) Patrick Corish, \textit{The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries} (Dublin: Helicon, 1981), 4-5.
Ireland were consciously working towards [the rebellion].”

However, when the rebellion broke out in 1641, it was first and foremost a native Irish rebellion against the Protestant authorities and settlers.

A second ethnic group joined the native Irish in their rebellion against the Protestant authorities: the Old English. This was the name commonly assigned to the descendants of the English colonizers of Ireland from the time of the Norman invasions until the Reformation. Though not strictly confined to its boundaries, the Old English for the most part resided in the area known as the Pale—an area comprised of the five counties of Dublin, Meath, Louth, Kildare, and Kilkenny. The Old English had traditionally been the instrument of English control of Ireland, with varying degrees of success. However, after the solidification of the establishment of a Protestant Church in England during the reign of Elizabeth I, the Old English, who had largely remained Roman Catholic, were replaced as governors of Ireland by a set of new Protestant immigrants. This development left the Old English embittered by their fall from power.

The Protestant settlers who had usurped the authority of the Old English were referred to as the New English. The Elizabethan conquest of Ireland carried out by this group opened up more land for settlement. This land would, however, be reserved for Protestant settlers who would also serve to extend English authority beyond the reaches of the Pale. The policy of plantation—the policy of government sanctioned and supported immigration to designated areas of Ireland, which accounts for a significant proportion of the growth in the Protestant population

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8 Canny, 402.


10 Perceval-Maxwell, 11.

11 Clarke, Old English, 17.
of Ireland—is best illustrated by the example of the plantation of Ulster. Following the rebellion in the 1590s of two members of the native Irish gentry, the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell, in the northern province of Ulster, the English government confiscated their lands as retribution. By 1609, the process of planting English and Scottish settlers in the confiscated lands was begun. Originally, the Protestant settlers were banned from taking on native Irish tenants. This proved unfeasible, however, and, as a result, the Protestant settlers relied on large amounts of Irish labor, and collected rents on land that had until recently belonged to the native Irish.\(^\text{12}\) This familiarity between the native Irish and New English populations bore mixed fruits in the rebellion, but for the most part a strong antipathy between the two groups developed. Similar schemes for increasing the size of the Protestant population in Ireland were carried out in other counties in Ireland. Importantly, the offices of English government in Ireland were, with few exceptions, turned over totally to this group, at the expense of the Old English.\(^\text{13}\) In conjunction with the issue of religion, this caused considerable tension between the two groups.

Along with the New English settlers that were planted in Ireland, there was also a significant population of Scots. By the 1640s, these Scottish settlers in Ireland had become even more virulently anti-Catholic than their English counterparts. However, a mutual mistrust of Catholicism did not overcome the mutual distrust the Scots and the English had for each other, and the Scots’ standing in Ireland was more akin to the native Irish population than that of the English settlers. The Scots were politically excluded from holding offices in the Irish government and had no influence at court, although, like the native Irish, they did have some

\(^{12}\) For a more detailed study of the Plantation of Ulster see Canny, 187-242.

\(^{13}\) Perceval-Maxwell, 17-8.
seats in the Irish parliament. Furthermore, the Scots’ role in the plantation scheme had inevitably made them many enemies among the dispossessed Irish. When the rebellion did break out, before the collapse of the native Irish leadership, a special effort was made to ensure that the Scots not become targets for the rebels. Though it would not last until the end of October, this resolution indicates that the leaders of the rebellion saw no real political advantage in antagonizing the Scots in Ireland. It was, therefore, concluded that the rebels’ efforts should be focused primarily on overthrowing the New English government. Despite the substantial level of Scottish involvement in the affairs of Ireland, there is nothing in the available source material that suggests a uniquely Scottish perspective on the role of the Catholic clergy in the rebellion. As a result, special attention is not afforded to the accounts of Scottish deponents in this thesis and they are considered within the wider selection of rebel victims’ accounts.

The Catholic Church’s stake in Ireland was linked with the fortunes of their native Irish and Old English adherents. In this regard, Church officials in Ireland supported lay attempts to secure toleration of Catholicism, whether tacit or statutory. Peter Lombard, created Archbishop of Armagh in 1601, sought unofficial accommodation from the Protestant Irish and James I, and was largely successful. This policy contributed to the growth of the new diocesan structure in Ireland and led to an influx of religious orders and secular priests. The goals of the Catholic Church, native Irish, and Old English did not always overlap, however. The implementation of the diocesan structure, along with many of the standards set down at the Council of Trent, was a

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 217.
16 Ibid., 9.
17 Ibid., 13.
18 Corish, 26.
slow process among the native population.\textsuperscript{19} The nature of the relationship between the native Irish and the Church at this time has led Percevall-Maxwell to suggest that “in a sense the social aims of the English state and the Roman church in Ireland were the same: to make the Irish conform more closely to the codes of behaviour found elsewhere in Europe.”\textsuperscript{20} Both the English state and the Tridentine Church sought to discipline what they saw as the excesses of native Irish behavior. Importantly, however, the calcification of a Tridentine Catholic identity differed from the undertakings of the English government in that, essentially, the Irish were being brought up to date with the new elements of a belief system that, on the whole, they already subscribed to.

Their faith in Jesus Christ and his presence in the sacraments need not substantially change, but the way in which the outward manifestations of this faith was exercised would. The project of re-catechizing the Irish inevitably met with some resistance, as the conflation of Christian and pagan elements had taken deep root in Irish rituals and everyday life.\textsuperscript{21} For their part, the Old English were willing to deviate from the positions of the Catholic hierarchy in order to prove their loyalty to the King, in an attempt to regain their political power.\textsuperscript{22} When push came to shove in 1641, however, one of the unifying goals of the rebellious coalition of native Irish and Old English—as is explained in an apology sent to the King for the necessity of the rebellion—was the call “for the general safeguard and preservation of the liberties, religion, possessions, estates, and persons of us your most faithfull subjects, the Catholiques of this your Realm of

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 16.

\textsuperscript{20} Perceval-Maxwell, 13.

\textsuperscript{21} Corish, 12.

\textsuperscript{22} Clarke, \textit{Old English}, 25.
Ireland.”23 As the rebellion progressed, the role of the Catholic Church became far more significant than it had been at the outset.24

The apology also highlights the fact that the rebels claimed to be fighting for the defense of the King’s rights, in addition to their own. In it they claim that they are fighting “for the defence and advancement of your Royal Crowne, your just prerogatives and rights.”25 The rebels claimed that they were merely rebelling against those that sought to undermine the King’s authority, and in their minds this included the Crown’s representatives in Ireland. The Crown’s interests in Ireland were officially represented first by the Lord Deputy and later the Lord Lieutenant. However, the man possibly most associated with the Lord Deputyship and Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland was Thomas Wentworth. It is with his tenure as Lord Deputy that the narrative of the events leading up to the outbreak of the Irish rebellion begins.

Thomas Wentworth was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland in January of 1632.26 His appointment had more to do with English politics, and his support of Charles’ decision to rule without a parliament, than with his qualifications for the job. Wentworth’s aim in Ireland was to govern that country as efficiently as possible in the service of the King’s needs.27 Aidan Clarke describes Wentworth as “a self-contained man of marked intelligence and overbearingly forceful character, remarkable executive abilities, and natural insensitivity, he was an authoritarian by


24 See chapter two.


27 Ibid.
inclination as well as by conviction.” Wentworth’s ruthless efficiency, although it arguably produced results, did not win him many friends in Ireland. Furthermore, his loyalty to the King made him suspect in the eyes of the Westminster Parliament. It was not until the King could no longer feasibly protect him that this combination of enemies, accrued over years of authoritarian leadership, would be successful in bringing about his demise. This is somewhat surprising insofar as Wentworth began making enemies fairly early on in his administration of Ireland.

Early in his tenure as Lord Deputy, Wentworth proved how mercenary he could be in pursuit of his aims. In order to secure a subsidy to ensure the solvency of the Irish government, Wentworth called a parliament in 1634. The parliament was to give the strange mixture of Old and New English representatives the opportunity, to discuss not only financial matters, but also to discuss the implementation of the Graces. The Graces were a series of concessions Charles had made to his Catholic subjects in Ireland in 1625, in return for the guarantee that they would vote him a subsidy. While the Graces addressed issues as varied as the ownership of land and the establishment of titles, the more controversial elements for Protestants were those clauses that effectively granted tacit toleration of Catholicism by removing mandated attendance at Protestant services and the imposition of recusancy fines. Catholic landowners had walked a fine line since the introduction of anti-Catholic legislation to Ireland in the sixteenth century. Unlike their native Irish co-religionists, the Old English did not have the luxury of anonymity on their side, and, therefore, their religious behavior was subject to far stricter scrutiny. The native Irish could practice their Catholicism, although secretly, fairly unmolested by the authorities. The Old English had already lost their ability to serve in the Irish government, without meeting certain

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 246-7.
30 Canny, 266-7.
new confessional standards, to the influx of New English settlers. The only modicum of influence they had retained was by virtue of their land ownership, which qualified them as eligible to sit in the Irish House of Commons. But under Wentworth’s tenure, even this was being slowly eroded. Wentworth was threatening to confiscate large portions of land in the largely Catholic province of Connacht for the purpose of further Protestant plantation. The Lord Deputy had also begun to question the validity of a number of Old English land titles that dated back to the Middle Ages. The Old English stood to lose everything and the Graces are the manifestation of this group’s attempts to stop the rot.

During the meeting of the Irish Parliament in 1634, Wentworth watched as his financial plans were passed through both Houses with little opposition, offering the carrot of his support for the Graces to his Old English supporters. On the subject of the Graces, the Irish Parliament issued a declaration that suggested that they should be passed into statute law, so as to ensure that their execution was not dependent upon the whims of a frequently inconstant King. Due to the procedures of Poynings Law, however, the Irish Parliament could not pass the Graces into statute law until the bill in which they proposed to do so was approved by the English government. Less than three weeks after the conclusion of the session of parliament, Wentworth would spoil his new working relationship with the Old English. After reviewing the Graces, Wentworth objected to seven of them, mainly concerning land titles. Unfortunately, however, the Graces were a jobbed lot, and a rejection of one meant a rejection of all. Wentworth refused to permit the Irish Parliament’s suggestions on the Graces to be transmitted to England, effectively ending any chance of their being passed into statute law.31

In the next parliamentary session, which began in the autumn of 1634, the Old English made their displeasure known. At every opportunity that presented itself, the Old English MPs

opposed the legislation proposed by Wentworth’s government. In a letter to Sir John Coke, secretary of state, Wentworth noted that, “the Popish Party have been ill to please this Session.”\footnote{32 The Lord Deputy to Mr. Secretary Coke, 16 December 1634 in Thomas Wentworth, \textit{The Earl of Strafforde’s Letters and Despatches}, ed. William Knowler (London: William Bowyer, 1799), 1: 350.} Wentworth was forced to try to endear himself to the New English, whom he had alienated by his seeming friendliness towards the Old English.\footnote{33 Clarke, “Government of Wentworth,” 250.} In his letter to Secretary Coke, we see evidence of a tendency that was prevalent among Protestants of the seventeenth century. Wentworth suggested in the letter that the opposition he was facing from the Old English was down to the influence of “friars and Jesuits.”\footnote{34 The Lord Deputy to Mr. Secretary Coke, 16 December 1634 in Wentworth, 351.} He continued to argue that “so long as this kingdom continues popish, they are not a people for the crown of England to be confident of.”\footnote{35 Ibid.} The mistrust developed in this episode between Wentworth and the Old English parliamentarians would continue for the better part of Wentworth’s tenure in Ireland.

While the New and Old English jockeyed for position within the parliament, the native Irish were notable only by their exclusion from the proceedings.\footnote{36 Clarke, “Government of Wentworth,” 248.} Their lot under Wentworth was far less happy than that of their Catholic brethren, the Old English. S.R. Gardiner wrote of the fate of the native Irish commoners that “their part in the old tribal tenure was utterly unrecognised, and they were contemptuously thrust out into the world to seek their fortunes as best they might.”\footnote{37 S.R. Gardiner, \textit{History of England from 1603-1642} (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1904), 10:44.} The hardships endured as a result of the policy of plantation led to bitter resentment not only against the government that had generated the policy, but also against the Protestant newcomers who, in the eyes of the native Irish, were stealing their land. An example
of the attitude prevalent among the native Irish in the province of Ulster is provided by the correspondence of Sir Arthur Chichester. In a 1610 letter addressed to the Irish Council, Chichester wrote that “the natives of these counties … are generally discontented, and repine greatly at their fortunes, and the small quantity of land left to them upon the division.” What Chichester was referring to in his letter was the amount of land granted to the native population after the plantation of Ulster had been initiated. This comment supports Perceval-Maxwell’s assertion that while the English incursions on Irish land were viewed negatively by the majority of the native population, the intensity of anti-English and anti-Protestant feeling varied based on proximity to the plantations. Native Irish anger was, predictably, far more prevalent among natives of Ulster and other areas of plantation, compared to the areas of Ireland that had remained untouched by the plantations. For this reason, the hotbed of rebellious activity was the northern province of Ulster and a majority of the depositions that were taken of the victims of native Irish atrocities were from the same province.

Parliament was dissolved on 18 April 1635. From this point on, Wentworth opted to govern without a parliament until Charles needed money for his war with the Scots in 1640. The policies that he enacted and his plans for a plantation in Connacht were viewed as authoritarian and only served to increase the growing multitudes calling for his removal. While he remained in the King’s good graces, however, he was immune from such calls, for the time being.


39 Perceval-Maxwell, 9-11.

40 Rafferty, 26-9.


42 Perceval-Maxwell, 21.
Wentworth was held in such high regard by the King that he was summoned back to England in July 1639 to advise Charles on what course of action to take concerning the conflict with the Scottish Covenanters. This conflict had erupted in July 1637, as a result of the King’s imposition of the new prayer book on the Scottish church.\(^\text{43}\) The Scottish National Covenant was introduced in February 1638, and outlined the religious beliefs that the Scots were taking up arms to defend.\(^\text{44}\) Charles’ prosecution of the war had not gone well. He had been forced by Scottish military success into signing the Pacification of Berwick in June of 1639, little more than a month after beginning his military campaign.\(^\text{45}\) Wentworth arrived in England in September 1639, and quickly proceeded to dominate meetings of the Privy Council. Wentworth advised the King to delay the Scots in peace talks while he laid provisions for further prosecuting the war. He prevailed upon the King to call a parliament to raise funds for his Scottish ventures, a move that Charles was reluctant to take after the problems he had encountered with the parliament of 1628–9. Moreover, Wentworth argued that the Irish Parliament should be used to fool the Westminster Parliament into believing that the King could come up with the necessary resources to prosecute the war by other means and that he had called the English to Westminster only as a courtesy.\(^\text{46}\) This, Wentworth thought, would spur the parliament in London into action. The Privy Council agreed that an Irish Parliament should be called in March of 1640, to be shortly followed by an English parliament.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 51.


\(^{45}\) Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 270.

\(^{46}\) Ibid., 271.
Wentworth was created the Earl of Strafford in January 1640 and promoted to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as a reward for his sterling work in service to the King. He returned to Ireland on 18 March 1640, two days after the first session of the new Irish Parliament began. Wentworth’s confidence in his ability to deliver on his promise to the King, that the Irish Parliament would serve as an example to their counterparts in Westminster, was a result of the fact that he had taken steps to ensure that government policies would receive positive hearings. Through a combination of gerrymandered districts and assurances that districts would return government-approved members of parliament, Wentworth was able to eliminate sixteen Old English seats before the elections even took place. After the composition of the House of Commons had been settled, the Old English had lost one-third of their representation as compared with the parliament of 1634. Nevertheless, the first session of the Irish Parliament went as well as Wentworth could have hoped for. The Irish House of Commons passed a bill that ensured the King four subsidies of £45,000 each. This money would not only be sent to the King directly, but would also serve to fund the creation of an Irish army for the King’s use against the Scots.

The creation of this new Irish army would go on to be one of the main contributing factors to Wentworth’s downfall. The administrative foundations for the creation of this force had been laid by the Irish Council, a body that consisted of the Lord Lieutenant’s chief advisors, during the first session of the Irish Parliament. The Council’s work had begun promisingly. Recruitment for the army commenced and was proceeding well, the time-table and training

47 Perceval-Maxwell, 65.


49 Perceval-Maxwell, 72.

50 See chapter four.
arrangements had all been set, and the officers and a core group of 1,000 soldiers from the old Irish army had already been selected and assembled. What would later prove to be a contentious issue in England was the decision of the Council to lift the usual religious tests that would be administered to the soldiers. 51 This cleared the way for Catholic Irishmen to serve in the army, and a large portion of the 8,000 soldiers of the new Irish army were Catholic. 52

Wentworth departed for England, to attend the opening of the Westminster Parliament, on 3 April 1640. In his absence the second session of the Irish Parliament commenced, and in this session one begins to see the emergence of Catholic resistance towards Wentworth’s policies. The second session began on 1 June 1640. Perceval-Maxwell posits that a combination of the facts that the spring had been late in coming that year, and that Irish trade was beginning to be affected negatively by the conflict in Scotland, contributed to a feeling of general discontent among the Irish population. 53 Perhaps of greater impact on affairs within the Irish Parliament was the fact that a number of the boroughs that Wentworth had disenfranchised prior to the first session were readmitted. 54 The admission of these formerly excluded members marked the beginning of a reinvigoration of Old English opposition to government policies. 55 The first of Wentworth’s policies to fall victim to the Old English was his plan for the plantation of Connacht. On June 3rd, the issue was referred to a committee for discussion and in turn that committee referred it to a subcommittee, of which a majority of the members were Catholic. 56

51 Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 274.

52 Russell, 127.

53 Perceval-Maxwell, 76.

54 Ibid., 77.

55 Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 276.

56 Ibid.
Wentworth’s plans for plantation never emerged from that subcommittee. After stymieing Wentworth’s plans for plantation, the Irish Commons addressed the issues of the subsidies that had been agreed to in the previous session. In response to the Irish Council’s decision to begin collecting the subsidies before an order to do so was issued by the Irish Parliament, the latter moved that the collection of the first subsidy would be allowed to proceed. However, they also stipulated that subsidies in future should be assessed “after an easy and equal rate of each man his estate, without relation to any former certainty.” The effective result of this was to reduce the amount of the subsidy collected. This was particularly damaging to Wentworth’s credibility because he had made much of the good example the Irish Parliament would set for the Westminster Parliament in terms of duty to one’s King. Finally, the Irish House of Commons lobbied the Lord Deputy, Christopher Wandesforde, who had been left in control in Wentworth’s absence, to grant them two extra days for the airing of grievances. Wandesforde complied, but after the parliament began attacking the issue of clerical fees due to the Church of Ireland, he prorogued the parliament until 1 October 1640.

In between the second and third sessions of the Irish Parliament, the situation between England and Scotland had come to a head. The Scottish Parliament had met, in defiance of the King, during June. By 3 August 1640, the Scots had decided to invade England. By the twentieth

57 Perceval-Maxwell, 78.
58 Ibid.
59 Journals of the House of Commons of the Kingdom of Ireland. (Dublin, 1796), 1:146-7 as cited in Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 276.
60 Perceval-Maxwell, 78.
61 Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 277.
of that month they had entered England, and ten days later they entered Newcastle unopposed.\textsuperscript{62} Wentworth was intricately involved in devising the King’s reactions to these events and was not in Ireland for the commencement of the third session of the Irish Parliament on 1 October 1640. This third session picked up where the second had left off. The Old English continued to advocate the reinstatement of members of parliament who had been excluded by Wentworth. They once again reworked the scales for assessment of the subsidies promised in the first session.\textsuperscript{63} Furthermore, they continued their calls for church reform that had been curtailed by Wandesforde’s prorogation of the previous session.\textsuperscript{64} In addition to these issues held over from the second session, the members of the Irish Parliament, both New English and Old English, began to suggest constitutional changes to the way that the House did business. The House sought to start generating its own legislation for consideration, and set up a committee in order to do so. Under the rather cumbersome strictures of Poyning’s Law, any legislation that was to be considered in the Irish Parliament first had to be sent to London for royal approval. There was nothing in the law that prevented the Irish Houses of Parliament from generating their own legislation, but in practice the right had been almost exclusively exercised by the Lord Lieutenants and Lord Deputies.\textsuperscript{65} While the generation of original legislation in Dublin marked the beginning of a movement for constitutional reform within the Irish Parliament, the most significant action of the third session was the passage of the November Remonstrance. In the Remonstrance, the Irish Parliament complained of the abuses and excesses of Wentworth’s administration which, according to the wording of the document, had brought the kingdom to the

\textsuperscript{62} Perceval-Maxwell, 83.

\textsuperscript{63} Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 279.

\textsuperscript{64} Perceval-Maxwell, 83.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid. 83-4.
brink of destruction. A majority of the grievances included with the Remonstrance were drawn up by the Old English, but the resentments of all ethnic groups present in Ireland except the native Irish were represented. The Irish Commons passed the Remonstrance unanimously on November 7th, and preparations were quickly made for the creation of a committee to transmit the document to England. Wandesforde reacted by proroguing the parliament yet again. Despite Wandesforde’s instructions to the contrary, however, the committee left Ireland to present their Remonstrance to the Westminster Parliament, who would later use the document to help formulate a case for the impeachment of Wentworth.

Wentworth was impeached by the Westminster Parliament on 11 November 1640. By 12 May 1641, he had been executed. Ireland was not to receive another Lord Lieutenant until after Wentworth’s execution, and so the administration of the Irish government was left to the Lord Deputy, Christopher Wandesforde. Wandesforde died before the new session of parliament met, however, which raised questions about the legitimacy of the fourth session of the Irish Parliament. This session began on 26 January 1641, and after a slow start it proved to be one of the most productive sessions of the Irish Parliament in terms of the number of issues that were addressed. Many of the issues that were discussed had to do with further constitutional reforms, but more important to the topic of this paper were the developments regarding Irish Catholic grievances in particular. One of the most significant developments during this session with

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66 Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 280.
67 Ibid., 280-1.
68 See chapter four.
69 Gardiner, History of England, 44.
70 Perceval-Maxwell, 119.
71 Clarke, “Breakdown of Authority,” 282-3.
regard to Catholic rights in Ireland was the challenge presented to the rules forbidding the sale of land to the native Irish. This law—which was a product of plantation policy, and was designed to maintain the integrity of the British settlement that this policy endeavored to create—was so strict that even the native Irish were not permitted to sell land to each other.\footnote{Perceval-Maxwell, 120-1.} Perceval-Maxwell argues that, by 1641, these strictures were a cause of great anger amongst the native population.\footnote{Ibid., 121.} He cites a petition presented to the Irish Parliament by a number of native Irishmen who argued that the “mark of separation and distinction from the rest of his highnesses’ subjects” present in the land sale restrictions could only “breed jealousy.”\footnote{“Petitions of the Irish” [February 1641], PRO, SP 63/274: 1-7 as cited in ibid.} During this session, the Irish Parliament also ordered their committee in England to seek assurances from the King for securing the Graces.\footnote{Perceval-Maxwell, 121.} Over fifteen years had passed since Charles first promised the concessions contained within the Graces to his Catholic subjects in Ireland, but by 1641 they still had not been put into effect. This fact caused resentment among the entire Catholic population of Ireland.

A further manifestation of Catholic displeasure with the administration of Ireland, in this case limited more to the Old English Catholics, was the promulgation of the Queries. The Queries, which would later be adopted as the personal project of a prominent Old English lawyer named Patrick Darcy, were a highly detailed attack on the specific policies carried out during Wentworth’s tenure as Lord Lieutenant. The Irish Commons’ plan was to garner the support of the Irish House of Lords in extracting answers from the Lords Justices to the questions posed in the document. Aidan Clarke describes the purpose of this strategy as follows:

The object of this request was, of course, to extract an authoritative confession of the illegal basis of much of Wentworth’s government. The Queries were not
simply a random series of grievances: they were, rather, the balanced ingredients of a calculated policy of rendering impossible a repetition of the events of the recent past by establishing an agreed delimitation of the competence of the executive government.\textsuperscript{76}

This attempt to limit executive power is an example of how the Old English reacted to the manipulations undertaken by the Wentworth administration to prevent Catholic interests from being heard in the Irish Parliament. This fact is evidenced in the Queries by the inclusion of a complaint concerning the disenfranchised constituencies that Wentworth had prevented from inclusion in the first session. The question posed to the Lords Justices was “whether the issuing of Quo Warrantoes out of the Kings Bench, or Exchequer, against Burroughes that anciently sent Burgesses to the Parliament, to shew cause why they sent Burgesses to the Parliament, be legall?”\textsuperscript{77} The Queries and the Lords Justices’ subsequent response would continue to be an issue into the fifth session of parliament.

The main business of the fifth session of the Irish Parliament, which commenced on 11 May 1641, was the passage of the Three Instruments. These were a series of documents that addressed a number of constitutional issues, and were passed largely under the auspices of the Protestant members of the House with Catholic support.\textsuperscript{78} The main Catholic activity in the House again primarily concerned the Queries. The Lords Justices’ responses to the Queries were deemed unsatisfactory by the Irish Parliament. The answers provided were evasive, or sometimes simply an assertion that they did not have the authority to answer the questions posed at all. In response, Patrick Darcy delivered what came to be known as the Argument. The purpose of this

\textsuperscript{76} Clarke, \textit{Old English}, 141-2.

\textsuperscript{77} “An Argument Delivered by Patrick Darcy, Esquire” (Waterford: Thomas Bourke, 1643), 9.

\textsuperscript{78} Perceval-Maxwell, 147.
declaration was to provide the answers to the Queries that the Lords Justices failed to provide.\textsuperscript{79} The Queries and the Argument garnered considerable support from the Protestant elements of the Irish Parliament, due in large part to constitutional issues that were addressed therein. For the same reason, these documents were sent to England for consideration by the King. The King was only willing to make limited concessions to the Irish Parliament. In a letter dated 31 July 1641, the King had agreed to a number of the Irish Parliament’s constitutional complaints. However, the King would not issue a decision on the laws forbidding the sale of land to native Irish Catholics and, as was recommended to him by members of the English House of Lords, would not grant the Graces until the issues surrounding the subsidies promised in the first session could be worked out.\textsuperscript{80} Through great endeavor, the Irish Parliament’s committee in England was ultimately successful in convincing the King to change his mind and to permit the Irish Parliament to discuss a bill that would secure the Graces as Acts of the Irish Parliament. This victory was short-lived, though, as disputes began to break out along confessional lines in the Irish Parliament concerning the necessity of the body’s continued meeting. In the eyes of the Protestant members, the serious business of constitutional reform had been addressed, and it is an illustration of their insensitivity to their Catholic colleagues’ interests that they considered the Graces to be of little importance. The eventual prorogation of the Irish Parliament, on 7 August 1641, was viewed by the Catholic members to be an attempt by the Puritan-influenced Irish government, and their Protestant pawns in the Irish Commons to prevent the Graces from being enacted into law. According to Perceval-Maxwell, this perception caused discord and

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 148.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 153.
encouraged further religious divisions in Ireland. For the Old English, the failure to implement the Graces was just another example of the instruments of English government’s lack of concern for, if not outright hostility towards, issues of importance to Catholic Irishmen.

The feelings of mistreatment by the Protestant elements of government that the Old English felt as a result of the parliamentary sessions of the preceding two years were tame compared with the ill feeling expressed by the native Irish in the rebellion. The resentments of the native population had been building up since the Elizabethan conquest of Ireland. One of the only available sources to monitor the mood of the native Irish community in the years subsequent to the Tudor conquest is the Gaelic poetry produced during the period. Among the most virulently anti-English of the Gaelic poems available for study was “Fúbún fúibh, a shluagh Gaoidheal.” This poem, written by an anonymous native Irish author, lambasts members of the native Irish gentry for not taking the requisite action to rid Ireland of the British intruders.

The O’Briens of Banba whom Murrough led on,
They are gone with the Saxon aggressor,
They have bartered their heirloom of ages away
And forgotten to slay the oppressor.

This excerpt illustrates two elements of the author’s anger. The first is the author’s indignation that the O’Briens have betrayed their people by taking up with the English invaders. The second is that the author feels that the English should be killed, a fact that the O’Briens have forgotten. Other Gaelic poems generally were not loaded with the same vitriol as the previous example, but they do illustrate the resentment that was building under English rule. For example, the poem “Do Frith, monuar, an uain sí ar Éirinn” lists a number of grievances, mainly concerning the

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81 Ibid., 155.


83 Canny, 421.
native population’s dispossession and the subsequently imposed burden of rent.\textsuperscript{84} Despite the anger present in the native population, to which these poems attest, a large-scale violent outburst did not occur until 1641.

Nicholas Canny suggests that an explosion of violence on the scale of the rebellion in October 1641 was prevented from happening earlier because the most embittered individuals chose exile to the Continent as opposed to open resistance to the Irish government.\textsuperscript{85} The numbers of émigrés from Ireland during the reign of the Stuart kings is quite substantial, approximately 100,000 individuals from an original population of around 1,000,000.\textsuperscript{86} Of the native Irish who remained, the more rebellious elements were mollified by their social superiors, in the form of the native Irish and Old English gentry.\textsuperscript{87} However, as we have seen, during Wentworth’s administration of Ireland the social elites had become increasingly alienated by the decisions and policies taken by the Lord Deputy. The alienation of the native Irish gentry in particular, proved to be the catalyst for the popular uprising that ensued in 1641.\textsuperscript{88} As long as the gentry were content enough with their situation to remain loyal, they would restrain the lower orders from rebelling. The political situation of the native Irish gentry in early 1641, though, had deteriorated to the point that they felt compelled to take matters into their own hands and were the main plotters behind the outbreak of the rebellion.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 428-9.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 455-6.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 456.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 469.
The plan developed for the execution of the rebellion was drawn up in a series of meetings between the chief native Irish conspirators between February and October 1641.\textsuperscript{89} In its original conception, the plan was for the simultaneous capture of Dublin Castle, to be undertaken by Lord Maguire and Hugh MacMahon, and the outbreak of the more general uprising in Ulster, under the direction of Roger Moore and Sir Phelim O’Neill.\textsuperscript{90} Of these four native Irish leaders, none had a great amount of prior military experience but all had felt compelled to act by the increasingly hostile tenor of the Irish government’s policies towards Catholic landowners.\textsuperscript{91} The lack of a particularly strong military leader did not deter the conspirators from fairly lofty goals. The goal in Ulster was to capture a majority of the chief fortifications in that province. The rebels, whose forces were comprised largely of armed commoners without any military training, achieved great success in their aims in Ulster. Within thirty-six hours of the outbreak of the rebellion, the rebels had control of Moneymore, Portadown, Tanderagee, and Newry, a chain of positions that would prevent aid being sent to Ulster from Dublin.\textsuperscript{92} By Sunday, October 24\textsuperscript{th}, Sir Phelim issued the Remonstrance of the Irish rebels, which professed their loyalty to the King but decried the behavior of the Westminster Parliament as “Maligning and Envying any Graces,”\textsuperscript{93} evidencing the anger present in rebel circles over the failure to codify the Graces. The Remonstrance also called for restraint in the execution of the rebellion and promised that abuses committed during the rebellion would be repaired.

\textsuperscript{89} Gardiner, \textit{History of England}, 49-52. The nature of these meetings is discussed in chapter three.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 51-2.

\textsuperscript{91} Perceval-Maxwell, 10.

\textsuperscript{92} Perceval-Maxwell, 214.

Events in Dublin did not proceed nearly so well. The night before the attempt on Dublin Castle was scheduled to proceed, the plot was betrayed by one of the conspirators. One of the men assembled for the task of taking the Castle, Owen O’Connolly, had slipped away from the rebels’ festivities on October 22nd and after a series of detours had arrived before the Lords Justices to relate all that he had heard that evening. According to O’Connolly, the capture of Dublin Castle was only the first step in a general slaughter of Protestants planned for Dublin. The historian S.R. Gardiner notes that the veracity of this claim is suspect, as both O’Connolly and MacMahon, with whom O’Connolly had been conversing about the plot, had been drinking heavily. Nevertheless, the Lords Justices quickly set about making preparations to counteract the conspiracy. On the morning of October 23rd both MacMahon and Maguire were seized, and the plot foiled.

In Ulster, things quickly spiraled out of control. Despite Sir Phelim’s calls for restraint on the part of the rebels, violence in Ulster was soon occurring between the native Irish and their Protestant neighbors with startling regularity. Canny suggests that “the speed with which the initial elite challenge became transformed into a popular uprising suggests that Sir Phelim O’Neill and his associates were more oblivious to problems and grievances of their social inferiors within the Catholic community than was the government in Dublin of which they complained so bitterly.” This supports the assertion made by the historian Austin Woolrych that the rebellion, as the native Irish gentry conceived it, was primarily to do with securing the rights to their land. The native Irish commoners did not have that luxury, as their land had already been taken from them by Protestant settlers. Once the green light had been given to the

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95 Canny, 473.
masses of the native Irish population, they pursued their own brand of justice vigorously. The collapse of leadership also occurred elsewhere as the rebellion sprang up around Ireland. This breakdown of authority led to some of the more horrific atrocities that were enumerated and exaggerated in the depositions taken in the subsequent months and years.  

A military stalemate eventually emerged in Ulster, but as the Protestants in this province began to organize their reaction to the rebellion violence began to erupt further south. In early November, native Irish Catholic forces, under the leadership of Colonel Brian MacMahon, began to march south into Louth. Meanwhile in Cavan, the rebels had also met with considerable success. Under the leadership of Philip O’Reilly, a Catholic Irish MP, the rebels had managed to secure the entire county in a matter of weeks since the outbreak of the rebellion. Once this had been achieved, O’Reilly and his comrades set about rationalizing the rebellion in light of the news of the failure of the rebels in Dublin. The resultant Cavan Remonstrance serves as an interesting insight into the thought of some of the native Irish leaders after the failure in Dublin and before the defection of the Old English to the rebellion. Interestingly, the Cavan Remonstrance limited its claims to only the rebels in Cavan, but also purported to represent the interests of the “Commonality” of Irish rebels. Among the Remonstrance’s calls for freedom of conscience and honest government, the authors included the protestation that they were

97 Ibid., 473-4.
98 Perceval-Maxwell, 219.
99 Ibid.
100 “Copy of the Remonstrance of the ‘Gentry and Commonality’ (the insurgents) of the Co. Cavan, of their grievances, common with other parts of Ireland,” 6 November 1641 in Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reign of Charles I, 1633-1647* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1901), 347.
undertaking the rebellion “for the preservation of his Majesty’s honour.”\textsuperscript{101} The Cavan Remonstrance is, therefore, one of the first incidents of Catholic justification of the rebellion as protecting the King’s interests. The rebel leadership would later develop this claim to assert that they had rebelled against the Westminster Parliament at the King’s insistence. A number of proclamations were issued, which included warrants from the King ordering the rebellion to be executed.\textsuperscript{102} Historians have until recently dismissed the veracity of these royal warrants, but more recent works have treated the question of Charles’ involvement with the rebels as open for debate.\textsuperscript{103}

The next significant development in the rebellion was the defection of the Old English to the side of the native Irish. The Old English had been viewed with a sense of ambivalence by the Irish government since the outbreak of the rebellion. On the one hand, the Lords Justices mistrusted them because of their confessional identity as Catholics. But on the other hand, the Lords Justices recognized that they needed the help of the Old English if the English government in Ireland was to survive.\textsuperscript{104} By the beginning of December, though, it had become apparent to a majority of the Old English of the Pale that their position as both loyal subjects to the King and as faithful Catholics had become untenable. Radical action needed to be taken in order to create a political environment, in which such seemingly contradictory religious and political beliefs could be reconciled.\textsuperscript{105} To that end, the Old English of the Pale agreed to meet the native Irish rebels at the Hill of Crofty in Meath to discuss the possibility of the former joining the rebellion. It is

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{102} Perceval-Maxwell, 214. and “ Copies of Proclamation of Sir Phelimy O’Neall and others,” 24 October 1641, in Cal SP Ire, 342.

\textsuperscript{103} This question is dealt with in further detail in Appendix 1.

\textsuperscript{104} Perceval-Maxwell, 30-1.

\textsuperscript{105} Clarke, Old English, 220-1.
important to note, however, that at this point the agreement between the Old English and native Irish was for an alliance, not a fusion of forces. The Old English established their own military command and made no effort to rein in the excesses of the native Irish rebels. Protestant hopes that the defection of the Old English to the rebel cause in December 1641 would temper the insurrection’s violent nature proved to be ill-founded. The rebellion spread throughout the rest of Ireland during the early portions of 1642 and showed no sign of letting up in intensity. It wasn’t until the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny that some semblance of order would be restored in Ireland.

The Confederation was the fruit of two of meetings held in the middle of 1642. The first of these meetings, held in May 1642, was a purely clerical affair. However, the clergy called secular leaders to the second meeting in June 1642 in order to address the issues facing the success of the rebellion in Ireland. The aim of the meetings was to establish an organized front for the goals of the disparate groups of rebels. Organizing the objectives of the rebels served two purposes. The first reason for establishing the Confederation was to provide an authority competent to negotiate with the authorities in England on behalf of the entire rebel cause. This authority had to represent the diverse interests of the native Irish gentry, the Old English, and the Catholic Church. Secondly, it was an attempt to refocus the energies of the native Irish commoners to more constructive short term goals than the random rapine and pillaging that had plagued the insurrection’s early days. This was an important undertaking by 1642, as Protestant

106 Woolrych, 207.
107 The Earl of Ormond to the King, 12 December 1641 in Cal SP Ire, 353.
108 “Orders Conceived by the Supreme Council of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland,” 11 June 1642, in Cal SP Ire, 363.
109 Clerical involvement in the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny is addressed in further detail in the chapter two.
forces in Ireland had begun to score a number of important victories against the rebels. The institution of the Confederation of Kilkenny largely succeeded in this latter goal and oversaw the construction of a more organized military component to the Catholic cause in Ireland.\(^{110}\)

Therefore, this event serves as the endpoint for this study, as after this point the rebellion took on a completely different character.

Much has been made in the preceding pages of the political decisions that led to the outbreak of the rebellion. It is important to understand these aspects of the rebellion, as it is within the context of these events that the role of the Catholic clergy in the rebellion developed. Indeed, it was the anger, desperation, and fear inspired in the Catholic population—particularly the native Irish—by these various political occurrences, which served as a catalyst for the clergy’s involvement. However, as we shall see, any clerical involvement aroused the suspicions of the Irish government that a Catholic conspiracy was afoot. The following two chapters deal in greater depth with the reality of the Catholic clergy’s involvement in the Irish rebellion and with the Irish government’s perceptions of and reactions to that involvement.

\(^{110}\) For a more detailed explanation of the causes for, and nature of the process of establishing the Confederation see Micheál Ó Siochrú, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 11-54.
Chapter Two

The Role of the Roman Catholic Clergy in Ireland

Assessing the role that the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland played in the rebellion of 1641 is a complex and multifaceted problem. The issues are complicated all the more by the relative lack of source material for this period. Nevertheless, the historian must look at the role the clergy were accused of fulfilling, and attempt to test the veracity of these claims.¹ For the sake of convenience, a thumbnail sketch of the attitudes included in the most archetypical and revered Protestant account of the Irish rebellion is outlined here. Sir John Temple’s *Irish Rebellion* took on a magisterial quality among Protestants in England and Ireland, and is the best source for a survey of Protestant attitudes towards Catholics in general and priests in particular. Temple argued that the Catholic clergy in Ireland were responsible for the organization of the rebellion,² that they were part of an international Catholic conspiracy headed by the Pope that was designed to destroy Protestantism in the British Isles,³ that the clergy served as a means of communicating instructions and information for the rebels,⁴ and that the clergy were both instigators of mob violence and themselves violent participants in the rebellion.⁵ These four presumptions are addressed in the following pages. The position taken here is that most of

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¹ How the Irish Catholic clergy were perceived by other contemporary groups is dealt with in more depth in chapters three, five and six.

² John Temple, *The Irish Rebellion or, an History of the Beginnings and First Progress of the General Rebellion Raised within the Kingdom of Ireland, upon the three and twentieth day of October, in the Year 1641* (London: R White, 1646), 6-7, 76.

³ Ibid., 60.

⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁵ Ibid., 85, 31.
Temple’s presumptions are incorrect if not seriously flawed. In place of the Protestant perception of “radical clericalism,” the position advanced in this paper is that the Catholic clergy were politically active without being radical. That is to say that, while the Catholic clergy were active in some elements of the rebellion, namely serving as an organizational force and attempting to establish links to secure foreign aid for the rebellion, they were not responsible for the genesis of the rebellion. Nor were they, for the most part, positively involved in the proliferation of violence towards Protestants in the kingdom.

In investigating the behavior of the Roman Catholic clergy during the Irish rebellion, one runs into a number of challenges that make it difficult to form a complete picture of their involvement. The primary issue to be addressed is the relative lack of surviving primary source material from the clergy themselves. Due to fires in 1711 and 1922, the main records of the Confederate government in Ireland at Kilkenny—which contained the records of the rebels—are now lost. As a result, there is very little representation of the voice of the Irish Catholic clergy. The main surviving record of the Irish perspective on the rebellion is the anonymous collection called the *Aphorismical Discovery of Treasonable Faction*, which is available in J.T. Gilbert’s *A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland, from 1641 to 1652*. In addition to this source, the following pages also rely on the correspondence of several Franciscan friars, preserved in a single volume published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. There is a danger here that we over privilege the Franciscan perspective, as most of the correspondence relevant to the

6 Micheál Ó Siochru, *Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 12.


period of this study was between two friars, Irishmen in exile: Hugh Bourke, who was the Commissary of the Irish Friars Minor in Germany and Belgium and stationed in Louvain, and Luke Wadding, who was the Guardian of St. Isidore’s seminary in Rome.\textsuperscript{9} To combat this potential bias, one must rely on the depositions taken in the wake of the rebellion by the Irish government. This, however, presents a new set of problems, described by Conrad Russell as follows: “Above all, though, the early testimony of the English and Scots on the rebellion is, like English reports from India during the Mutiny, such a vivid measure of sheer physical fear that it is hard to use it as an accurate indicator of much else.”\textsuperscript{10} The consensus among members of the historical community is that the panic that surrounded the outbreak of the Irish rebellion led to exaggeration in the depositions and a reliance on the familiar Protestant ideas of Catholicism as an insidious force set on the destruction of true religion and order.\textsuperscript{11}

As a result of this limited pool of sources, the historian is forced to piece together a holistic picture of the role of the Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion from fragmentary evidence. The depositions serve as the primary basis of the evidence on which the interpretation of this chapter is based. In many instances, the evidence supplied to support the claims made herein is laced with the anti-Catholic sentiment of the deponents. This chapter attempts to separate the wheat from the chaff, and reach the substantive truth of the situations related in the depositions, disregarding the polemical language used to describe them. In addition, a small number of deponents had positive things to say about the Catholic clergy’s role in the rebellion. Credence is given to these depositions in the following pages because most of the deponents were still the victims of lay Catholic violence; they had no particular love of Catholicism and,

\textsuperscript{9} Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 29 November 1641, in ibid.


\textsuperscript{11} Toby Barnard, \textit{The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760} (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 18.
therefore, no reason to lie in favor of the Catholic clergy. Another phenomenon supporting the argument presented here is that a discernable shift in attitude towards the Catholic clergy occurs between the 1640s and the 1650s. The depositions taken in the 1650s have far fewer mentions of clerical activity in the rebellion, and most of those that do occur are positive. It seems that with the sobering passage of time a more realistic picture of clerical involvement in the rebellion emerged in the 1650s, a phenomenon that is all the more remarkable given that the most fanatically anti-Catholic elements of the Long Parliament had by then assumed control in England and Ireland. By necessity, much of what follows is speculative interpretation, which can be substantiated with other evidence to differing degrees, and I have attempted to keep the distinction between hard fact and personal interpretation clear in the following pages. But although my method conforms to Canny’s approach to the lack of sources, other historians viewing the same evidence may come to altogether different conclusions. This, therefore, is only one contribution to the ongoing debate about the role of the Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion of 1641.

According to the Protestant establishment at the time, the Catholic clergy were the prime conspirators behind the organization of the rebellion. This assertion does not hold up, though, when one investigates the surviving documentary evidence of the conception of the plans for the rebellion. The organizers of the rebellion were Roger Moore and Lord Maguire. In Maguire’s account of the events that led up to the outbreak of the rebellion, he notes that Moore came to see

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him to discuss the possibility of a rising. Moore listed a number of grievances, pertaining particularly to the reign of Thomas Wentworth as Lord Lieutenant. However, Moore also reminded Maguire that “the welfare, and maintaining of the Catholick Religion, which he said, undoubtedly the Parliament now in England will suppress doth depend on it:…by which persuasions he obtained my consent.”

Thus, we can see that religion was certainly of central importance to two of the rebellion’s central figures, and was an impetus behind the development of the original rebel plot. However, at this meeting in February 1641, Maguire does not make any mention of a clerical presence.

The next meeting to plan for the rebellion was held in May of 1641. While there was a clerical presence at this meeting, it appears to have been of minimal influence. Maguire only mentions two clerics, the first of whom was used as a messenger to contact an Irish exile serving in the army of the King of Spain in the Netherlands—Colonel Owen Roe O’Neill, who was one of several Irishmen serving in Continental armies who would be asked by the rebels to return to Ireland to take command of Irish forces. The conspirators resolved “that an Express Messenger should be sent to the Colonel, to make all the Resolutions known to him, and to return speedily with his Answer. And so one Toole O Comely a Priest (as I think Parish Priest to Mr. Moore) was sent away to Colonel O Neale.” The parenthetical reference suggests that it was O’Comely’s relationship to Moore, more than his status as a member of the clergy, that secured him the job as emissary to Colonel O’Neill. The second cleric mentioned in Maguire’s narrative was a friar named John Barnewall. Barnewall informed the


16 Ibid., 543-5.

17 Corish, “Rising,” 290.

18 “Relation of the Lord Mac-guire,” 546.
native Irish conspirators of the actions of the Old English Catholics of the Pale. In his relation, Barnewall apparently indicated that the Old English were discussing the developing situation with England and “that those Gentlemen of the Pale (and some other Members of the House of Commons) had several Meetings and Consultations, how they might make Stay of the Souldiers in the Kingdom.”\(^{19}\) Despite his seeming insider knowledge, Maguire views Barnewall as no more than a messenger. Barnewall was not recognized by Maguire as being an active participant in the consultations to keep the soldiers that Wentworth had raised for Charles in Ireland, merely an observer. Moreover, the consultations in question, even if Barnewall were included in a more active role than Maguire attributes to him, certainly do not qualify as a clerical conspiracy due to the predominance of secular conspirators.

One of the most significant claims of clerical involvement in the orchestration of the rebellion can be found in Dr. Henry Jones’ relations of a meeting at the Franciscan abbey at Multyfarnham. Jones, who was the Protestant Dean of Kilmore and strongly anti-Catholic,\(^{20}\) provides two versions of the alleged meeting at Multyfarnham, which differ quite significantly in tone and detail. These differences give one pause, and raise questions about the veracity of the details that Jones provides. Despite the dubious contradictions between the two versions, though, Jones’ information about the meeting, sketchy as it is, provides the only concrete example of how Protestants believed the Catholic clergy to be involved in the development of the rebellion that has survived. Whereas other Protestant writers were content to attribute the rebellion to the machinations of Roman Catholic clergy without providing their rationale, Jones explains what he believed the clergy’s role to be more specifically.

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.

Jones’ relations cannot be written off as a particularly well thought out manifestation of familiar anti-Catholic tropes, however. Crucially from the perspective of the modern historian, Perceval-Maxwell has discovered evidence which corroborates that a meeting did take place at Multyfarnham. However, these other sources provide limited details as to what went on at the meeting and Jones’ relations, therefore, become increasingly important in developing a view as to the genesis of the rebellion. In the context of this thesis, such information is important in order to try and establish the date of the clergy’s involvement with rebel plot. Jones’s relations are frustrating on this point, as he offers a different date in each of the two versions. In addition, the tone of these predominantly clerical meetings changes between the two versions.

The first relation of the events at Multyfarnham Jones provides comes in the form of his deposition. In his deposition Jones is very clear that the meeting at Multyfarnham occurred in October, on the feast of St. Francis (October 4th). Since the meeting at Multyfarnham is the earliest example of clerical involvement that survives, one can conclude from Jones’ deposition that the clergy of the Catholic Church were not involved in the rebellion until a few weeks before its outbreak in late October. However, in a pamphlet, which Jones authored later, in 1642, this date is contradicted. In “A Perfect Relation of the Beginning and Continuation of the Irish-rebellion, from May Last, to this Present 12th, of January, 1641,” Jones shifts the date of the meeting to the summer. In either case, Jones’ relation of events provides support to the argument against the involvement of the Catholic clergy in the original conception of the rebellion. Even if one does accept that this meeting occurred on the earlier date, sometime in the summer of 1641, it still would have happened after the original native Irish conspirators had conceived the notion

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21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
of the rebellion in February. However, if the clergy were involved in the summer, they would have been far more involved in planning the rebellion.

Another way in which the two versions provided by Jones contradict each other is in the manner of the meeting presented. In his deposition, Jones relates that, “a man and many others there agitated and the question was, what course should be taken with the English and all others that were found in the whole kingdom to be Protestants. The Council was thereon divided.”23 Jones continues that two basic camps were formed among the clergy. The first advocated deporting all Protestants and Englishmen, while the second called for the murder of all Protestants and Englishmen in the country.24 In this version of events the clergy are portrayed as being divided on an issue that was brought to their attention. Jones again changes his tune in his pamphlet, in which he lays the blame for the conception of the rebellion squarely on the Catholic clergy, writing: “It is clear and manifest, that this new way of Treason and Rebellion, was by the disloyall and perfidious Romanists,…at a Friary called Multifarnham in the County of Westmeath, where many hundreds of them met and consulted for many daies together this last Summer…plotted, contrived, and put in execution.”25 By using the phrase, “new way of Treason and Rebellion,” it is clear that Jones is trying to insinuate that the rebellion was the fruit of the meeting of Catholic clergy at Multyfarnham, and that, even for them, such a meeting and plan was an innovative step. This latter version portrays the clergy as far more proactive and unified in planning a massacre of Protestant Irishmen. Obviously, the discrepancies in these two


24 Ibid., 355-7.

relations prevent them from both being true. Therefore, one must try and determine which version is more accurate.

On the whole, Jones’ deposition seems to be a bit more reliable than his pamphlet. Though, the fact that Jones’ deposition is largely based on hearsay\(^{26}\) does cast some doubt on its veracity. On the other hand, the claims made in Jones’ pamphlet are far more exorbitant and have less support from other contemporary evidence. Of his two versions, Jones’ deposition is certainly the more level-headed and reasonable, although, one is forced to try and get to the substantive truth behind the anti-Catholic rhetoric. Like many Protestant depositions, Jones’ account contains elements of truth couched within wildly polemical language. And it is not surprising that most of the outlandish claims made by Jones in his deposition follow the familiar themes of the popish plot motif that was popular amongst Protestants of this time. Jones makes some claims, which with the benefit of hindsight, seem wildly outlandish. For instance, Jones says in his deposition that the rebels planned to send 30,000 troops to conquer England.\(^{27}\) Such a plan would have been far beyond the means of the rebels. But just because the modern reader of Jones’ deposition knows this to be untenable, does not mean that Jones did not honestly believe that this was the case himself. And as the only remaining source for information on the meeting at Multyfarnham, one must try and piece together some picture, however incomplete, of what went on from the evidence provided by Jones.

To that end, the position taken in this thesis is based on the information provided in Jones’ deposition, synthesized with the scholarship of Michael Perceval-Maxwell relating to the meeting at Multyfarnham. Perceval-Maxwell’s view, which has become the standard view among modern historians, is that the meeting occurred on, or around, the date suggested in

\(^{26}\) He claimed to have heard the story he related in his deposition from a friar who was present at the meeting.

\(^{27}\) “Council of the Rebels at Multifarnham Abbey,” in Hickson, 2:358.
Jones’ deposition (early October), and that the clergy were joined by a few lay members of the native Irish gentry to discuss leadership in a Catholic Ireland. Perceval-Maxwell posits in *The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641*, using Jones’ deposition as evidence, that “the Multyfarnham meeting resembled more a debate than an assembly which laid down policy.” It seems most likely then, based on these sources, that the clergy had been informed of the native Irish gentry’s plans and were meeting to try and make sense of them for themselves. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the meeting at Multyfarnham gave the clergy their first warning of the rebellion’s imminent outbreak. Moreover, even Jones credits a significant portion of the Catholic clergy with lobbying for the humane treatment of Protestant Irishmen. All of this is an indication of the disparity between the prevailing Protestant perception and the actual role of the Roman Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion.

Another of the central accusations leveled at the Catholic clergy in Ireland was that they were part of an international Catholic conspiracy that sought the destruction of Protestantism with the help of the Catholic powers in Spain and Rome. There is evidence that supports elements of this claim, namely that the Irish clergy were in contact with members of the Roman clergy, seeking advice and support for the rebellion. The international nature of the Catholic clergy opened up avenues of communication that made it possible for Irish clerics to seek intervention from their counterparts on the Continent. One of the finest examples of this is the correspondence of Hugh Bourke and Luke Wadding, both of whom were Irish Franciscans in exile in Europe. Bourke wrote to Wadding, who was stationed in Rome, and on a number of occasions stressed the importance of winning the Papacy’s financial and military support for the

28 Perceval-Maxwell, 236.

29 Ibid., 239.
rebellion. Bourke’s letter to Wadding on 7 December 1641 attempts to convince the Pope to divert military forces from another campaign to aid the Irish rebellion:

> We trust His Holiness will bear a hand on this occasion in the interest of the Church and for the glory of God. His anti-Parmesan army would be employed with more glory and to better purpose in this enterprise than in any other that Europe knows of to-day; whereas if His Holiness neglect to foster this war begun solely in the interest of the Catholic and Roman religion, other princes will have a care how they embroil themselves for the like cause."  

What is most striking about letters such as these is the amount of effort that Bourke dedicates to trying to convince the Pope of the value of getting involved. In a subsequent letter Bourke asks Wadding to relate personally to the Pope that “if His Holiness should not liberally foster the present war, seeing it is merely for religion, he would lose credit with all the kings and princes of Europe.” While these letters do confirm the Protestant fear that the Catholic clergy in Ireland were trying to engage foreign Catholic powers for aid for the rebellion, they also illustrate how reality begins to diverge from the English conceptions of a popish plot.

The fact that Bourke needed to try so hard to convince the Pope of the value of supporting the Irish rebellion belies the Protestant assumption that the plans for the rebellion were an element of the popish plot that had its genesis in the “Romish Forge.” This is further evidenced in the Papal response to Bourke’s pleas for aid. In February of 1642, Bourke addressed a number of increasingly desperate letters to Wadding, further urging the importance of Papal aid. Bourke wrote, “For the love of God see that some succour is sent in forthwith.”

In March, Bourke changed his tack. He requested that, if arms and munitions could not be spared for the rebellion, a papal nuncio should be sent to Ireland to inspire the rebels to persevere in

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32 Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 22 February 1642, in ibid., 121.

33 Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 18 February 1642, in ibid., 119.
their efforts.\textsuperscript{34} Wadding’s response to these requests is dated 22 March 1642. Unfortunately for Bourke, Wadding wrote that the Pope would not be sending aid to Ireland. “In the first place I represented to Your Paternity how impossible it was that His Holiness should take upon himself the burden of this war, seeing that he is already engaged in another, and the temporal resources of the Church are very limited.”\textsuperscript{35} This came as a severe blow to Bourke\textsuperscript{36} and other rebels, including Owen Roe O’Neill.\textsuperscript{37} Both wrote to Luke Wadding lamenting the Papacy’s obstinate refusal to send aid to Ireland.

Maguire states in his relation of the origins of the rebellion that Moore assured him that they “could not miss of help from either Spain, or the Pope.”\textsuperscript{38} However, the Spanish would also fail to provide the assistance that the rebels had convinced themselves would be available. Again we see from his correspondences that Bourke was in some way involved in attempting to secure aid from Spain. Bourke wrote of his frustration in this venture to Luke Wadding.\textsuperscript{39} In one of his more caustic moments, he wrote to Wadding that “nothing is to be hoped from Spain, not even the least favour.”\textsuperscript{40} It is important to note, here, that Spain was in no position to intervene in Irish affairs in 1641. The Spanish monarchy was preoccupied by major uprisings in Catalonia and Portugal in the early 1640s. The failure of an effective arrangement with Spain or the Papacy for support for the rebellion would seem to disprove the Protestant belief that the Irish rebellion was part of a wider Catholic conspiracy with its origins in Catholic Europe.

\textsuperscript{34} Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 1 March 1642, in ibid., 122.
\textsuperscript{35} Luke Wadding to Hugh Bourke, 22 March 1642, in ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{36} Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 12 April 1642, in ibid., 131.
\textsuperscript{37} Owen Roe O’Neill to Luke Wadding, 18 May 1642, in ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{38} “Relation of the Lord Mac-guire,” 544.
\textsuperscript{39} Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 8 March 1642, in HMC, \textit{Franciscan MSS}, 125.
\textsuperscript{40} Hugh Bourke to Luke Wadding, 22 March 1642, in ibid., 127.
Perhaps the crux of the argument against the clergy presented by Sir John Temple and the other Protestants, was that the Irish Catholic clergy were violent participants in the rebellion, and that they incited the native Irish to take violent action against their Protestant neighbors. This notion has caused some historical debate. While it has been given some credence by Michael Perceval-Maxwell, both Nicholas Canny and Micheál Ó Siochrú have refuted these claims. Perceval-Maxwell eschews the generalization made by Temple that the Irish clergy were on the whole violent, but does subscribe to the belief that the clergy inspired the anti-English and anti-Protestant feelings among the rebels that led to violence towards the Protestant settlers. Canny and Ó Siochrú accept the proposition that the clergy inspired anti-Protestant feeling, but add that the clergy did everything within their power to direct this antipathy towards the symbols of Protestantism in Ireland—such as Protestant Bibles, Churches, etc.—rather than Protestant individuals. Canny illustrates this distinction in *Making Ireland British* by explaining that the Irish clergy wished “to rid their community of Protestant religious worship, which they regarded as a malign presence, rather than of Protestant people who might be persuaded to convert to Catholicism.” Ó Siochrú takes Canny’s assertions one step further and argues that, essentially, the Irish Catholic clergy were a force upon which executive authority was foisted only after the lay leaders failed to take control of the situation. As such, Ó Siochrú posits that the Irish clergy were essentially a conservative force that sought to “to restore some semblance of law and order,

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41 Temple, 31.
42 Temple, 85.
43 Perceval-Maxwell, 249.
44 Canny, 489. and Ó Siochrú, 27-8.
45 Ibid.
It is particularly revealing of the wide range of interpretation that the events of the Irish rebellion are open to that Perceval-Maxwell and Ó Siochrú come to totally different conclusions when interpreting an individual episode in the rebellion. For example, the Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, Malchy O’Queeley, ordered that a force of Catholic soldiers should be raised in Connacht. Percevall-Maxwell interpreted this move to be a part of Archbishop O’Queeley’s designs to raise a rebellion in the province, whereas Ó Siochru asserts that this force was assembled to maintain order and prevent looting in the province. As this example illustrates, analysis of the role of the Catholic clergy during the Irish rebellion, especially when it comes to the issue of clerical violence, relies to a large extent on the individual historian’s interpretation. For his part, Perceval-Maxwell seems to have been more willing to subscribe to the accepted wisdom about clerical involvement available in both primary and secondary sources printed concerning the Irish rebellion, as his study focuses more on the political dimension of the rebellion; whereas, Canny and Ó Siochru both take a more skeptical view of the roles assigned to the Catholic clergy in the primary material. Canny, in particular, devotes large portions of his study to examining the issue of the Catholic clergy’s actual role in the rebellion.

The position advanced in this paper falls somewhere between Canny’s and Ó Siochru’s interpretations. After an examination of the available primary resources, the thesis that Canny and Ó Siochru share concerning the Irish clergy’s attitude towards rebel violence, which is, as Ó Siochru puts it, that “in most accounts, they [the Catholic clergy] acted as a moderating influence

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46 Ó Siochru, 42.
48 Ó Siochru, 39.
on the rebels, counseling restraint and preventing the massacre of protestant settlers on a number of occasions,"\textsuperscript{49} is accepted and used as a starting point for the discussion that follows.

One striking example of clerical moderation of rebel violence is provided in the deposition of Michael Harrison. In it, Harrison related a scenario that he claimed to have witnessed in December 1641. Harrison reported that in the town of Charlemont, a soldier under the command of Sir Phelim O’Neill was caught murdering a Protestant by a Dominican friar named Father Gynon. Harrison explained that Fr. Gynon brought the soldier “with his sword bloody to Sir Phelim, whom the friar then told, that if he would not punish his soldiers for killing such as he had protected (i.e. promised to protect), God Almighty would not prosper his undertakings, to which the said Sir Phelim made answer, ‘\textit{Go about your business, it doth not concern you!}’”\textsuperscript{50} and so the soldier went unpunished.

Fr. Gynon’s attempts to moderate rebel behavior by making an example of this soldier were obviously stymied in this instance. But this is just one example of a number of episodes that are present in the depositions that illustrate what Canny describes as the clergy’s “concern to protect British people from murder and robbery until they had first been given the opportunity to ‘turn to Mass’, and where they refused to convert they would have had them escape with their lives and some dignity.”\textsuperscript{51} In addition to scenarios in which the clergy took a direct stand against rebel violence, there are a number of depositions that report how priests tried to protect Protestants from the violent excesses of the rebels by less direct means.

One such example of this clerical strategy is provided in the deposition of Jasper Horsey. Horsey described the actions of one rebel in particular, John Roche, after he and a number of

\begin{flushleft}49 Ibid. 
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\begin{flushleft}50 “Deposition of Michael Harrison,” 11 February 1652, in Hickson, 1:228. 
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\begin{flushleft}51 Canny, 489. 
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other Protestants were taken prisoner by a group of local rebels. “And the said John Roche immediately caused the said Walter Harte [one of Horsey’s fellow Protestant prisoners] to be hanged, but in the meantime proffered him his life if he would turn Papist, and for that purpose brought to him a mass priest to persuade him thereunto, but the said Harte utterly denying to turn, was presently executed.”

In this episode, Harte was offered his life if he would convert to Catholicism. For a devout Protestant, this may have been a fate worse than death. However, it is also an indication of the clergy’s desire to spare the needless shedding of blood. Canny suggests that the strategy of offering Protestant victims the opportunity to convert to Catholicism was one of the main ways in which the Catholic clergy attempted to prevent their needless slaughter. Indeed, similar stories of priests intervening in the middle of executions to attempt to convert the potential victims are fairly numerous in Mary Hickson’s collection of depositions. How convincing a conversion that came at the end of a noose was for these clerics is not recorded, but it is reasonable to assume that the notion that Protestants might reconcile to Catholicism only to save their lives and then return to apostasy as soon as it was safe to do so, must have crossed their minds. This is not to say, of course, that the Catholic clergy did not earnestly and even sometimes opportunistically seek the true conversion of Protestants back to the Catholic Church. This fact is attested to in the deposition of John Kerdiff, who, though he was treated humanely by a Friar Malone, was critical of his captor for subsequently burning his Protestant version of the Bible. However, it seems reasonable to assume that in cases where the Catholic clergy were...


53 Canny, 489-90.

54 For examples see the “Deposition of Barnarby Dunne,” 22 November 1642, the “Deposition of Robert Wadding, 17 March 1641, both in Hickson, 2: 83,50, and the “Deposition of Henry Steele,” 10 January 1641 in Hickson, 1:213.

confronted with the imminent execution of Protestant victims that the clergy were willing to accept Protestant lip service.

But why did the Catholic clergy not devise another scheme to save Protestant victims? The Horsey deposition provides some insight into this question. In Horsey’s deposition, the deponent states that John Roche and his company of twenty-five rebels brought Harte before a single priest. In situations such as this, it is entirely possible that the priests were intimidated by the violent nature of the rebels themselves. Therefore, they were limited in what they could do to help the Protestants to extricate themselves from these situations. Sparing Protestants merely to stem what the clergy deemed unnecessary violence would hardly appeal to the more violent members of the rebellion, as is evidenced by some of the anti-Protestant vitriol propagated by the rebels during the rebellion. Having the Protestants publicly renounce their faith, which made them so offensive to the rebels, and publicly subscribe themselves to the rebels’ belief system, was probably the only realistic option that presented itself to the priests in the face of an angry mob. The clergy may have had the power to channel the anger of the native Irish into more constructive objectives for the success of the rebellion, but they did not have the power to make that anger evaporate altogether. It has been noted by historians that many of the Protestants killed in the rebellion were killed by people whom they knew beforehand. The settling of old scores was a powerful motivating factor behind the violence of the native Irish. The result of years of oppression and mistreatment was the burning hatred that would not be mollified, by clerics or


57 Canny, 490.

58 Ibid. 488.

The mob mentality, as it generally does, probably contributed to the growth of violence. Once one man’s enemies had been dealt with, why shouldn’t the next man in the mob deal with his Protestant antagonists? The intensity of anti-English and anti-Protestant feeling among the native Irish commoners provided a challenge to the clergy’s intentions of moderating the rebels’ activities.

For the most part, if the clergy intended to remove Protestants from harm’s way, they did it before the Protestants had been captured by the rebels. This was certainly the case for the family of the Protestant Bishop of Killala. In a relation of Catholic deeds during the rebellion presented to the Marquess of Ormond, the anonymous author explains that “one Brian Killery, a friar, the guardian of the abbey of Ross, near Shrule, was one of the first that made haste to that rescue, and brought the said bishop and his wife and children with several others of the said distressed Protestants into his monastery, where he civilly treated them for several nights.”

This example illustrates that the Irish Catholic clergy were also willing to protect the clergy of the Protestant Church from the wrath of the Irish rebels. Despite the ideological differences of the two religions, Killery still felt obligated to prevent the unnecessary loss of life.

Where they could, members of the Catholic clergy attempted to ferry Protestant families away from danger. This strategy was more effective when it was implemented before the clergy were confronted by mobs of native Irish with Protestant victims in tow. There are, of course, certain cases of exceptional bravery on the part of the Irish Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion. In one remarkable instance, a Franciscan friar risked life and limb to save a family from a

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60 Ibid., 15-6.
rampaging mob in Shrule. 62 The friar, who related his story in a deposition, resolved to try and save a Protestant child. What happened as he tried to perform this task merits extended quotation:

One Beuchannon’s (sic) son was twice or thrice, at least, forcibly taken out of the deponent’s arms. And this deponent further saith, that the murderers, whom this deponent, being a stranger, knew not, threatened to kill this deponent if he let not the son of the said Buchannon go, and that the son of the said Buchannon was forcibly taken out of this deponent’s arms, and murdered. 63

Following these ultimately unsuccessful heroics, the same friar provided for another Protestant family to be hidden so as to keep them safe. Other stories similar to this one show up elsewhere in the narrative of the Irish rebellion. At the town of Cashel, after a mob of 500 rebels began to ransack the town, the anonymous author of the account to Ormond relates that “the English were saved … by the Roman Catholic clergy of the town, who in the streets exposed themselves to rescue them.” 64 The author goes on to give a number of specific examples of how members of religious orders hid Protestants in their chapels and under their altars. 65

Nevertheless, the skeptical reader may be tempted to argue that these depositions were as much propaganda, designed to exonerate the clergy, as the Protestant literature that condemned them. This line of argument may have some merit, but there are a number of facts that make it unlikely. Firstly, these instances are generally corroborated in more than one deposition. For example, Friar Fitzpeter’s deposition is supported by the testimony of James Lynch and the

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65 Ibid., 244.
author of a tract sent to the Marquess of Ormond.\textsuperscript{66} Secondly, the depositions were collected by Protestant authorities, and it is unlikely that they would have given much truck to the protestations of innocence of Catholic clergy in anything other than in situations where there was some reason to give their testimony credence. This notion is supported by the fact that, as Canny points out, a number of Protestant deponents testified to the good deeds of Catholic clerics.\textsuperscript{67} It is reasonable to believe, then, that some of these Catholic depositions were supported by the information provided in Protestant accounts. Finally, these depositions were being collected in the 1650s by agents of the Cromwellian government. There would have been very little hope for any propagandistic value in these depositions, as the Puritan authorities could very easily quash such attempts if they became evident. Moreover, Catholic clergy who were being debriefed by Cromwellian officials were very likely unable to access the necessary materials for printing propaganda.

All of this does not absole the clergy of their active role in the rebellion. It does, however, put pay to the Protestant assumption, evident in the depositions, that the members of the Catholic clergy were violent instigators.\textsuperscript{68} Such generalizations rarely stand up to thorough examination. Likewise, it would be inaccurate to assert that the Irish clergy were not responsible for any loss of life during the rebellion. The author of the \textit{Aphorismical Discovery} provides some examples of armed bands led by members of the Irish clergy.\textsuperscript{69} Some of the depositions detailing priestly cruelty are probably substantively true, even if they do rely on polemical embellishment. The latter, however, are in the minority. Nicholas Canny commented on the content of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{66} For example see “The Examination of James Lynch concerning the murders committed at Shrule,” 23 November 1652, in Hickson, 2: 1-2; and [Anonymous] to the Marquess of Ormond, in Hickson, 2:254-5.
  \item \textsuperscript{67} Canny, 488.
  \item \textsuperscript{68} For an example see the “Deposition of Alexander Crichton,” February 1641, in Hickson, 1:188-90.
  \item \textsuperscript{69} Gilbert, 18.
\end{itemize}
depositions, writing that “despite [the] occasional mention…of priests egging on the insurgents to ever more dastardly acts, the more reflective deponents noted that priests played a generally directive and moderating role in the insurrection.”

This leads one to question why the accusations of priestly malevolence developed in the way they did, and became such a large part of the narrative of the rebellion that was reported back to London by the authorities in Dublin? One imagines that personal tragedy played a major role in some cases. Margaret Bromley was forced to watch as her husband and neighbors were killed by the rebels. She later claimed that “the priests and the friars were the cause of their killing and putting to death the English and Scotch Protestants.” Though she did not herself directly insinuate any clerical involvement in the murder of her husband and neighbors, when the suggestion was put to her that Catholic priests were the cause of the violence that led to her husband’s death, she accepted it as the truth. Those who were seeking to make sense out of the violence that had been perpetrated on them would often resort, in their confusion and their grief, to the prevalent religious stereotypes of the day. This is evidenced by the fact that, like Margaret Bromley, many of the deponents who list priests as violent members of the rebellion do so based on the testimony of others. This reliance on hearsay makes such relations prone to hyperbole, as the deponent is one step removed from the event in the best of circumstances.

Another possible cause for the exaggerated role assigned to Catholic priests in the Irish rebellion was that it was a cynical manipulation of Protestant religious fears by government officials. The Irish government was filled with Protestant officials, most of whom inherently mistrusted Catholics. When the rebellion broke out, the state of English government in Ireland

70 Canny, 488.
71 “Deposition of Margaret Bromley,” 26 August 1642, in Hickson, 1:297.
was incredibly weak. This meant that the Irish government had to appeal to England for the necessary men and material in order to combat the rebellion.

However misrepresented the Catholic clergy have been in the surviving records, it is undeniable that the vast majority of the Irish Catholic clergy wanted the rebellion to succeed. Nicholas Canny wrote of the Ulster clergy’s aims in the rebellion that “turning the world upside down, had, of course, never been the objective…of the Catholic clergy of the province who played such an active and visible role in the insurrection from the outset that some deponents were given to attributing every evil that befell them to priestly, if not papal, influence.”\footnote{Canny, 488.} Canny goes on to argue that the profile of the Catholic clergy as leaders of the rebellion increased as the influence of the original conspirators waned.\footnote{Ibid., 489.} As the secular power structure of the rebellion broke down, the clergy stepped in to lead what the Earl of Clanricarde described as a “loose and desperate people.”\footnote{Clanricarde to the Lords Justices, 31 October 1641, in Ulick Bourke, \textit{Memoirs and Letters of Clanricarde}, ed. John Smith de Burgh (London: R & J Dodsley, 1757), 6.} Micheál Ó Siochrú has suggested that the establishment of an oath of association and eventually the creation of the Confederation of Kilkenny were undertaken by the clergy in order to form some sort of social cohesion as the old, English, order was destroyed.\footnote{Ó Siochrú, 39.} This is evidenced in one of the first orders from the Supreme Council of the Confederation of Kilkenny, in which the punishment for pillage was ordered to be death.\footnote{“Orders Conceived by the Supreme Council of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland,” 11 June 1642, in \textit{Cal SP Ire}, 363.} Ó Siochrú argues that “the nature of these orders underlines the conservative outlook of the Irish catholic leaders, both
lay and clerical. Forced by political circumstances to assume an executive role, they sought (above all else) to restore some semblance of law and order, protect private property, and control the populist uprising. 77 One can argue, then, that while the Catholic clergy were politically active in the rebellion, they were not radical in the sense that they were believed to be by Protestants. The radical nature of the rebellion was not attributable to the role of the clergy; it was a sudden and violent expression of the accrued anger and sense of injustice of the native Irish people. Not even the native Irish gentry, who unleashed the rebellion, expected such an outcome. They were left dumbfounded by the loss of control, and the responsibility for reinstating order fell to the Catholic clergy. The clerics had not, and still to a large degree could not, manipulate the majority of rebels into performing organized actions. Rather, the clergy tried, and often failed, to reinstate some semblance of decency and order.

While the orders of the Confederate Supreme Council are a good example of the moderating nature of the clergy in the Irish rebellion, there is another dimension to the role they played. In addition to concerning themselves with preserving order, they also took steps to aid in the success of the rebellion. One of the primary ways in which the clergy aided in the organization of the rebellion was by serving as a means of communication. This strategy met with mixed results. In the more successful instances one can see the great potential that an international network of clerics communicating with each other could have. For example, the attempts to secure the services of Colonel Owen Roe O’Neill and other Irish officers serving in foreign wars were successful in large part because of the work of the Irish Catholic clergy. 78 The

77 Ó Siochrú, 42.

78 “Relation of the Lord Mac-guire,” 546.
Franciscan friar Luke Wadding, who was in contact with Owen Roe O’Neill, also secured a benediction and plenary indulgence for the Colonel and all the men he took into Ireland with him from the Pope. This would have served as a motivation for soldiers to join the expeditions that were being led into Ireland. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the clergy as a tool to spread word of the rebellion was stymied by their internal divisions. The Irish clergy may have attempted to serve as an information network for the rebellion, a function they were accused of fulfilling by Protestant officials such as Sir John Temple, but they failed to reach the organizational heights credited to them by the Protestants because of a lack of uniformity of purpose within their own ranks.

It is important, for a better understanding of the Irish Catholic clergy’s involvement in the rebellion of 1641, to make necessary distinctions between the roles, objectives, and behaviors of the various elements among the clergy. Within the Catholic clergy in Ireland three different divisions can be readily identified: the division between the ethnically Irish clergy and their Old English counterparts, the division between the diocesan priests and the religious orders, and the division between the episcopate and the presbyterate. The perspective proposed by Protestant authors such as Sir John Temple, of a clergy unified in its aim to bring down the Protestant establishment, is a rather unsophisticated attempt to explain how the rebellion fit into a wider popish plot. The truth of clerical involvement in the insurrection is far more nuanced, and requires a closer inspection of the roles of the three aforementioned divisions.

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80 Urban VIII to Eugenio O’Neill and Thomas Preston, 1642, in ibid., 125.
81 Temple, 40.
82 Ibid.
There were many differences between Catholicism as it was practiced by the Old English, and as it was practiced by the native Irish. The Old English had identified themselves with the Catholic teachings of the Counter-Reformation, and modeled their ecclesiastical structure on those in mainland Europe. Patrick Corish suggests that the Old English looked particularly to the French as a model of Tridentine Catholicism. 83 The native Irish clergy, on the other hand, were only slowly coming to terms with the developments laid down in the Council of Trent. They were also, in a general sense, more inclined to appeal to Spain for aid rather than France. 84 These differences led to tensions between their respective clergy members. In the deposition of George Creichton, the deponent provides a vivid example of the animosity between these groups, which demands extended quotation:

This deponent further saith, that the priest of the parish of Lurgan did so hate the pale people that he would not that any of their priests or friars should say mass in his parish, and the people of the pale did so hate him that they would not come near to him. Neither party believed each other, the Irish would usually abuse those of the pale with news of foreign aids landed at Wexford and Kinsale, and while they were thus telling lies one to another and seemed to give themselves comfort in telling them, some would sometimes come in from Dublin and tell them some news that would change all their cheer and then how earnestly would they pray for peace and many a bitter curse would they give to them that began the war. 85

The mutual distaste these groups of clergy felt for each other, which is clearly evidenced in the preceding excerpt, may have also had something to do with lingering ethnic tensions. Until the arrival of the New English during the reign of Elizabeth I, the Old English had been viewed as the colonial oppressors of the native Irish. The perceived threat of a belligerently anti-Catholic parliament in London had made strange bedfellows of these two former antipathetic groups.


84 Ibid.

Their common faith, as Corish points out, was not the unifying factor it was supposed to be by Protestant outsiders. And, in fact, it was another issue over which the clerical members of each ethnic group differed quite virulently. Additionally, each ethnicity had its own agenda for the rebellion. The Old English clergy, as well as the Old English laity, greeted the rebellion and its populist tendencies with skepticism at first. Many of them came from substantial landowning families, and mistrusted the native Irish’s propensity for pillaging. However, the Catholic Church stood to gain from the rebellion’s success, and so the Old English, clergy and laity, joined the rebellion in early December. Relations between these two ethnic groups were complicated further by the fact that a preponderance of the Old English clergy were members of the diocesan priesthood, as opposed to the native Irish clergy, who were predominantly members of various religious orders. The distinction between these two types of priests would lead to further conflicts and disorder within the ranks of the Irish Catholic clergy.

The different experiences of religious (regular) and diocesan (secular) priests during the rebellion is a topic that is too vast to be able to do it justice within the limited space dedicated to it in this work. Indeed, an entire study could be done, devoted purely to comparing the roles and objectives that each order played in the rebellion. But that is not the objective of this chapter. It is important, however, that the reader understand some of the basic issues that arose between the regular clergy and their secular counterparts. What follows, therefore, is a thumbnail sketch of this issue.

As mentioned earlier, the conflict between the regular and secular elements of the clergy is tied in some ways to the ethnic tensions between the Old English and native Irish. While this was a factor that, one imagines, added particular venom to the conflict, there are more structural

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86 Corish, *Catholic Community*, 40.
87 Ó Siochrú, 39.
issues that also caused both groups concern. Corish explains, in his work on the Catholic Church in Ireland, that conflicts of jurisdiction began to arise after the reestablishment of the diocesan structure in Ireland during the early seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{88} The religious orders that had remained in Ireland during the Tudor persecutions, particularly the Franciscans, had established a close relationship with the native Irish laity.\textsuperscript{89} This relationship was a result of the fact that the Franciscan pastoral ministry was the only one of its kind in Ireland during the reigns of the Tudor monarchs.\textsuperscript{90} As a result, the native Irish Catholic laity became comfortable with the monastic system of the friars, as opposed to the diocesan structure that was being reintroduced.\textsuperscript{91} Corish explains that, “the problem with the friars arose because the Council of Trent had insisted that within his diocese all pastoral mission derived from the bishop.”\textsuperscript{92} This led to a conflict between the regular clergy and the secular hierarchy over which group had the authority to minister to the Irish. The position of the bishops was that the friars would have to subscribe to episcopal authority if they intended to continue their ministry. This position was understandable, as the bishop was held ultimately responsible for the management of his diocese. But the Franciscans, as a religious order, argued that they were not subject to the authority of the bishop but rather were subject to the authority of their superiors within the order.\textsuperscript{93} Both sides had legitimate concerns. The issue was complicated due to the unique status of the Church in Ireland. Both groups became entrenched in their positions and remained mistrustful of each other.

\textsuperscript{88} Corish, \textit{Catholic Community}, 26.

\textsuperscript{89} Perceval-Maxwell, 13.

\textsuperscript{90} Corish, \textit{Catholic Community}, 26.

\textsuperscript{91} Perceval-Maxwell, 13.

\textsuperscript{92} Corish, \textit{Catholic Community}, 27.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 28.
When the rebellion broke out in October 1641, some sort of détente between the regular and secular clergy seems to have occurred. Again this may have more to do with the two groups joining forces against a common enemy, rather than a resolution of the issues they had butted heads over. In any case, both regular and secular members of the clergy met together at Kilkenny in May and June of 1642 to discuss the progress of the rebellion and the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny.\textsuperscript{94} Not enough information was available for this project to be able to investigate the different behaviors of the regular and secular clergy during the rebellion. One gets the impression, however, based on the availability of Franciscan documents that illustrate their activity in the rebellion and the knowledge that many of the secular clergy were of Old English ethnicity, that the regular clergy were generally more active. However, further research is required in order to sufficiently substantiate that claim.

It proves to be too much of a generalization, though, to refer to the regular clergy’s activities collectively. There were also significant differences between the various orders. Though the Franciscans were by far the most numerous order in Ireland in the seventeenth century, other orders, such as the Jesuits, began to establish themselves in the country in the 1620s.\textsuperscript{95} Upon their arrival, the Jesuits allied themselves with the Catholic bishops, which would have made them suspect in the eyes of the Franciscans for the reasons discussed above. A Franciscan named Francis Stanford wrote to Luke Wadding about the relations between the two orders in 1642. In his letter he goes so far as to compare the controversy between the orders to the ongoing rebellion. The problem that Stanford outlines is that the Franciscans were dependent upon the charity of the Irish congregations they served for financial support. With the intrusion of new orders, Stanford predicted that the Franciscans would have to close their monasteries so

\textsuperscript{94} Corish, “Rising,” in Moody, 3:298.

\textsuperscript{95} Corish, \textit{Catholic Community}, 26.
as to reduce the financial burden on the laity.\textsuperscript{96} Though there was considerable antipathy between these two orders, they were both pulling in the same general direction as far as the execution of the rebellion was concerned. Both groups are credited with roles as organizers and instigators of the rebellion in the depositions, and offered vocal support for Catholic establishment in Ireland. There is also evidence that both orders intervened to save Protestant lives.\textsuperscript{97} However, the papal nuncio criticized the Jesuits, later in the decade, for being too preoccupied with their own individual missions during the rebellion. “The Jesuits, as usual, [are] devoted to their own interests.”\textsuperscript{98} This comment evidences the fact that the Jesuits had developed a reputation for going about things their own way. Though the interests the papal nuncio refers to largely coincided with the general goal of establishing Catholicism as the official religion in Ireland, the Jesuits were devoted to their own plans as to how that scenario should come about.\textsuperscript{99}

The behavior of individual members of religious orders could also vary wildly. This phenomenon is illustrated particularly well in the deposition of John Goldsmith, who related his experience with the Augustinian friars of Abbey Ballyhaunis. Goldsmith was a convert to Protestantism whose brother was a Catholic priest.\textsuperscript{100} Despite his brother’s warnings to leave Ireland, Goldsmith remained in the country and found himself the target of a rebel mob. The deponent went on to relate that:

[He] was presently pursued by Edmund O’Malley McLaughlin, who beset the house where this deponent was with about twenty of his men, saying unto him, ‘Mr. Gouldsmith, do you remember how the English served us? how they slit our noses and scarred our faces? Come forth! And was so bitter against this deponent,}

\textsuperscript{96} Francis Stanford to [Luke Wadding], 25 May 1642, in HMC, \textit{Franciscan MSS}, 143.

\textsuperscript{97} [James Kearney?] to His Grace the Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in Hickson, 2:243-4.

\textsuperscript{98} Rinucinni to Panzierolo, 4 July 1648, in Hickson, 1:386.

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{100} “Deposition of John Goldsmith,” 30 December 1643, in Hickson, 1:375.
that had not a friar whom he knew begged for him, as the neighbours told him, he (the said Edmund O’Malley McLaughlin) had cut out this deponent’s tongue.¹⁰¹ This excerpt illustrates the role of a particular member of that community. This individual’s attempts to save Goldsmith, however, were in stark contrast to the behavior of the rest of his community. Referring to the Abbey at Ballyhaunis, which was the home of the Augustinian friars, Goldsmith deposed that at the “abbey, they having then received instruction from those friars (as was said), they then broke forth into all inhuman practices, barbarous cruelties, and open rebellion.”¹⁰² This episode not only provides an example of the disparity between an individual clergyman and his community, but also provides an example of a religious order that behaved in contrast to the majority of the Irish Catholic clergy. The fact that the latter portion of this excerpt conforms to more conventional Protestant anti-Catholic rhetoric may seem to discredit Goldsmith’s testimony. However, he had already testified that a Catholic clergyman had saved his life, so he was obviously not so blindly anti-Catholic as to deny the possibility of clerical virtue when he saw it. He could have very easily omitted any positive mention of the Roman Catholic clergy and tarred them all with the same brush, but rather he presents a nuanced interpretation of the events of which he was a part. Still he was a Protestant man who had suffered personally at the hands of the Irish rebels, and he may have subconsciously fallen back on the well-established stereotypes of Catholic cruelty and Irish barbarity in his relation of the Augustinians behavior. But there is another fact that lends Goldsmith more credibility than the average deponent. He was also speaking as an eyewitness to the facts that he testified to,¹⁰³ which differentiates him from other deponents that related information which was, at the best of

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 377.
¹⁰² Ibid.
¹⁰³ Ibid.
times, secondhand. Even if one finds Goldsmith’s relation suspect, there are Catholic sources that corroborate the fact that the behavior of individual members of religious communities could significantly differ.\textsuperscript{104}

The final division within the Irish clergy that remains to be discussed is that between the bishops and the priests. As mentioned earlier, the bishops—as members of the secular clergy—were predominantly Old English in their ethnicity. Most also came from landed families. As such, the bishops’ role in the Irish rebellion was largely administrative.\textsuperscript{105} None of the depositions available in Hickson’s collection make reference to bishops in their description of murderous episodes. When the episcopate do show up in the depositions they are usually said to be attending meetings\textsuperscript{106} or moving into abandoned Protestant sees.\textsuperscript{107} The bishops were members of the aristocracy, and it should come as no surprise, then, that they declined to get involved with the dirty work of the rebellion they supported. Surprisingly, though, the bishops are not even credited with a role in organizing the rebellion. As discussed earlier, Maguire’s relation of how he and Moore planned the rebellion mentions a small number of priests who were involved in some capacity with the plotting of the insurrection, but no bishops.\textsuperscript{108} The bishops’ role evolved over the course of the rebellion, from relative inaction in the early days to a position of strong leadership with the establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny. Like many members of the Old English landed class, the bishops were concerned with preserving law and order insofar as they deemed the protection of their estates important. However, they also

\textsuperscript{104} See J.T. Gilbert, \textit{A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland, from 1641 to 1652} (Dublin: Irish Archeological and Centic Society, 1879), vol. 1.

\textsuperscript{105} Ó Siochrú, 42.

\textsuperscript{106} “Council of the Rebels at Multifarnham Abbey,” 3 May 1641, in Hickson, 2:355.

\textsuperscript{107} “Deposition of Ambrose Bedell,” 26 October 1642, in Hickson, 1:219.

\textsuperscript{108} “Relation of the Lord Mac-guire,” 543-6.
stood to gain more lands for themselves and the Church, if the rebellion succeeded. Thus the bishops recognized the need for a provisional government to be founded to ensure both law and order but also to be a strong voice for organizing the Irish Catholic community in its cause. The significant role that the bishops played in the establishment of the Confederation is highlighted in the depositions. Donatus O’Connor deposed that “whilst this deponent was at Kilkenny, the great councilor men…sat there, with, for, or amongst the rebels were,…[the] titulary bishop of Ossory, the titulary bishop of Downpatrick, and divers other titulary bishops.” The Confederation was established, with significant episcopal support, in two meetings at Kilkenny in May and June of 1642. By 7 June 1642, the Supreme Council of the Confederates had issues its first set of orders and would continue to administer the affairs of Irish Catholics until its defeat by Cromwell in 1649.

The establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny marked the end of the chaotic and confusing initial period of the rebellion. Insofar as the Irish Catholic clergy played a significant role in the creation of the Confederation, one can argue that the clergy are at least partly responsible for reestablishing law and order in Ireland. This stands in stark contrast to the role that was assigned to Catholic clergy by the Protestant authorities. The actual role of a clergy which concerned itself with providing organizational structures for the rebellion in order

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109 Ó Siochru, 39.
110 “Deposition of Donatus O’Connor,” 28 October 1642, in Hickson, 2:46-9
111 Ibid., 47-8.
112 “Orders Conceived by the Supreme Council of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland,” 11 June 1642, in Cal SP Ire, 363.
113 Ó Siochru, 11.
114 Ibid., 11.
115 Ibid., 42.
to forestall utter chaos, is therefore more accurate than the contemporary Protestant perspective put forth by Temple in his history of the Irish rebellion. In some regards, however, the actual behavior of the Catholic clergy during the Irish rebellion is less important than the perceived role they had in the minds of English and Irish Protestants. This is certainly true for the development of the political crisis in England, to which the Irish rebellion made a significant contribution. It was the perceptions of radical clericalism discussed in this chapter, propagated by the Irish government, that played into a wider English obsession with a universal popish plot. In large part it was this fear that ensured Civil War in England.\footnote{Caroline Hibbard, \textit{Charles I and the Popish Plot} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 214.} The outcome of that Civil War would, in turn, have serious repercussions for the fate of Ireland. In 1649, the victorious Parliamentarians would send Oliver Cromwell to crush the rebellious Irish. In turn, as Toby Barnard explains, the “Cromwellian reconquest and settlement shaped Ireland for the next 150 years.”\footnote{Barnard, 16.}
Chapter Three

The Perceptions and Reactions of the Irish Government

When the rebellion of 1641 erupted on October 23rd in Ulster, the instruments of the English government in Ireland, located primarily in Dublin, were caught unawares. Equally surprising was the foiled attempt to seize Dublin Castle, which had been revealed to the authorities the night before its planned execution on October 23rd. Shocked, elements of the government, mainly the members of the Irish Council, fell back on tried and trusted images of a popish plot to make sense out of a rebellion that had seemed to come out of nowhere. Irrespective of the role that the Catholic clergy actually played in the rebellion, the role they were imagined to play in the minds of the Irish government helped shape official policy towards the rebels. One of the arguments of this chapter is that because this policy was based on erroneous assumptions and half-truths, it naturally developed into a rather unsophisticated policy of destroying the rebellion militarily and then segregating the native population from the Protestant settlers. This chapter provides an examination of the Irish government’s reactions to, and perceptions of, the role of clerical radicalism in the rebellion of 1641, and of the ways these reactions and perceptions affected the defensive policies that they pursued.

This chapter is concerned with the reactions of the English political establishment in Ireland to the phenomenon, real or imagined, of a radical Catholic clergy. As will be illustrated in the following pages, the Irish government imagined the Catholic clergy to be engaged in both

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1 Sir John Temple to the King, 12 December 1641, in Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reign of Charles I, 1633-1647 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1901), 354.

a wider Catholic political struggle to engineer the downfall of the Protestant establishment in England, and in a violent crusade to massacre the Protestant population in Ireland. Before one explores these attitudes, however, it is necessary to begin with a brief overview of the structure of the English government in Ireland. For most of the 1630s, the King’s authority in Ireland was represented by the Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth. In early 1640, Wentworth was promoted to be the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Many of Wentworth’s policies proved to be extremely unpopular among the native Irish. After Wentworth’s removal from office in November 1640 had been engineered by his enemies in the Westminster Parliament, Christopher Wandesford remained as Lord Deputy of Ireland. However, he died before the end of the year, and the two Lords Justices, Sir William Parsons and Sir John Borlase, were left in effective control. This situation continued even after the appointment of the absentee Earl of Leicester as Lord Lieutenant in May 1641. Borlase and Parsons were described by the Victorian historian S.R. Gardiner as, respectively, “an old soldier, without any qualifications for governing a country,” and, “an adventurer who had made his fortune by evicting Irishmen from their lands.” These two men helped form much of the policy adopted toward the rebellion in its early stages, when it was still primarily a native Irish affair, and both portrayed the rebellion as being facilitated by the radical clergy of the Catholic Church. They were both supported in this portrayal by the presence of Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls, on the Irish Council, which helped formulate the policies and proclamations of the Irish government. Temple’s natural suspicion of Catholicism had been influenced no doubt by his upbringing. Born in 1600, the son of the provost of Trinity College, Dublin, an institution founded with the original intention of training

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Protestant ministers, Temple would later go on to earn his bachelors and masters degrees from Trinity in 1617 and 1620, respectively. He had spent much of his time abroad between 1620 and 1633, and only returned to Ireland in August 1641. Temple was convinced that the clergy of the Catholic Church were provoking the rebellion, which he makes a point of emphasizing in his history of the Irish rebellion. Robert Dunlop and Sean Kelsey provide a summary of the effect of Temple’s writings in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. “As the work of a professed eye-witness, and one whose position entitled him to speak with authority, its statements were received with unquestioning confidence, and the work did much to inflame popular indignation in England against the Irish.” After the King and parliament went to war, Temple was imprisoned in Dublin Castle for criticizing the King’s decision to authorize a cessation of hostility with the rebels.

Because a majority of the evidence readily available to historians concerning the Dublin government’s reaction to the rebellion comes to us in the accounts of men like Temple—that is to say, men with a vested interest in portraying the rebellion in a certain light—the image portrayed is necessarily skewed. Temple goes to great lengths, early in his book, to establish the veracity of the narrative he is presenting. He uses the margins of his book to relate the sources for his information, and at some points this strategy becomes intrusive. He is so concerned with making sure that each story he relates is scrupulously sourced that sometimes the amount of space on a page dedicated to providing a source dwarfs the amount of space dedicated to the text.

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6 Sir John Temple to the King, 12 December 1641, in *Cal SP Ire*, 354.

7 Dunlop and Kelsey, 69.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.
of the narrative.\textsuperscript{10} The obvious goal of this is to give the reader the impression that there is such a preponderance of evidence in support of his account that it would be foolish to question his motives. However, if one is trying to obtain an objective and fair perspective of events, one needs to examine the sources that Temple relies on.

The vast majority of the sources that Temple cites are examinations of alleged victims of Irish atrocity. These examinations were compiled primarily by Henry Jones, a Protestant Minister acting on the behest of the Lords Justices, in the months immediately following the outbreak of the rebellion.\textsuperscript{11} Historians have called into question the veracity of these testimonies. The consensus of modern historians is that the scope of these atrocities is exaggerated in the testimonies to preposterous levels. Reports from dispossessed Irish Protestants put the total number of those slain at around 154,000; however, modern research has adjusted this to a more believable, if still unsettling, range of 3,000 – 4,000.\textsuperscript{12}

Temple’s ideas about the rebellion can be structured into a fairly organized hierarchy. For him the axis of the rebellion was formed by two primary entities: the Irish Catholic lawyers and the Roman Catholic clergy.\textsuperscript{13} These two forces both served to provide a justification for the rebellion, although their targeted audiences differed. The lawyers, men like the Catholic MPs Nicholas Plunkett and Patrick Darcy, would provide a legal pretext for the rebellion, and in Temple’s opinion they had been agitating for the rebellion in the Irish House of Commons for

\textsuperscript{10} Sir John Temple, \textit{The Irish Rebellion or, an History of the Beginnings and First Progress of the General Rebellion Raised within the Kingdom of Ireland, upon the three and twentieth day of October, in the Year 1641} (London: R. White, 1646), 99.

\textsuperscript{11} Henry Jones, \textit{A Remonstrance of Divers Remarkable Passages Concerning the Church and Kingdome of Ireland} (London: Godfrey Emerson and William Bladen, 1642), frontispiece.

\textsuperscript{12} Toby Barnard, \textit{The Kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760} (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 18.

\textsuperscript{13} Temple, 6-7, 76.
some time. The lawyers’ arguments about constitutional rights and the need to redress grievances concerning topics as varied as land ownership and the oath of supremacy would appeal, Temple believed, both to the Old English and to the native Irish gentry. The Catholic clergy, on the other hand, provided a religious justification for overthrowing the Protestant government and absolution for any atrocity committed in the prosecution of that aim. Temple asserted that the clergy unleashed the pent-up fury of the lower orders of the native Irish. “For the facilitating of the worke, and stirring up of the people with greater animosity and cruelty to put it on at the time prefixed; they [the clergy] loudly in all places declamed against the Protestants.”

For Temple, there were two primary ways in which the Catholic clergy served as provocateurs of rebellion. Firstly, they provided an information network that allowed instructions concerning the rebellion to be disseminated throughout the country. Temple made explicit reference to this belief in his history of the Irish rebellion.

For they [the Irish] living promiscuously among the British, in all parts having from their Priests received the Watchword for both time and place, rose up, as it were actuated by one and the same spirit, in all places of those Counties before mentioned at one and the same point of time; and so in a moment fell upon them, murdering some, stripping only, or expelling others out of their habitations.

In this statement, Temple alludes to a perception commonly held by Protestants in England and Ireland during the seventeenth century. Protestants believed that by the very nature of their religion, Catholics were susceptible to manipulation from ecclesiastical authority. This made the situation of promiscuous intermingling of the English and Irish populations dangerous in Temple’s mind, as is illustrated by his suggestion of segregating the populations after the war with the rebels had been won.

14 Ibid., 76.

15 Ibid., 78.

16 Temple, 40.
That when Gods time is come … and that Kingdom [Ireland] comes to be replanted with British, and settled in peace again, (which I have even in our lowest condition, with great confidence attended, and do now most undoubtedly believe will ere long be brought to passe) there may be such a course taken, such provisions made, and such a wall of separation set up betwixt the Irish and the British, as it shall not be in their power to rise up.\textsuperscript{17}

This plan illustrates the vehemence with which Temple believed the Irish and English needed to be separated due to the Irish susceptibility to clerical manipulation.

Temple was working under the assumption that the Roman Catholic Church was the only organization structurally capable of disseminating the plan to all those involved. “Great numbers of these wicked Instruments (the Laws against all of the Romish Clergy, being of late laid aside, and tacitely suspended execution) came over into Ireland: The main ground-work, and first predispositions to a Rebellion in generall, were most undoubtedly with great dexterity and artifice laid by them.”\textsuperscript{18} Temple assumes a uniformity of intention on the part of rebels, and indeed on the part of the clergy, a fact that has already been discounted in this thesis.\textsuperscript{19} Nonetheless, in the mind of Temple and many of his contemporaries in the government of Ireland, the clergy were unified in their radicalism with the set goal of extirpating all Protestant elements from the kingdom. When Temple later cites the specific example of a priest named Malone,\textsuperscript{20} who was alleged to have traveled throughout the country disseminating the plot for the rebellion, he implies that the country was filled with Catholic clergy who were performing the same task. Much of this assumption rests on how Temple imagined the ecclesiastical structure of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Temple explains how the hierarchy of the Catholic Church functioned by explaining that it was the role of “the great ones mischievously to plot and

\textsuperscript{17} Temple, 6.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 66.

\textsuperscript{19} See chapter two.

\textsuperscript{20} Temple, 66-7.
contrive, the inferior sort tumultuously to rise up and execute whatsoever they should command.”  

In his mind, the Catholic Church was associated with a simple diocesan hierarchy, with every member of the presbyterate answerable to a bishop, who was ultimately beholden to Rome. The only way that Temple, and indeed the Lords Justices, could see to defeat this organization was with a comprehensive military defeat of the rebels and a stricter enforcement of the anti-clerical laws to prevent such a scheme arising in the future.

Implicit in Temple’s depiction of the Catholic clergy as a network for the propagation of rebellion is the presumption that the plan for rebellion must have come from some higher source. While Temple does admit throughout his work that the rebellion was facilitated to some extent by the disgruntled Irish gentry, the more threatening idea for Temple is that the radical clergy, as he perceives them, are agents of a wider Catholic conspiracy. Indeed, Temple feared that every participant of the rebellion in Ireland was merely a pawn of Rome. Temple was encouraged in this view by the aforementioned examinations. Temple’s attachment to this idea is discernable throughout his work, and the nuance of his argument demands extended quotation.

But yet I am very confident, that upon view of severall examinations, any reasonable man will conclude with me, that the very first principles of this inhumane Conspiracy, were roughly drawn and hammered out at the Romish Forge, powerfully fomented by the treachery and virulent animosities of some of the chief Irish natives, and so by degrees, by them moulded into that ugly shape wherein it first appeared: There certainly it received the first life and motion, whether at Rome, whether in Ireland, or in any other place, I cannot yet determine; But my meaning is, it was first hatched and set on foot by those most vigilant and industrious Emissaries, who are sent continually abroad by the power of that See with full commission, per fas & nefas, to make way for the re-estabishment of the Romish Religion in all parts where it hath been suppressed.

In the latter portions of this excerpt, Temple explains that he cannot yet prove his hypothesis that the plan for the rebellion was formed by the Papacy itself. However, if he cannot prove that the

21 Ibid., 66.

22 Temple, 60.
Pope directly mandated a rebellion to be fomented in Ireland, he can contest that the rebellion was the result of a wider Papal policy of reestablishing Catholicism throughout the world. Throughout the rest of the work, though, Temple falls back on the idea of the rebellion as a direct popish plot, as a means to help make sense of how the rebellion could have started. The execution of the popish plot is facilitated by the influx of Catholic clergy to Ireland that Temple makes reference to earlier in his work.23 This influx was caused by a relaxation of the anti-clerical laws on the books in Ireland, and therefore, to combat this phenomenon Temple advocates a stricter enforcement of those laws after the government had defeated the rebels militarily.

Part of the threat of a popish plot, in Temple’s mind and in the minds of most Englishmen of the time, was that it would include an invasion from one of the continental Catholic powers, namely either France or Spain. For Temple, this is a real and frightening possibility, and one that he accepts without question. For example, he readily gives credence to the deposition of Francis Sacheverel, in which the deponent claims he heard a number of Priests boasting that the rebellion had been fomented by Jesuits, friars, and other priests in Spain, England, and other countries, and that they were delighted by the success of the plan so far.24 Temple also cites the case of an anonymous priest who crowed “that he was Plotter of this Rebellion, That he had spent in Travell and Prosecution of that design beyond Seas foure thousand pounds; and that all the Kings of Christendome, excepting the King of England, and the King of Denmark, have hands in this business.”25 This type of rhetoric would have appealed to Protestants of English descent in the mid-seventeenth century, as it spoke to an English fear, no matter how unrealistic, that Ireland

23 Ibid., 66.

24 Ibid., 67.

25 Ibid., 99.
could be used as a staging post for an invasion of England by one of the Catholic powers.\textsuperscript{26} This “back door” theory was one of the main political motivations for most of the policies pursued in Ireland from the time of Queen Elizabeth, including the policy of plantation.

From the documentary evidence, it seems fairly apparent that the Lords Justices shared Temple’s view that the Catholic clergy worked as a network for disseminating instructions for the rebellion. In their letter to the Lord Lieutenant, dated 13 November 1641, the Lords Justices wrote of “finding still more and more cause to suspect that the combination took force from the incitement of the Jesuits, priests, and friars.”\textsuperscript{27} The conviction with which the Lords Justices held this belief, however, seems to have grown stronger with the passage of time. At first the Lords Justices were not entirely convinced of the Catholic clergy’s role in the rebellion, or at least were open to the possibility that the clergy were not responsible for it.\textsuperscript{28} The Lords Justices’ tentativeness was because they felt that they could not afford to risk losing the loyalty of the Old English Catholics by implying that they had been fraternizing with a clergy that was complicit in rebellion. To ostracize the Old English would have had disastrous effects on the English government in Ireland. Perceval-Maxwell explains that by 1641 the ratio of Catholics to Protestants in Ireland was fifteen to one.\textsuperscript{29} The Lords Justices recognized that the odds were not in their favor—the remnants of the King’s army in Ireland were dispersed throughout Ireland and numbered only 2,297 foot and about 1,000 horse.\textsuperscript{30} The Lords Justices demonstrated just how reliant they felt on maintaining the loyalty of the Old English in the following extract from their

\textsuperscript{26} Barnard, 20.

\textsuperscript{27} Lords Justices to the Lord Lieutenant, 13 November 1641, in \textit{Cal SP Ire}, 346.


\textsuperscript{29} Perceval-Maxwell, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 241.
letter to the Lord Lieutenant on 25 October 1641. “All the hope we have here, is, That the
English of the Pale, and some other Parts, will continue constant to the King in their Fidelity, as
they did in former Rebellions.” 31 In other words, the Irish government was depending on the Old
English to help preserve the Irish government, at least until aid from England could arrive. In
their first proclamation after the eruption of the rebellion, however, the Lords Justices came very
close to alienating the “English of the Pale” by declaring that the rebellion had been started by
“some evil affected Irish papists.” 32 This statement offended the loyal Catholics, and the lords of
the Pale sent representatives to the Lords Justices to protest their loyalty and deny that they knew
anything of the conspiracy to take Dublin Castle, or the more general uprising in Ulster. 33 In
response to this incident the Lords Justices softened their rhetoric for the aforementioned letter
and also issued another proclamation to correct any misinterpretation that could have been
caused by their first one.

However, the Old English had sided with the rebels by early December of 1641,
claiming, as the native rebels had, that they were fighting to help ensure the rights of the King. 34
Their defection signaled the end of any attempts on the part of the Irish government to cater to
loyal Catholics, as in the perception of the Lords Justices this notion was now a contradiction in
terms. The defection of the Old English merely fed the image that many in the Irish government
held of Catholics as being fundamentally untrustworthy. As a result, by 1642, the Lords Justices’
perception of the Catholic clergy as a threat to the established order in Ireland seemed to have
solidified. In a proclamation dated 6 October 1642, one can see how the Lords Justice’s view of

31 Lords Justices to the Lord Lieutenant, 25 October 1641, in Nalson, 516.
32 “Proclamation by the Lords Justices and Council,” 23 October 1641, in Temple, 22.
33 Perceval-Maxwell, 240.
the Catholic clergy had shifted to a more certain stance of their involvement in the rebellion from that of the aforementioned proclamations and letters from October 1641. In the new proclamation the Lords Justices granted their commissioners the power to arrest and detain any member of the Catholic clergy found in Dublin. Furthermore, the Lords Justices wanted the commissioners to extract any information they could from those that they detained about “what titulary popish Archbishops, Bishops, Vicars-generall, Jesuits, Priests, or Friars, or other supersticious Orders of the popish pretended Clergy are or shall be in and about the said City or Suburbs.” In the same commission, however, the Lords Justices also advocated that any member of the Catholic gentry or nobility should be turned out of the city. Furthermore, Catholic commoners were to be documented and their movements restricted. Obviously, to some extent the discrepancy between the treatment of the Catholic laity and clergy can be attributed to logistical considerations. Perceval-Maxwell suggests that the ratio of Catholics to Protestants in Dublin at the time of the Rebellion was not insignificant, and that the Catholic population was certainly too large to detain or expel from the city entirely. Imprisoning all the Catholics of the city would have not only been unfeasible but deleterious to the defense of the city of Dublin, as the Lords Justices testified in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant expressing their concern that most of the army they had sent to help lift the rebel siege of Drogheda consisted mainly of Irish papists. The fact of the matter was that the Lords Justices needed to keep Dublin functioning at some minimal level to ensure its security, and this simply would not have been possible without

35 Lords Justices to the Lord Lieutenant, 25 October 1641, in Nalson, 516.

36 “A copy of a commission under the Great Seale of Ireland, granted by the Right Honorable Sir William Parsons Knight and Barronet, and Sir John Borlase Knight, Lords Justices of that kingdom” (London: E. Husbands and J. Franck, 1642), 4.

37 Perceval-Maxwell, 30-31.

38 Lords Justices and Council to the Lord Lieutenant, 25 November 1641, in Cal SP Ire, 350.
employing some of the Catholic population of Dublin. However, the decision by the Lords Justices to detain only members of the Catholic clergy also indicates a prioritizing decision on their part. Faced with a limited defensive capability, they were forced to decide between preventing the Catholic clergy or the Catholic gentry from being released out of the Pale and back to the rebels. The conclusion that they came to was that the clergy would have posed more of a threat.

The second major radical dimension of the Catholic clergy in Temple’s view was that the clergy were actually inciting the native Irish to violence. According to Temple, the clergy set about to achieve the goal of the removal of the English from Ireland in one of two ways. In the first instance, the Catholic clergy were inciting the Irish to perform direct acts of violence against specific groups of Protestants as the clergy looked on. A ready example of this is shown in Temple’s discussion of the depositions from some of the persecuted Protestants. “We have it from Master Creighton, a reverend Minister, one long detained prisoner within the County of Cavan, that the Fryars exhorted the people with tears to spare none of the English.” Temple argues that the clergy were able to manipulate the native Irish to take such violent action through the use of the threat that the Puritans in the Westminster Parliament were plotting the extirpation of all Catholics from Ireland. Secondly, there are instances Temple cites in which the clergy themselves were involved in the violence or had taken command of some rebel force. These descriptions range from the assertion that a monk named Creely had taken command of the arsenal at Newry after its capture by the rebels, to far more barbaric descriptions of slaughter. One such incident, alleged to have been committed by Fr. Hugh Mac O Degan, is included in the

39 Temple, 85.
40 Ibid., 78.
41 Ibid., 31.
deposition of Alexander Creichton, which Temple cites. He details how Fr. Mac O Degan collected approximately forty to fifty Protestants and forced them all to convert to Catholicism; after which Fr. Mac O Degan “presently told them, they were in good Faith; and for feare they should fall from it, and turne Hereticks, he and the rest that were with them, cut all their throats.”

This to Temple illustrates the full extent of how evil the clergy were. Not only were they seeking to destroy all vestiges of the legitimate temporal order, but they were also seeking to undermine the Protestants’ salvation. In a real sense, for Temple the radical clergy were waging war on Protestants’ souls. In this instance the priest accomplished this by first destroying all chance of salvation by forcing decent Christians to profess themselves as agents of the Antichrist and then to seal their fate by denying them any chance of repentance.

To what extent the Lords Justices believed the Catholic clergy to be guilty of inspiring violent action in either of the ways that Temple obviously did is not revealed in the source material hitherto examined. However, one could reasonably assume that they would have been at least exposed to this point of view through their workings with Temple in the Irish Council.

However, the only evidence that historians have of Temple’s belief that the clergy were engaged in violent rebellion is Temple’s history of the Irish rebellion, which was originally published in 1646. Temple’s correspondence in the Calendar of State Papers for Ireland during the period of the rebellion only reveals that he believed the Catholic clergy to be involved in the organization and dissemination of information. It seems that it wasn’t until later that Temple began to express his belief in writing that the Catholic clergy played a violent role in the rebellion. It is reasonable to assume, however, that Temple’s belief in the violent nature of the Catholic clergy

42 Ibid., 109.
43 Ibid., Frontispiece.
44 Sir John Temple to the King, 12 December 1641, in Cal SP Ire, 354.
was fostered by the stories of atrocities that were beginning to filter into Dublin shortly after the rebellion began.\textsuperscript{45} Whether or not he believed on a personal level that these stories were true, they were certainly present enough in the imaginations of Protestants in Ireland at the time to influence the decisions made about maintaining the security of the English government in Ireland.

All this raises the question, though, of whether Temple truly believed the Catholic clergy played the role he suggested, or if his suggestions were made cynically to manipulate popular religious fears to achieve political ends. Obviously, such a question can only be the subject of conjecture, unless new evidence comes to light. However, it is important to keep the possibility in mind when considering the development of a political policy that is so intertwined with confessional identity. Moreover, under the auspices of the Lords Justices, the Irish government tried everything it could to secure aid from the English government. One of the most ubiquitous and effective strategies that the Lords Justices had at their disposal was anti-Catholic, and particularly anti-clerical, rhetoric. Conrad Russell suggested as much when he argued that “it was certainly true that Lord Justice Parsons wished to influence policy in an anti-Catholic direction.”\textsuperscript{46} It is probable that the Lords Justices emphasized the role of the clergy in their reports to spur the Westminster Parliament into sending troops and money to Ireland.\textsuperscript{47}

The heavy-handed nature of the Irish government’s policy towards the rebels was not inevitable. In fact, other agents of the English government developed their own plans for the suppression of the rebellion. One such individual was the Earl of Clanricarde. Aidan Clarke, in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{45} Temple, 109-120.
\item \textsuperscript{46} Conrad Russell, \textit{The Fall of the British Monarchies, 1637-1642} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 379.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Perceval-Maxwell, 275.
\end{itemize}
his book *The Old English in Ireland 1625-1642*, categorizes Ulick Bourke, the Earl of Clanricarde, as a member of the Old English mainly because of his confessional identification as a Catholic.\footnote{Clarke, *Old English*, 16.} Though there is a debate about whether Clanricarde was born in England or Ireland, he had spent most of his life in the former, and was politically active in both personal service to the King and in the House of Lords from 1628 until he left for Galway in September of 1641.\footnote{Jane Ohlmeyer, s.v. “Bourke, Ulick, 1st Marquess Clanricarde” *ODNB*, (Oxford, 2004) 8:850-1.} Clanricarde’s arrival a month prior to the outbreak of the rebellion left him with little time to get used to his new surroundings. Despite this fact, Clanricarde acquitted himself well in the confusion of the ensuing months, and is worth singular mention as being one of the only agents of the pro-government forces in Ireland to develop a cogent and realistic strategy for the suppression of the rebellion.

Clanricarde believed that the vast majority of the native Irish rebels were motivated by desperation and fear.\footnote{Earl of Clanricarde to the Lords Justices, 31 October 1641, in Ulick Bourke, *Memoirs and Letters of Clanricarde*, ed. John Smith de Burgh (London: R & J Dodsley, 1757), 6.} In a letter to the Lords Justices, he explained “that the noise of the Northern rebellion doth unite loose and desperate people to rob and spoil, which meeting with no timely resistance, may give encouragement to greater mischiefs that yet appear.”\footnote{Ibid.} He realized that if the fears of the rebels could be addressed they would be less susceptible to the influence of radicalizing forces, such as the Catholic clergy. This notion formed one part of Clanricarde’s two-fold strategy to suppress the rebellion. The other crucial part of Clanricarde’s plan was to have a vigorous military strategy in place to prevent the rebellion from spreading further. In this objective Clanricarde depended on the local gentry, as he described in a letter to the Lord President of Connacht, Viscount Ranelagh:
Yesterday most of the gentlemen of the country were here with me, and I was much pleased to observe their general distaste and hatred against the contrivers of those mischiefs, and their ready and forward desires to be employed in all service that might best express their hereditary duty and affection. I had but newly discharged them to their present several divisions, with instructions for the safety and quiet of the county.\textsuperscript{52}

In a letter to the Earl of Essex, Clanricarde outlined how he planned to utilize these gentlemen for the defense of the county. “I have made several divisions of the county, and committed the peace and quiet of each part to several gentlemen of trust and quality.”\textsuperscript{53} In this way, smaller forces could respond to localized incidents, while the main part of the Earl’s forces could be reserved for deployment to areas that were a higher security risk. It is a testament to the Earl’s plan that his county was one of the last to join the rebellion.

Clanricarde’s strategy, however, would be stymied in both of its two major principles. In order to achieve his military aims, the Earl needed support in the form of money and weapons from the Lords Justices. This support was never forthcoming. In an impassioned letter to Lord Justice Parsons, on 8 December 1641, Clanricarde wrote, “My lord, if I continue thus unarmed, and, in appearance, neglected, it must extremely impair and discourage the resolution of many well-affected able men within my government.”\textsuperscript{54} Clanricarde expressed a similar theme in another letter, stating that many native Irish who would have chosen to remain loyal were being forced to join the rebels because they did not have another viable option. “Many [are] enforced to go with them to save themselves, that would be otherwise faithful.”\textsuperscript{55} In other words, the government was losing loyal subjects to the rebels because there was no strong pro-government force to defend them in their decision to remain loyal. Clanricarde had no other options,

\textsuperscript{52}Earl of Clanricarde to the Lord Viscount Ranelagh, 5 November 1641, in ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{53}Earl of Clanricarde to the Earl of Essex, 14 November 1641, in ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{54}Earl of Clanricarde to Lord Justice Parsons, 8 December 1641, in ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{55}Earl of Clanricarde to Lord Cottington, 7 December 1641, in ibid., 33.
militarily, than to wait for the Lords Justices to send him some of the supplies that he needed. The Lords Justices argued, however, that they needed to keep their supplies in Dublin to maintain the government’s influence there. “We would most willingly send to your lordship arms for that number, and a far greater, and would also replenish the store at Galway, but that we are not able to do it….The arms that were in the stores here are altogether exhausted by our raising of forces here to preserve this place.”

The second part of Clanricarde’s plan also met with limited success, at first. In a letter to the Lord Lieutenant, Clanricarde gave a summation of his plan to pacify the rebellion. Clanricarde explained that Ireland was in a deteriorating situation “which will now require that your lordship comes strongly provided, not only with arms and men, but the power to pardon and receive mercy; to grant or deny such conditions and proportions as shall be made unto your lordship.”

Clanricarde realized that in order to gain control over a rebellion of desperate people, one needed to address the causes of their desperation. He realized that in their desperation, the native Irish turned to whatever institution promised to address their issues of concern, which ended up being a combination of the Catholic clergy and the native Irish gentry. Clanricarde hoped to supplant the rebel leaders—including the clergy—with the government as that source of leadership.

Clanricarde recognized that elements of the Catholic clergy were becoming both politically and violently active as early as 25 November 1641. He would later decry the violent nature that he perceived to be developing among certain members of the clergy. In Galway, he

56 Lords Justices and Council to Earl of Clanricarde, 24 December 1641, in ibid., 44-5.
57 Earl of Clanricarde to the Earl of Leicester, 6 December 1641, in ibid., 30.
58 Ibid.
59 Bourke, 20.
pointed to a number of men including two friars as being responsible for the outbreak of violence in that area in May 1642. He later wrote of them that “The violence of these persons I have named, and their party, forced others for fear of their lives, to join, and sign with them, and there was daily made a strange tumult and confusion amongst them.” 60 What particularly struck Clanricarde about this episode was that the clergy were willing to force the natives to subscribe themselves to the oath developed by the rebels. This fact evoked bitter criticisms of the radical clergy from Clanricarde. 61 However, he must have realized how significant a role the clergy, especially a clergy that was politically mobilized, could play in deciding the outcome of the rebellion.

With this in mind, it should not come as a surprise that, to a much lesser extent, Clanricarde would utilize the Catholic clergy to advance his own political agenda. Once it became apparent that his calls to address the grievances of the rebels as a means to pacification were being ignored by the Dublin administration, 62 Clanricarde set about engineering a scenario in which this idea would become more politically feasible. In early 1642, Clanricarde had begun making contact with some of the rebel leaders, trying to persuade them to prepare a remonstrance to present to the king. 63 He subsequently sent them a message urging them to lobby the King directly for a truce. 64 But how was Clanricarde getting his messages to the rebels? The answer to this question is that he had employed his personal chaplain, Oliver Bourke, a Dominican friar, as

60 Earl of Clanricarde to the Lords Justices, 18 May 1642, in Bourke, 139.

61 Micheál Ó Siochrú, Confederate Ireland, 1642-1649 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 28.

62 Earl of Clanricarde to Lord Justice Parsons, 8 December 1641, in Bourke, 34.

63 Ibid., 34.

64 “Propositions conceived necessary to be propounded unto the Earl of Clanricarde, that his lordship may move the lords of the pale therein, and others that have taken arms, as the best means for the general good, and his own safety, in Bourke,” in Bourke, 80.
an envoy to the rebels.\textsuperscript{65} Clanricarde explained this decision by writing “that none but a churchman would be permitted to pass through the several counties to Tredagh, and for that I did conceive, and do believe he then was very faithful in the king’s service, and affectionate to me, and more likely to persuade, and gain belief, than any layman.”\textsuperscript{66} In this instance, Clanricarde illustrated his willingness to learn from the rebels, and employ a member of the Catholic clergy to achieve his own political ends. One of these political ends would prove to have a lasting effect on the development of the rebellion. Included among the papers that Oliver Bourke delivered to the leaders of the rebellion was a document outlining a model of government, which, though not identical, bore a striking resemblance to the form of government that was eventually established as the Confederation of Kilkenny.\textsuperscript{67} Clanricarde’s motivation for suggesting an alternative form of government was almost certainly not undertaken with the intention of his creation remaining a permanent institution, but rather to serve as an official body with which the King could negotiate a peace and address the underlying causes of the native population’s desperation. However, what was eventually established, partly as a result of Clanricarde’s suggestion, would remain the primary organizational force for the rebels until 1649.

The Irish government’s perceptions of radical clericalism had a profound effect on the ways in which they responded to the crisis of rebellion in 1641. But since many of these perceptions diverged from the reality of the situation, the strategies that were developed—namely, a comprehensive military victory over the rebels and a strict enforcement of the anti-clerical laws—as a result were often ineffective in the short term. It must also be taken into consideration that the government in Ireland was hamstrung by a lack of funds, soldiers, and

\textsuperscript{65} Ó Siochru, 23-25.

\textsuperscript{66} Bourke, 80.

\textsuperscript{67} Ó Siochru, 34-35.
weapons. In many ways there was not a great deal they could do. The precarious predicament in
which the Irish government found itself in 1641 is best summarized by S.R. Gardiner.

Unfortunately, for more than thirty years, the English government [in Ireland] had
not been wise, and now at last it had ceased to be strong. The native population
had neither been crushed nor conciliated. Full of memories of violated rights and
goaded to bitter hatred by the contemptuous indifference of the conquerors, that
population was mastered by a devouring indignation which when it once burst
forth would rage as a consuming flame.68

The “memories of violated rights” that Gardiner alludes to were the underlying causes of the
rebellion. The native Irish had become desperate, and in their desperation they turned to the
Catholic clergy and native Irish gentry for leadership. The native Irish turned to these two groups
to help them because, as Gardiner states, the Irish government had shown nothing but
indifference. One man who realized that the only effective way to combat the rebellion was to
combine a vigorous military effort with a government policy of addressing the issues that
concerned the native Irish directly was the Earl of Clanricarde. His plan was aimed at defeating
radical clericalism as it actually existed, namely a Catholic clergy that was serving a political
agency because the native Irish had no one else to turn to. Clanricarde’s plan was for the
government to supersede the clergy as guarantors of native Irish rights.69 But the Irish
government was too consumed in its own perceptions of the rebellion as a war against a militant
popish plot to acknowledge or attempt Clanricarde’s plan.

69 Earl of Clanricarde to the Earl of Leicester, 6 December 1641, in Bourke, 30.
Part II:

The Rebellion in England
Chapter Four

The Causes of Conflict Between The King and Parliament

Due to the fractured nature of English politics in 1641, there was no unified English governmental response to the crisis of the Irish rebellion—indeed, a unified response would have been impossible, given the relationship between the King and parliament by November 1641. The Irish rebellion was used as a political tool by both these parties, one against the other. Of particular utility in this burgeoning conflict was the issue of the radical Catholic clergy’s role in the rebellion in Ireland (see part one). The ways in which news of Catholic clerical involvement in the rebellion was received differed between the two camps. Before trying to understand how the authorities reacted to these phenomena, however, one must first understand the context in which the news of the rebellion was received. It is crucial, therefore, to establish, what David Cressy describes as, the “cluster of revolutionary developments”¹ which emerged in England during the early 1640s. Among these developments Cressy emphasizes the importance of “a transformation of the social circumstances for public debate, [which]…took place…against the background of an exuberantly unfettered press and a deeply traumatized state.”² The emergence of mounting public disorder in 1641—a trend that was facilitated by the collapse of effective censorship and the subsequent boom in pamphleteering—was a significant factor in the nascent conflict between Charles and the Long Parliament. In an effort to provide the reader with a context within which to understand how the news of radical Catholic clericalism in the Irish rebellion was received, the following pages provide a brief summary of the political dynamics of


² Ibid., 40.
1641, the emergence and prominence of a virulent strain of anti-Catholicism in England, and the emergence of the role of public involvement in the political crises.

After his failure to extract the money he needed for his war in Scotland from the Short Parliament, King Charles dissolved that body after only three weeks, on 5 May 1640. However, Charles’ war against the Scottish Covenanters—the group of Presbyterians in Scotland that opposed the implementation of English ecclesiastical norms on the Scottish Church—went poorly, and the King was forced to agree peace terms with the Scottish forces occupying northern England. One of the conditions for the ratification of the peace treaty was that the treaty would have to be approved by an English parliament, which the King subsequently called and opened on 3 November 1640. The King’s attitude had not significantly changed, though, in the intervening months—secretly the King wished the newly called parliament to provide him with money to pursue a new campaign against the Scots, after which he would consider the Scottish grievances. Of Charles’ opening speech to the new parliament, Conrad Russell writes: “he was asking for exactly what he had asked for in the Short Parliament, and, indeed, even expressed the conviction that if he had been believed in the Short Parliament, none of the intervening trouble need have happened.”

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3 Anthony Fletcher, in the introduction to The Outbreak of the English Civil War writes: “it is the many-sidedness of the political process of these years that needs to be stressed.” Anthony Fletcher, The Outbreak of the English Civil War (New York: New York University Press, 1981), xxx. While this “many-sidedness” is important to understanding the causes of the English Civil War, many facets of the crisis fall outside the scope of this thesis. It would also be impractical to attempt a comprehensive history of this period within the limited space available. Consequently, the following pages are limited to discussing the three areas of the developing political crisis in England set out earlier, beginning from the calling of the Long Parliament.

4 Austin Woolrych, Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 137.

5 Ibid., 147-8.

In the period between the two parliaments, a number of leading parliamentarians from the Short Parliament, including Oliver St. John and John Pym, \(^7\) crafted a petition to the King for a new parliament. Written in large part by Pym, the petition urged the King to call a new parliament arguing that it was in the King’s best interest for the “prevention of the dangers that may ensue to your royal person and to the whole state.” \(^8\) John Pym had been a member not only of the Short Parliament but also of the parliaments of the 1620s, and he would go on to become one of the most influential characters in the development of the political crisis in England during the early 1640s. Pym’s opening speech outlining his political agenda to the Long Parliament can be used to structure the overview of the growing tensions between King and parliament between 3 November 1640 and 9 September 1641 outlined below.

When John Pym made his opening speech in the House of Commons, on 7 November 1640, he was not the undisputed leader of the House that he would later become. \(^9\) His star had been on the rise in the parliaments of the 1620s and he gave an influential speech early on in the Short Parliament. In the early meetings of the Long Parliament, Pym’s speech again set the tone. Pym was convinced that, at root, the political troubles the kingdom had endured during Charles’ reign were the result of a popish plot. \(^10\) Pym outlined for the other members of the House a “design to alter the kingdom both in religion and government.” \(^11\) In a carefully coordinated maneuver, Pym’s speech was followed immediately by that of Sir John Clotworthy who helped

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\(^7\) Russell, 149-150.


\(^9\) Woolrych, 165.

\(^10\) Russell, 216.

situate the “design” in an Anglo-Irish context. Clotworthy explained that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Thomas Wentworth (who had recently been created the Earl of Strafford), had raised an army of 8,000 Catholics with the distinct purpose of unleashing this force on England. Clotworthy had been present in Ireland while Wentworth was raising the army, and was thus a credible witness in the eyes of the other members of the House. Fletcher describes the effectiveness of Pym’s pantomime by saying: “it was merely the centrepiece of a day’s debating, in an atmosphere of frantic alarm, during which Pym began to educate his colleagues in the full horror of the papist design.”

According to Caroline Hibbard, this notion of a Catholic conspiracy to undermine the Protestant establishment of England, and a reactionary feeling of anti-Catholicism, were the defining characteristics of the burgeoning conflict between the King and parliament that would eventually culminate in war.

Prior to Pym’s speech, another MP, Sir Benjamin Rudyerd, made a speech in which he urged the King and parliament to set aside their differences and work together. This admonition came in the light of his explanation that the problems of the 1630s were the result of divisions caused by the popish plot. He argued that the underlying cause of the political tension was related to recent religious innovations. “It is a knowne and practis’d principle, That they who would introduce another Religion into the Church, must first trouble and disorder the Government of the State, that so they may worke their ends in a confusion which now lies at the doore.” Historian Austin Woolrych has argued that Rudyerd’s speech was representative of a majority of the MPs’ beliefs that political strife was positively linked with the threat to true

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12 Fletcher, 3-4.
religion.\(^{15}\) In the eyes of a majority of MPs, the undoubted source of these woes was the Roman Catholic Church.

Regardless of the actual threat posed by Catholics in England, fears of a popish plot in England were prevalent in the 1640s. Caroline Hibbard characterized the state of Catholicism in England, in her *Charles I and the Popish Plot*, as “scarcely menacing, rather on the defensive.”\(^{16}\) With the major Catholic powers of Europe preoccupied with military commitments on the Continent one could be tempted to believe that the English Protestants could breathe a sigh of relief. However, as counterintuitive as it may seem from the modern perspective, anti-Catholicism (including its attendant preoccupation with a popish plot) was one of the defining characteristics of the Long Parliament. The international element of the Long Parliament’s anti-Catholicism is addressed below, but first it is necessary to address some of the basic Protestant assumptions about Catholicism that underlie their attitudes and behaviors.

For most Protestant men, the Catholic Church was an anti-religion, or as Peter Lake describes it, “a perfectly symmetrical negative image of true Christianity.”\(^{17}\) The Pope, who in Protestant minds was the Antichrist, was a servant of Satan, sent to rot the Christian Church insidiously from within. Hence, the Reformation had been necessary to purge Christianity of the Antichrist. Ever since the Reformation, Protestants believed that the Antichrist would try to bring down the true church through intrigue, as well as more obvious military threats. This view of a Catholic threat is highlighted in a 1641 pamphlet purporting to contain the confessions of a priest who was caught and hanged for “seducing the King’s people” towards popery, which lists the

\(^{15}\) Woolrych, 164-5.

\(^{16}\) Hibbard, 3.

two cornerstones upon which the author believed the Church of Rome was based. After explaining the priest’s boastfulness in the face of death, the author writes: “I cannot see how this religion can stand with truth or reason, when the greatest part of it is grounded upon murther and mischiefs.” The belief that Catholics followed the Evil One gave rise to what Lake calls a series of “binary oppositions.” That is to say, that every negative characteristic that was applied to Catholicism highlighted its positive opposite within English Protestantism, and vice versa. Catholicism was an inversion of the natural and divine order of things. For example, while Protestants upheld the virtue of liberty, Catholics were deemed to be absolutist and tyrannical. Whenever the godly perceived an act to be tyrannical, they were predisposed to believe that it was most likely the result of some popish influence.

This particular example is important in the context of this thesis, as it was one of the motivating fears that united a majority of the Long Parliament at first in its opposition to Charles’ policies. Charles’ inclination for personal rule during most of the 1630s was seen by godly Puritans as evidence of a popish plot. As mentioned earlier, Pym’s first speech in Parliament highlighted this fear. Pym stressed the immediacy of the task facing the Long Parliament, positing that the “stepps of these things [the elements of the Catholic plot] that have proceeded in motion first softly now by strides which are neare their ends if they bee not prevented.” Pym also outlined the four major ways that he saw popery infecting the kingdom. Firstly, Pym argued that there was a design to alter the religion of the country by “setting difference between the King and his subjects.” Secondly, he argued that there was a plan afoot

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20 Ibid.
21 D’Ewes, Notestein, 8.
to reunite the Church of England with the Church of Rome, being carried out by “the corrupt parte of our clergie.”

Thirdly, Pym posited that there were foreign interlopers trying to corrupt religion and government. Finally, Pym denounced the behavior of Englishmen who were so blinded by greed for personal advancement that they had turned to Catholicism, or as Pym put it, those that had “runne into Popery.” These distinctions serve as a convenient organizational device, and are used in what follows to discuss the role of anti-Catholicism in the growing conflict between the King and parliament.

The first aspect of Catholicism that Pym highlighted was the fear that Catholics were trying to bring about a return to popery, specifically by creating disagreements between the King and his people. Such disagreements importantly played on a particularly pertinent element of the Protestant conception of Catholicism. One way in which the Catholics were supposedly going to achieve their nefarious ends was by sowing dissension among the English. Whether it was between the King and parliament, or one part of the Church of England and another, the Catholics could divide the King’s subjects and weaken royal authority. In turn, this would prepare the way for the Pope to overthrow the Protestant monarchy by a foreign invasion that would be supported by local Catholics. Hibbard writes: “Disunity within the church or state was regarded as unnatural, even un-Christian, and its persistence indicated that the devil was at work. By a progression of ideas natural to many Protestants, discord would thus be blamed on those prime agents of the devil, the papacy and the Jesuits.”

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22 Ibid.
23 Hibbard, 170.
24 D’Ewes, Notestein, 8.
25 Hibbard, 14.
already predisposed to the notion of a radical clerical involvement in the tumults in Ireland—not on the basis of any factual evidence, but simply because division within the state was perceived as being the result of Jesuit machinations.

Understanding the Protestant fear of Catholic-inspired divisions helps clarify the thinking behind various parliamentary accusations that the King was surrounded by evil councilors. Pym accused the King’s advisors of “setting differences between the king and his subjects.”26 In the eyes of Pym and the other leaders in the Long Parliament, the King had been surrounded by a number of advisers who had engineered policies that were to the detriment of the kingdom. Such policies included the imposition of taxes without parliamentary consent, mandated liturgical reforms to church worship and doctrine, and the wars with the Scottish Covenanters in 1639 and 1640, all of which were believed to be strengthening the position of popery in England.27 Creating a plan to address the problem of the evil counselors was one of the main objectives in the early days of the Long Parliament. In his opening speech, Rudyerd reasoned that “His Majesty hath clearly and freely put himelfe into the hands of this Parliament, and…if he prosper no better in our hands then he hath done in theirs, who have hitherto had the handling of his affaires, we shall forever make ourselves unworthy of so gracious a confidence.”28 Rudyerd and Pym went on to suggest the idea of bartering with the King. Pym’s prime concern was to get the King to agree to give the key offices of the kingdom to MPs with parliamentary approval. In return, Pym would guarantee to place Charles’ finances on a sound basis. Pym planned an excise tax, reforms to customs duties, and the sale of the lands of the deans and chapters of Cathedrals,

26 D’Ewes, Notestein, 8.
27 Woolrych, 166.
28 Rudyerd, 5.
in order to ensure the Crown’s solvency. But in return Pym expected the King to take advice only from counselors who had the confidence of parliament.\textsuperscript{29}

From the King’s perspective, he still needed to be convinced that Pym’s plans would serve him better than the other means for raising money still available to him. The mistrust that Charles’ felt towards parliament was probably due to a number of factors, but Lake argues that the most significant cause of this suspicion was a religious conspiracy theory that ran parallel to anti-popery. Both George Con, the Scottish papal representative in the Court, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, convinced Charles of the existence of an international Calvinist anti-monarchical conspiracy.\textsuperscript{30} In the Laudian view, Calvinism was inherently incompatible with sound government. Its rejection of authority, and its tendency to excite the lower orders into believing that they had a say in issues that were far beyond them, made Calvinism a threat to political stability.\textsuperscript{31} Indeed, it was not uncommon at the time to read pamphlets in which Puritans were accused of being just as seditious as papists. In his pamphlet, “Religions Enemies,” John Taylor makes this point clear. Taylor compares these two groups with other Protestant dissenters, writing that they all,

\begin{quote}
do\ stif\ stiffely\ hold\ and\ maintaine\ to\ their\ uttermost\ power\ that\ every\ one\ (in\ his\ owne\ opinion)\ in\ each\ of\ their\ Sects\ are\ the\ true\ Church,\ and\ under\ the\ colours\ of\ a\ feigned\ piety\ they\ are\ all\ in\ violent\ opposition\ against\ each\ other,\ in\ a\ disunion\ and\ diversity\ among\ themselves,\ and\ all\ in\ general\ malignant\ inveterate\ hatred\ against\ the\ Government,\ the\ Governours,\ and\ of\ the\ true\ Church\ indeed.\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{29} Woolrych, 166.

\textsuperscript{30} Lake, “Anti-popery,” 92.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. 85.

It is reasonable to assume then that an apprehension of Puritan populism and a Calvinist anti-monarchy movement played a role in Charles’ reticence to give in to parliament’s demands. Another major stumbling block for Charles in Pym’s proposition was that he refused to give up his rights as head of the Church of England.\footnote{Woolrych, 166.} As Lake describes it, Charles believed that “popish tyranny was thus to be avoided not by the retrieval of any popular liberties but by the vindication of the rights of sovereign Christian princes as ecclesiastical governors.”\footnote{Lake, “Anti-popery,” 78.}

The second element of Pym’s four part diagnosis of an encroaching popish plot argued that there was a plan afoot to bring the Church of England back into communion with the Church of Rome. For many, this fear was manifested in the person of the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. In a pamphlet printed by William Prynne—one of Laud’s most prominent victims—after Laud had been charged by the Long Parliament with high treason, one can see the anti-popish imagery that was used to rile public opinion against Laud: “And it was a great aspersion iustly cast upon such high authority, that hee so much affected sumnum jus, iustice without mercy, as sparing neither person nor profession, and to leave all others.”\footnote{William Prynne, “Rome for Canterbury” (London, 1641), 2.} This excerpt alludes to the image of popery as equivalent to tyranny, and would have resonated with readers particularly because of Prynne’s firsthand experience of Laud’s cruelty.\footnote{For a more detailed explanation of Prynne’s treatment at the hands of Laud and his licensers, see the chapter six.} Therefore, by displaying his tyrannical tendencies, Laud was also increasing suspicion that he was part of a popish plot to bring down the Church of England. There were, however, other, more explicit, reasons for parliament’s suspicion. Laud was widely believed to be an Arminian. This was a
school of Protestant thought that held a number of tenets that were distressing to Calvinists, Puritan and non-puritan alike. They rejected the Calvinist ideals of the assurance of God’s election and guaranteed perseverance in faith of the godly. Arminians were also seen to have a dangerously popish view on the comparative values of the sermon and the sacraments. Arminians were derisive of the Puritans’ extolment of the sermon, and held the sacraments of the church to be more important. For example, Laud and his followers emphasized the importance of the physical church structure because it was the house of God. They believed that, though God was present everywhere, he was present in a special way in the church building.\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, within the church structure, they believed that the altar should be set apart for particular veneration. They did this by mandating that fixed altars in the eastern end of the church should replace movable communion tables, and that these new altars should be separated from the congregation by an altar rail.\textsuperscript{38} All of these innovations smacked of Catholicism to Puritans and were evidence of Laud’s role in a popish plot.

Possibly the most damning indictment that the Puritans could level against the Arminians was the agnosticism with which the latter regarded the equating of the Pope with the Antichrist.\textsuperscript{39} One of the problems faced by the Protestant churches that claimed to be the true heirs to the early followers of Christ was how to trace their lineage to these groups. For almost 1,500 years the Church of Rome had been the only Christian Church in the West. Puritans and Arminians developed two different strategies for explaining away this problem. Puritans argued that an “invisible church,” of true believers had existed throughout the history of the “visible church.”


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 171.

\textsuperscript{39} Lake, “Anti-popery,” 90.
While the “visible church” had become corrupted in the Medieval period, pockets of the “invisible church” had remained pure and was, as historian Anthony Milton describes, “comprised essentially of the whole company of God’s elect throughout history who alone were members of Christ’s mystical body by an inward effectual calling.”

On the other hand, Arminians held that the “Court of Rome” could be distinguished from the majority of the Church of Rome. In this interpretation, first put forward by Richard Field, true believers had existed in substantially larger areas than in the Puritan view. These groups had been under the tyranny of a small minority that ruled from Rome. Laud took Field’s logic further and applied it to the Catholic Church as a whole. He argued that while the Pope and the Church of Rome had slipped into erroneous doctrine, they were still a true Church in some sense by virtue of the fact that they professed faith in Jesus Christ and retained the sacrament of baptism. Therefore, the Pope could not be the Antichrist, as he was at the head of a true religion that had merely lost its way. In the black and white world of many Puritans, if one was not opposed to the Antichrist then one was allied with the Antichrist. Laud’s Arminian tendencies, combined with the innovations that he introduced in the Protestant liturgy, confirmed for many that he was really a Catholic in disguise.

This notion of Laud as a crypto-Catholic is illustrated in the following political cartoon.

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41 Ibid., 193.

42 Ibid., 201.

The image depicts three figures: a “Sound-Head,” a “Rattle-Head,” and a “Round-Head.” This configuration serves as a spectrum of where these three characters come in the author’s reckoning, as he describes them as “Well plac’d where best is merited” in the caption. The author praises the “Sound and Religious…Puritan” on the left of the page, and then becomes more critical of the characters the further right one moves on the page. The depiction of the “Rattle-Head,” though, is particularly significant. The appearance of the character is that of a two-faced man, who is stood responding to both the other characters in the cartoon. He is dressed half in the clerical vestments of the Church of England, and half dressed in an outfit that resembles the cassock of a Jesuit priest. The half that is facing the “Sound-Head” bears a striking resemblance
to other depictions of Laud. Moreover, this half of the character is waving away the book that the Sound-Head is trying to give to him, symbolic of the rejection of truth. The other half of the figure is facing the last character, the “Round-Head.” The “Round-Head”, depicted as a friar, is handing the “Rattle-Head” a Crucifix, which the “Rattle-Head” warmly receives. The author then goes on to write in the caption that the “Rattle-Head” “With Romish-rubbish did men’s Souls beguile.” The “Rattle-Head” is refusing the truth of the Scripture and instead engaging in the idolatrous, Catholic behavior of praying to a Crucifix. This reflects the popular attitude that Laud, through ecclesiastical policy, was secretly bringing the English Church back to Rome.

Parliament’s reaction to Laud’s innovations were numerous and varied. Proceedings to impeach Laud began on 18 December 1640, after being introduced in the House of Commons by John Pym. In an indication of Laud’s unpopularity in that chamber, the motion was carried without one dissenting voice. But while a vast majority of the Long Parliament could get behind the leadership’s agenda against the innovations in ecclesiastical governance of the 1630s, the introduction of more radical measures to alter Church structure, such as the Root and Branch Petition, would begin to fragment opinion within the House of Commons. The Root and Branch Petition was presented by 1,500 Londoners to the House on 11 December 1640. The petition blamed the woes of the country and Church on the governance of the bishops and archbishops, and called for the absolute abolition of the episcopacy. One of the unintended consequences of the Root and Branch Petition was the beginning of divisions within the Commons. While many parliamentarians could agree that something needed to be done about the Church that had evolved out of the 1630s, they could not agree on what exactly should be done. The adoption of

44 Russell, 182.
45 Woolrych, 169-70.
46 Fletcher, 96.
the formula outlined in the Root and Branch Petition by some parliamentarians highlighted this division.

During the King’s absence in Scotland (in the summer of 1641), the House of Commons had taken it upon itself to issue a series of ordinances that provided for the government of the country in the King’s absence. One of these ordinances required the removal of “divers innovations in or about the worship of God, [which] have been lately practiced in this kingdom.”\(^\text{47}\) The people of England were then encouraged to dismantle altar rails, crucifixes, and various other items considered to be of a popish origin—an activity that had been taking place in England up to this point without any official government sanction. One of the most sweeping changes attempted by the House of Commons was the removal of the bishops from the House of Lords. These efforts met stiff resistance from the House of Lords, but after the passing of the Protestation in May 1641 the bishops ceased taking their seats in the House of Lords.\(^\text{48}\) All of these actions directly challenged Charles’ determination to maintain control over church governance.

Charles had firmly subscribed to an Arminian ecclesiastical policy. Lake argues that by the end of the 1620s, innovations in religion, such as those introduced by the Arminian branch of the Church of England, were already viewed as a threat to the liberties of Englishmen. This was a result of the tension between the populist nature of Puritanism and the desire to suppress these tendencies in the Arminian branches of the church. Lake concludes: “thus Arminian religious opinions came to be associated with a jaundiced view of Parliament and strongly absolutist


\(^{48}\)Woolrych, 181.
accounts of royal power.” Charles did little to dissuade people from this view. His continued insistence on his prerogative powers, his involvement in various schemes to pressure parliament into compliance, and his reliance on advisors such as Laud and Wentworth, all served to confirm the fear that he had been swayed and influenced by a popish plot.

Pym’s third point in his outline of the threat to England posed by popery was the accusation that there were foreign agents in England trying to corrupt religion and government. This concern over foreign interference spoke to a larger aspect of the threat posed by Catholicism. The Pope traditionally claimed the right to depose and excommunicate monarchs whom he deemed unfit to rule. This provided a serious political threat to the monarchs of England after the Reformation had taken hold. During the reign of Elizabeth I, Pope Pius V promulgated the Papal Bull of 1570, which absolved her subjects from obedience to the heretic Queen:

[I] also (declare) the nobles, subjects and people of the said realm and all others who have in any way sworn oaths to her, to be forever absolved from such an oath and from any duty arising from lordship. fealty and obedience; and we do, by authority of these presents so absolve them and so deprive the same Elizabeth of her pretended title to the crown and all other the abovesaid matters.

Philip II of Spain sought to execute the bull, and prepared an Armada to invade England in 1588. England, therefore, had a recent history of near-misses with antagonistic foreign Catholic powers. Pym’s arguments about foreign interlopers alluded to this history and would likely have resonated with the other members of the House. In addition, the religious dimension of the

49 Lake, “Anti-popery,” 90.
51 Pius V, “Regnans in Excelsis” (Rome, 1570), 1.
52 Mullett. 23.
ongoing Thirty Years War in mainland Europe gave Protestants in England the impression that the military power of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire was experiencing a resurgence. However, Pym was referring more specifically in his speech to foreign agents active within England.

While there were Catholic Spanish and French members of the Court—the most notable member of which was Queen Henrietta Maria—Pym was also alluding to the role of the Jesuits as agents of the Antichrist. The Jesuits were one of the most active orders of Catholic priests in England during the Counter-Reformation. This is not surprising: one of the reasons for the establishment of the order was to reverse the spread of Protestantism. The perceived insidiousness of the Jesuits’ mission in England soon earned them the infamy of becoming one of the main pillars of the perceived popish plot.\(^53\) Caroline Hibbard explains one of the reasons Jesuits, as opposed to other orders, singularly became associated with the popish plot, arguing: “behind every political crisis, Catholic conspiracy might be suspected, the more so because the Jesuit order was identified with support for theories of resistance.”\(^54\) These theories of resistance contributed to the English Protestants’ suspicion that the Jesuits were also responsible for the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.\(^55\) In addition to this fact, Jesuits were also considered particularly dangerous because they were deemed to be masters of disguise and capable of insidious infiltration. This fact is evidenced in a pamphlet from 1641, entitled “A Discovery of the Jesuits Trumpery, Newly Packt out of England.” In this pamphlet, the anonymous author uses the imagery of a peddler’s pack to explain the many tricks the Jesuits have at their disposal. Chief

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 3-32.

\(^{54}\) Hibbard, 15.

\(^{55}\) Ibid.
among them, according to the author, are the “sheepes-cloathing…and disguises,” with which the Jesuits were able to infiltrate England and deceive honest Englishmen into aiding their cause.

Parliament took action against the perceived threat of the Jesuits and other foreign malefactors by passing the Protestantation. The Protestantation was introduced by John Pym on 3 May 1641, after he had related to the parliament details of a plot by the King to use the army to leverage the release of Thomas Wentworth, who had been arrested for treason. The Protestantation focused mainly on the issue of interloping Jesuits and priests, and resolved that steps should be taken to bring an end to their scheming. The final version of the Protestantation did make mention of the army plot that Pym had described to the House earlier. Some members of the House considered this plot, too, to be the handiwork of Jesuits and Jesuit sympathizers. Pym called for an oath of loyalty to be drawn up as a corollary to the Protestantation. The wording of the oath explicitly professed the belief that there was a popish plot to subvert the true church, and called on every man who took it to do all within his power to uphold the Protestant faith. “I A.B. do, in the presence of God, promise, vow and protest to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may with my life, power and estate, the true reformed Protestant religion expressed in the Church of England, against all Popery and popish innovation within this realm.” Passage of the Protestantation also brought about an end to the debate on the bishops’ right to sit in the House of

57 Hibbard, 194.
58 Woolrych, 179-80.
59 Hibbard, 194.
60 “The Protestantation,” 3 May 1641 in Gardiner, Constitutional Documents, 84.
Lords. As a result of the Protestation, both the recusant lords and bishops ceased attending the House.  

As previously described, the King’s court was filled with diplomats from some of the great Catholic powers in Europe. Indeed, Hibbard has argued that some of these foreign elements were with the King far more frequently than some of his official advisors, and had an effect on the rather casual way that decisions on policy were made in the Court. Charles greatly resented the pressure put on him by parliament to alter the composition of his privy council. Though the King eventually complied and appointed seven new privy councilors, it was a shallow victory for parliament, as from that point onwards Charles rarely called the council to meet. The pressure applied by the parliament in order to get the King to listen to counsels that they deemed to be sufficiently void of popish influence actually pushed Charles closer to the unofficial councilors with whom he surrounded himself, many of whom would have not met the parliament’s exacting standards of godliness. Behavior like this creates the impression that Charles was obviously unconcerned with easing the Puritan fears of meddling foreigners. Indeed, this suspicion is further confirmed by Charles’ courting help from the Antichrist himself. In the midst of Charles’ negotiations for a settlement with parliament, the King was also trying to obtain a loan from the Pope. Through the use of his wife’s Catholic connections, Charles hoped to secure a loan from the Papacy that would provide him with enough money to raise an army of English, Irish, French, and possibly Dutch, soldiers that would enable him to pressure parliament into compliance.  

61 Woolrych, 180.
62 Hibbard, 12.
63 Russell, 263-4.
64 Ibid. 248-9.
The fourth and final sign for Pym of a popish plot in England were the activities of Englishmen who were so greedy for power that they were willing to “run into popery.” Thomas Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford, perhaps provides the clearest example of the kind of man Pym alluded to. Wentworth had served as both Lord Deputy and Lord Lieutenant in Ireland during the 1630s. During the later portion of his tenure in Ireland, he had raised an army to support the King’s war against the Scots. As the vast majority of the men in that 8,000-strong army were of native Irish ethnicity, they were also predominantly Catholic. The creation of this army caused a stir in England, where it was believed that this army was actually to be used against English Protestants. In this way, it would have seemed to a mid-seventeenth century Puritan observer that Wentworth had sold himself to the popish plot in order to try and gain prestige and win the favor of the King. Wentworth was well known to many of the members of Long Parliament, as he had served with a number of the members in the early 1620s. However, by the middle of that decade, Wentworth had begun to associate with the Duke of Buckingham—a figure of hate among parliamentarians and another man who was deemed to be secretly an agent of the Antichrist—and was eventually favored by Buckingham for the presidency of the Council of the North. Wentworth was also accused of many other explicit popish activities. But, ultimately, it was his popish trait of tyranny that turned the New English in Ireland against him, and served as the catalyst for their involvement in his downfall.

The Long Parliament was quick to move against Wentworth. On 11 November 1640, Pym engineered Wentworth’s impeachment. Once this was accomplished, though, his trial did not begin until March. The problem that the Parliament faced in trying to remove what they

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65 D’Ewes, Notestein, 8.

66 Hibbard, 173.
perceived to be an instrument of the popish plot, was that nothing Wentworth had done constituted treason under English law. The arguments against Wentworth were tenuous at best. Pym argued, though, that all the charges against Wentworth, taken cumulatively, constituted treason. However, the difficulty in proving this argument lay in the fact that treason was a crime against the King and Wentworth had taken all his actions with the King’s approval. Wentworth helped his own case greatly through his sterling defense. He picked the prosecution’s arguments apart, and it is a testament to how well the trial was going in his favor that a bill of attainder was introduced to the House of Commons on April 1641. This bill aimed to circumvent the judicial process and proclaim Wentworth guilty of treason by a legislative act, which would not require a conviction in a trial. Pym was uncertain about the bill and resented the implication that the trial he was helping to prosecute was not going well. The House of Lords, who sat as judges in Wentworth’s trial, also did not react kindly to the circumvention of the judicial process. The bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on 21 April 1641. Many members were absent from the House for fear of opposing the bill, and those that did have the courage of their convictions were roundly lambasted as popish sympathizers. The House of Lords was far more deliberate in its consideration of the bill and did not pass the bill until after the revelation of the army plot, on 5 May 1641.67

Meanwhile, the King was active in trying to ensure the release of his friend and servant. Woolrych suggests that Charles even went as far as to offer Pym the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in exchange for Wentworth’s life. Pym rejected the offer, primarily because he had so publicly called for Wentworth’s impeachment.68 When this course of action failed, Charles set into motion a plan to storm the Tower of London and free the imprisoned

67 Woolrych, 155-192.

68 Ibid., 177-8.
Wentworth. Charles’ plan also involved moving the northern army south to put pressure on the parliament. Both elements of the plan failed or were betrayed to parliamentary authorities. The fall-out from the so-called army plot actually did much to convince the Lords to vote in favor of the bill. In a letter to the King, Wentworth released Charles from any bond of friendship that would prevent him from assenting to the bill. Despite Charles assurance to Wentworth just after his arrest that “upon the word of a king, you shall not suffer in life, honour or fortune,”69 on 9 May 1641, moved to tears, Charles assented to the execution of Wentworth.70

It was into this cauldron of suspicions, prejudices, and conflicts that the news of the Irish rebellion was added on 1 November 1641. The reactions of the King and parliament to the news of a predominantly Catholic rebellion took different forms: while both were shocked and appalled, significantly they were afraid of different things. In the mind of the Puritans in parliament, the uprising of Catholic Irish was obviously a sign of the Antichrist’s continued involvement in an unfolding popish plot. For the King, the main issue he had with the rebels was that despite their protestations to the contrary, they had defied the authority of the King. The tumults in Ireland would also serve as another issue over which the King and parliament would clash. The fundamental mistrust between the two authorities meant that a unified response was not possible. The following chapters explore not only the reactions of each of these groups, but also the ways in which these reactions helped shape the policies that these distinct entities took towards the crisis in Ireland.


70 Russell, 274-302.
Chapter Five
The Perceptions and Reactions of the English Parliament

The Venetian ambassador to England, Giovanni Giustinian, showed remarkable foresight when on 29 October 1641 he wrote of the political situation in England that “there is a danger that what is begun with the tongue and the pen, may end at length with the sword.”\(^1\) Within a year, the fraying relationship between Charles and the Long Parliament degenerated from parliamentary speeches and proclamations concerning the mismanagement of the kingdom to a civil war between the two parties. Of course, the members of parliament—which had resumed meeting on 20 October 1641—\(^2\) had no idea that not two weeks into the new session they would be confronted with a rebellion in Ireland. The outbreak of the Irish rebellion proved to be a catalyst for war with the King, whose complicity, at least to some degree, was suspected in the troubles in Ireland from the very beginning.\(^3\) Writing about the Irish rebellion, Conrad Russell suggests that “for the godly, it was a validation of all their worst fears, and a justification for the most stringent measures to root out the lingering popery in their midst.”\(^4\) Much of that lingering popery was still thought to be manifested in the evil counselors surrounding the King, namely the perceived Catholic influence in the Privy Council and via the person of the Catholic Queen. Consequently, the attempts of the Long Parliament to remove the lingering elements of popery

\(^1\) Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 29 October/8 November 1641 in Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1640-1642 (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus-Thompson Organization Limited, 1970), no. 276.


from the kingdom brought them into further conflict with the King. The following pages explore the role that the perception of Catholic clerical involvement in the rebellion in Ireland played in the development of this political crisis in England.

Austin Woolrych has written that “England’s response to the Irish rebellion was vitiated by three things: misinformation from Dublin, blind prejudice against papists, and total lack of sympathy for legitimate Irish aspirations.” These factors undoubtedly influenced each other, and the main focus of the following pages relies on a synthesis of the first two points; namely, that the parliamentary response was misinformed about events in Ireland by the Lords Justices’ exaggerated dispatches, and that this phenomenon, combined with the rampant anti-Catholicism of the members of the Long Parliament, shaped the policies of the Long Parliament in two distinct ways. The policy that was adopted by parliament in response to the Irish rebellion would go on to have significant repercussions for the government of both England and Ireland in the mid-seventeenth century. Instead of reacting to the rebellion as an isolated incident, the Westminster Parliament, at this point effectively led by John Pym, viewed the rebellion within the wider context of a Catholic conspiracy affecting all three Stuart kingdoms. The rebellion was, therefore, used by parliamentarians as the impetus for solving the problem of the popish plot at its perceived source in England, the Court of Charles I. This policy of cleansing England of its popish influences was not an innovation resulting from the rebellion. But although parliament’s crusade against popery had existed before, it was pursued with a renewed vigor after news of the Irish rebellion reached England. The attempts to enact this policy were one of the major factors in the development of a civil war between the King and parliament. This policy


6 See chapter two.

required a focus on England, which inevitably led to the second way in which the policy was shaped by the news of clerical involvement in the Irish rebellion. Ironically, and probably unintentionally, the rebellion in Ireland and the subsequent determination to destroy the popish conspiracy led to the apparent neglect of the troubles in Ireland itself. This policy can be attributed to the pressing concerns that the parliament was confronted with in England. It is true that the Long Parliament attempted to keep abreast of the latest developments from Ireland. However, the type of definitive action required to remedy the situation there was not taken, as is evidenced by the fact that by the time the war with the King broke out in late 1642, a force of the size that was promised to the Lords Justices by parliament nearly a year earlier had failed to be delivered. Instead, both sides engaged in an acrimonious dispute over whether the King or parliament should have control over the army to be raised for Ireland. As a result of the bickering that ensued, two armed camps were formed, ostensibly for service in Ireland, that would end up being used to resolve the constitutional issues of England. Through the priorities that it displayed in its decision-making process, the Long Parliament indicated that it was following an “England first” policy in addressing the Catholic conspiracy, though it was never officially promulgated.

The role that parliamentary perceptions of Catholic clerical involvement in the Irish rebellion played in the development of this policy is not at first readily apparent in the surviving documents of the Long Parliament. The scarcity of parliamentary sources directly addressing the threat posed by the Catholic clergy in Ireland is highlighted when compared with the abundant references to this phenomenon in the official documents of the Irish government. As we have seen, there are a plethora of documents from Irish governmental officials that describe and opine

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9 For a discussion of a similar idea to the one described in this paragraph, see Michael Perceval-Maxwell, The Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 282-3.
on the violent nature of Catholic priests in the Irish rebellion. Of the parliamentary documents
that were available for review for this paper, only a handful focus on the clerical element of the
popish plot. However, the importance of this phenomenon for the shaping of the policies pursued
by the Long Parliament can be explored through the context of anti-popery more generally.

One can only speculate as to why less of a focus on the involvement of priests in the Irish
rebellion is evident in the documents produced by the Long Parliament, when compared to other
instruments of the English government. Perhaps it was felt that it would be inappropriate to
comment on the specifics of a rebellion of which they did not have first-hand knowledge. It is
possible that the members of the Long Parliament felt that reiterating the facts that had been
related to them was unnecessary. The position advanced in this paper, however, is that the most
likely explanation is that clerical involvement in rebellion was taken as a given. Since the Irish
rebellion had been identified as a Catholic plot, the Long Parliament employed in a number of
documents the tried and trusted images of a popish conspiracy within all three Stuart kingdoms,
of which clerical machinations were an intrinsic part. The assertion that clerical involvement is
implied in the Long Parliament’s statements and actions concerning the popish plot requires
further explanation. Some Puritans in the mid seventeenth century recognized that Catholics
could possibly be loyal as individuals. However, the fact that they answered to a higher political
authority—namely the Pope—meant that they still could not be trusted. Even the virulently anti-
Catholic John Pym posited, in a speech to the Short Parliament, that it was perhaps possible for
individual Catholics to be tolerant of true religion and loyal to good (parliamentary) government
by their natures.

Divers of them might be of themselves I confesse of peaceable disposicions and
good natures, but wee must not looke upon them [as] they are in their natures for
the planets of themselves are of a slowe and temperate motion, weare they not

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10 See the chapter three.
hurried about by the rappid motions of the sphaeres, and they carried about by the
violence of the primum mobile; soe are all these Papists at the Popes command at
any time, who onely waytes for blood.\textsuperscript{11}

Through the use of the antiquated analogy that the heavenly bodies were moved in their orbits by
spheres, this excerpt illustrates that Pym believed the Catholic laity to be easily manipulated and
propelled into action by the authority of the Pope. While in the minds of many Puritans the Pope
was the Antichrist, Puritans also recognized that he was at the pinnacle of the Church’s clerical
hierarchy. The Pope’s authority was represented to individual Catholics by the clergy, and the
clergy were, therefore, essential to the execution of the Antichrist’s plans. We thus have an
indication of how Pym and his like-minded cohort perceived the essential role of the clergy
within the wider context of the popish plot. Pym’s outlook was shared by many of the other
members of the Long Parliament, and Pym himself had all but solidified his position as the
leader of the House of Commons by the time news arrived of the Irish rebellion.\textsuperscript{12} Naturally,
clerical involvement was assumed when the Long Parliament addressed the popish plot in a
broader sense, which it did with far more frequency than it addressed the issue of clerical
machinations specifically.

News of the Irish Rebellion reached the Westminster Parliament on 1 November 1641.
The news had originally been sent to the newly appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of
Leicester, by the Lords Justices Sir William Parsons and Sir John Borlase. Leicester proceeded
to present their letter to the Privy Council, which in turn took it to the House of Lords, only to
find that that chamber was not sitting until later in the day. As a result, the Council took the letter

\textsuperscript{11} Esther S. Cope and Wilson H Coates, eds., \textit{Proceedings of the Short Parliament} (London: Royal Historical

\textsuperscript{12} Fletcher, 136-7.
to the House of Commons.\(^{13}\) The letter, delivered by Owen O’Connolly, the man who had revealed the plot to the Lords Justices, was read before the House of Commons.\(^{14}\) Sir Simonds D’Ewes, a member of parliament, noted the reaction the letter elicited from the House in his journal. “Ther followed a little silence, which was broken by Sir Benjamin Rudyerd who moved that some speedie course might be taken for the suppression of this rebellion by sending over the Lord Leiftenant with men and monie.”\(^{15}\) Later in the day, D’Ewes relates that the House of Commons resolved to publish a joint declaration with the House of Lords outlining its plan of action for addressing the rebellion in Ireland. This declaration is one of the few documents in which the members of parliament explicitly condemned the role of the Catholic clergy in the Irish rebellion.

The joint declaration was published on 4 November 1641, and was designed as a response to Lord Justice Parsons’ pleas for assistance. Conrad Russell argues that “if the Commons persistently misunderstood the Irish Rebellion, a great deal of the responsibility must rest on Lord Justice Parsons, since it was his letters which provided the official accounts available at Westminster.”\(^{16}\) That is to say, if Parsons presented a rebellion in which the Catholic clergy were the main conspirators and violent participants, then that is the information that the Parliament in Westminster would act on. In fairness to Parsons, it should be noted that in his original letter he did not explicitly state that the Catholic clergy were positively involved in the planning and execution of the rebellion, though he did suggest it. In the letter delivered to the

\(^{13}\) Russell, 414.


\(^{15}\) Ibid., 62.

\(^{16}\) Russell, Conrad, 414.
Commons, Parsons writes: “we have pregnant cause to doubt, that the Combination hath been taken force by the incitement of the Jesuits, Priests and Friars.” With this suggestion, Parsons was tapping into the rich vein of anti-popery that ran through the Long Parliament. One gets the impression from this and his later correspondence with parliament, in which Parsons does make reference to priestly complicity, that Parsons knew full well the reaction that even the suggestion of Catholic clerical involvement in the rebellion would elicit from the Long Parliament. If this was the case, the joint declaration would have not disappointed him. In the declaration, it becomes clear that the Long Parliament had made the leap in logic from Parsons’ suggestion of clerical involvement to their own assertion that these elements were responsible for the trouble.

The Lords and Commons in this present Parliament, being advertised of the dangerous Conspiracy and Rebellion in Ireland, by the treacherous and wicked Instigation of Romish Priests and Jesuits, for the bloody Massacre and Destruction of all the Protestants living there, and other His Majesty's loyal Subjects of English Blood, … have thereupon taken into their serious Consideration how these mischievous Attempts might be most speedily and effectually prevented, wherein the Honour, Safety, and Interest of this Kingdom are most nearly and fully concerned.

The latter portions of this excerpt are a reference to the soldiers and money that were voted to be sent to Ireland on 3 November 1641. It was resolved that 6,000 foot and 2,000 horse, along with £20,000, should be sent to Ireland “with all convenient speed.” This resolution would never be

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19 “Declaration to be sent to the Lords Justices of Ireland, from both Houses,” 4 November 1641, in House of Lords, 422.

20 House of Commons, 304.
fully executed as the Westminster Parliament’s attention would remain focused primarily on eliminating popery at home.

To that end, this declaration also illustrates how mistrustful the Westminster Parliament was of the King, even at this stage. Following the assertions that it would speedily address the rebellion, the parliament made it clear that it would be the body that decided how to go about rectifying the situation in Ireland. “Wherefore they [the House of Commons and the House of Lords] do hereby declare, That they do intend to serve His Majesty with their Lives and Fortunes, for the suppressing of this wicked Rebellion in such a Way as shall be thought most effectual by the Wisdom and Authority of Parliament.” 21 This statement asserts parliament’s position that it, not the King, should be trusted with the destruction of the perceived Catholic threat. This assertion went unchecked by the King for some time, as he was still in Scotland. Indeed, conflict could be avoided as long as the King was preoccupied with other affairs. But in future, control of the army that was to be sent to Ireland was one of the crucial flashpoints between the King and parliament. 22

John Pym was particularly mistrustful of the King. Pym argued that the miseries that had befallen Ireland had been a result of the machinations of the evil counselors surrounding the King, all of whom were members of the popish plot. 23 The individual in Charles’ Court of whom Pym was most suspicious was the Catholic Queen, Henrietta Maria. A contemporary observer commented on this, noting that “the parliamentarians have conceived some suspicion that the queen may have given some encouragement to these movements in Ireland.” 24 The Queen’s

21 Ibid.

22 Hibbard, 214.


24 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 5/15 November, 1641, in Cal SP Venice, no. 279.
entourage had for some time included numbers of foreign Catholic clergymen, a fact that aroused Protestant fears of foreign Catholic intervention in England. It was also feared that if a foreign invasion were to come, Ireland would be used as the staging ground. Therefore, Pym felt that unless something was done to remove the evil counselors from around Charles they would encourage the rebellion further. As a result, he wanted the King’s counselors to be approved by the Parliament. In order to try to achieve this, Pym suggested, in the instructions to the House of Commons’ commissioners in Scotland, that if the King would not concede to parliamentary approval of his counselors, then parliament would be forced to follow its own policy regarding Ireland.  

And, if herein His Majesty shall not vouchsafe to condescend to our humble supplication, although we shall always continue with reverence and faithfulness to his person and crown…we shall be forced,… to resolve upon some such way of defending Ireland from the rebels as may concur to the securing of ourselves from such mischievous counsels. 

The focus of this document on highlighting Charles’ reliance on evil counselors, particularly ones with known clerical associations, illustrates the significance of clerical involvement in the parliamentarian’s perceptions of a popish plot. Parliamentarians’ fears of these perceived agents of Antichrist was influenced, in part, by the reports of members of the Irish government concerning the role of Catholic priests in the rebellion in Ireland.

One example of how reliant the Westminster Parliament was on dispatches from Irish officials is evidenced in the following chain of events. On 22 November 1641, Sir John Clotworthy addressed the parliament concerning the origins of the rebellion in Ireland. In his

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27 Perceval-Maxwell, 274.
statement, Clotworthy was relying on information sent to him by Sir William Parsons. Sir
Simonds D’Ewes noted in his journal that “Sir John Clatworthie shewed hee had received a letter
from Sir William Parsons being much in effect the same with that hee sent to the Lord Leiftenant
of Ireland, only it was added that hee feared that this designe of Ireland was hatched in
England.” The assertion that the rebellion in Ireland had been conceived in England gave
credibility to another suggestion that had been circulating since news of the rebellion was
received in England, namely that a similar rebellion was planned for England. On 7 March 1642,
the Long Parliament issued a joint declaration of both Houses that provides the clearest iteration
of this belief, and illustrates the influence that reports from Ireland had on its development.

The Rebellion in Ireland was framed and contrived here in England, and that the
English Papists should have risen about the same Time, we have several
Testimonies and Advertisement from Ireland; and that it is a common Speech
among the Rebels, wherewith concur other Evidences and Observations of the
suspicious Meetings and Consultations; the tumultuary and seditious Carriage of
those of that Religion in divers Parts of this Kingdom, about the Time of the
breaking out of the Irish Rebellion.

Michael Perceval-Maxwell has suggested that letters like the ones referenced in this excerpt were
designed to frighten the members of the Westminster Parliament into sending troops to Ireland
more quickly. However, sparking the anti-Catholic fears of the members of the Long
Parliament ended up being counterproductive for the Irish government, as the MPs sought to
secure themselves from Catholic threats at home first.

One of the most significant attempts to address the issue of a popish plot in England was
the writing and eventual printing of a document that listed a series of grievances that parliament
had with the policies of Charles’ reign, and attributed all of these to a clandestine Catholic

28 D’Ewes, Coates, 182.

29 “Declaration of both Houses about Fears and Jealou sies,” 7 March 1642, in House of Lords, 629-30.

30 Perceval-Maxwell, 275.
conspiracy surrounding the King. The document, which became known as the Grand Remonstrance, was originally scheduled to be debated on 1 November 1641. However, the news of the Irish rebellion took precedence on the day, and the debate was postponed.\textsuperscript{31} The Remonstrance was eventually read in the House of Commons on November 8\textsuperscript{th}, and would continue to be debated until its passage on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}.\textsuperscript{32} The debates over the Remonstrance were punctuated by scares of Catholic risings in the counties and the news of threats against the lives of the members of parliament by Catholic priests.\textsuperscript{33} Though none of these plots came to fruition, the fear of a popish conspiracy against true religion that they engendered was used to good effect by Pym to ensure that the other MPs understood how serious a threat Catholicism in general, and Catholic clerics in particular, were to the survival of the English way of life. Austin Woolrych, writing about this phenomenon, noted that “Pym and Hampden repeatedly interrupted the debates on the Remonstrance with hot new ‘evidence’ of the plot in the counties. One may well wonder whether they believed any of it themselves.”\textsuperscript{34} Woolrych seems to suggest that the use of these stories was a cynical ploy to ensure the passage of the Remonstrance, an allegation that was also leveled against Pym by his contemporaries.\textsuperscript{35} Unfortunately, whether John Pym was a true believer in the Catholic conspiracy or merely a manipulator of prevalent religious fears is difficult to discern from the available resources. However, even if Pym was cynically employing these stories, such behavior confirms, rather than invalidates, the notion of anti-Catholicism as an important part of the build up to the English Civil War. Because, even if Pym did not believe

\textsuperscript{31}Woolrych, 192.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 199.

\textsuperscript{33}\textit{D’Ewes}, Coates, 144-5. See below.

\textsuperscript{34}Woolrych, 192.

\textsuperscript{35}Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 14/24 January, 1642, in \textit{Cal SP Venice}, no. 327.
these stories himself and was acting purely for his own political gain, he knew that this imagery would still resonate with a Catholic-fearing public. What one can say with certainty, though, is that news of the Irish rebellion and alleged Catholic conspiracies in England shaped the eventual form that the Grand Remonstrance took.

In fact, an entire section of the Remonstrance was added specifically to address the Irish rebellion.\textsuperscript{36} This was a move, Anthony Fletcher suggests, that secured Pym’s role as the leader of the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{37} Pym, who is credited with primary authorship of the document,\textsuperscript{38} divided the Remonstrance into three parts, the first of which dealt with establishing the causes behind the mismanagement of the kingdom. In this opening salvo, Pym perpetuated the long-held strategy of attributing the implementation of a popish plot to those around the King, rather than the King himself. In the list of actors who planned to undermine religion and government in England, Pym gave pride of place to “the Jesuited Papists, who hate the laws, as obstacles of that change and subversion of religion which they so much long for.”\textsuperscript{39} It is, perhaps, an indication of the primacy that Catholics—and particularly those influenced by Jesuit priests—held in Pym’s mind as threats to the state that they were listed first among instigators of turmoil in England and Ireland. After also categorizing the Bishops of the Church of England and the counselors surrounding the King as the other two main pillars of the popish plot, Pym moved on to the next section.\textsuperscript{40} The second, and by far the longest, part was a catalogue of grievances against the policies of Charles’ reign. It is in this section, that Pym explained how the aforementioned actors

\textsuperscript{36} Woolrych, 200.

\textsuperscript{37} Fletcher, 136-7.

\textsuperscript{38} Woolrych, 200.


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
set about trying to undermine the English political and religious system. It is also here that we see Pym make explicit reference to the rebellion in Ireland. “Only in Ireland, which was farther off, they have had time and opportunity to mould and prepare their work, and had brought it to that perfection that they had possessed themselves of that whole kingdom, totally subverted the government of it, routed out religion, and destroyed all the Protestants.”\(^4\) In this excerpt Pym is arguing that Ireland is an example of what the Catholic clergy and their coconspirators intended to achieve in England. How parliament had begun, and would continue, to address the listed grievances was expounded in the third section.\(^2\) Pym wrote that the Long Parliament had to deal with “the multiplied evils and corruption of fifteen years, strengthened by custom and authority, and the concurrent interest of many powerful delinquents.”\(^3\) However, inspired by the successes they had already enjoyed, the members of parliament vowed to continue the work of purifying England from the threats contained within the Remonstrance.

However, the House of Commons was not entirely united in support of the Remonstrance. On the final day of debate, November 22\(^{nd}\), there were more speeches made in opposition to the Remonstrance than in favor of it.\(^4\) Sir Simonds D’Ewes noted in his journal that he felt compelled to leave the house in order to avoid the vote, “because there were some particulars in the said declaration which I had formerly spoken against and could not in my conscience assent unto although otherwise my heart and vote went with it in the mayne.”\(^5\) The Grand Remonstrance was a tipping point for the Long Parliament, as members who had

\(^1\) Ibid., 151.


\(^3\) “The Grand Remonstrance,” 1 December 1641 in Gardiner, Constitutional Documents, 144.

\(^4\) Woolrych, 201.

\(^5\) D’Ewes, Coates, 185.
previously been dissatisfied with the leadership’s plans were now solidified into a substantial group by their opposition to the document.\footnote{Fletcher, 150.} Most of the opposition that Pym and the other leaders of the House of Commons faced was on the issue of the role of Bishops in the Church of England. Many of the members of the opposition, which would go on to become the royalist faction within the parliament, defended the governmental structure of the Church of England as sound, and dismissed the idea that the only way to preserve the Church from popish influences was to abolish episcopacy.\footnote{Ibid., 153.} To give an indication of how significant the opposition to the Remonstrance was, it was passed 159 votes to 148.\footnote{Russell, 429.} One thing that the two parties in parliament agreed on, however, was that there was a significant threat posed to England by Catholicism. The royalist party felt, though, that the integrity of the Church of England was equally threatened by the Puritans running parliament.\footnote{Fletcher, 153.}

The Grand Remonstrance had occupied a significant portion of parliament’s energies from its introduction to its presentation to the King on 1 December 1641.\footnote{Hibbard, 215.} So the preparations for dispatching the troops promised to the Lords Justices into Ireland proceeded slowly, a fact which the King commented on in an address to parliament on December 2\textsuperscript{nd}.\footnote{"The king’s speech to both Houses of Parliament on his return from Scotland,” 2 December 1641, in House of Lords, 459.} Despite the King’s urging to take expeditious action, parliament continued to be distracted with affairs in England. After the King had failed to respond to the Grand Remonstrance within two weeks, the
House of Commons moved to have it published. The parliament would also be distracted by the threat of Catholic uprisings in England that were alleged to be plotted by Catholic priests.

In the fears of popish plot encouraged by the correspondence of Irish governmental officials, one begins to get a clearer picture of the prominence that clerical involvement in the popish plot had in the minds of the MPs. In the examination of Owen O’Conolly by the House of Commons, the examinee explained to the commission interviewing him that the Catholic clergy had been involved with the plotting and execution of the rebellion, that the plan included the extirpation of Protestantism from Ireland, and that “the same would be done in England and Scotland.” While there is no written evidence to confirm that this statement, and others like it, influenced the decisions that parliament made subsequently, it is reasonable to conclude from the parliamentarians’ ensuing behavior that it must have had some effect. It was not long after O’Conolly’s arrival that the Long Parliament proceeded to take a number of actions against Catholic priests in England.

The day after the news of the Irish rebellion arrived in England, John Pym accompanied the Queen’s confessor, the Oratorian Father Robert Phillips, to the House of Lords so that they might “both take their oaths together to answer to such interrogatories as they should be examined upon.” The Lords had intended to question Fr. Phillips on his involvement in matters of state, which a contemporary observer described as a euphemism for trying to find out

\[^{52}\text{Woolrych, 202.}\]
\[^{53}\text{D’Ewes, Coates, 73-4.}\]
\[^{54}\text{D’Ewes, Coates, 71.}\]
\[^{55}\text{House of Lords, 418.}\]
whether or not Phillips had anything to do with the rebellion in Ireland.  

However, prior to taking the oath before his testimony, Fr. Phillips announced to the House that he would take the oath, but warned them that since the oath was to be taken on an English version of the Bible, which Fr. Phillips deemed heretical, he was not bound by the oath to tell the truth.  

In response, the House of Lords had him imprisoned in the Tower of London for affronting the House. The Venetian ambassador to England, Giustinian, may have been referring to the House of Commons’ intentions when he suggested that, “They charge him with having had some share in the disturbances in Ireland.”  

This hypothesis is further supported by the fact that after Fr. Phillips sent his apologies to the House of Lords, that chamber was willing to release him. However, the House of Lords had promised to consult the House of Commons before releasing him. John Pym argued that the priest should not be released until the lower house had had the opportunity to examine him. The following day, Pym argued that Fr. Phillips was a dangerous man and should not be released but rather charges of treason should be drawn up against him.  

Parliamentary fears that he was involved, and possibly even directing the Irish rebellion, were not eased by his detention in the Tower. In order to ensure that he could do no further harm, parliament ordered that his visitors should swear the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, that he should not be allowed private conferences, and that his trunk be searched. Fr. Phillips was

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56 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 12/22 November, 1641, in *Cal SP Venice*, no. 285.

57 *House of Lords*, 418.

58 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 12/22 November, 1641, in *Cal SP Venice*, no. 285.

59 *D’Ewes*, Coates, 177-8.

60 Ibid. 190.

61 Hibbard, 218.
released from the Tower at the end of 1641, only after he had fallen ill, and the Queen and French ambassador had lobbied for his release. Even then, the House of Commons mandated that he reside at Somerset House, keep himself away from the Court, and be ready to attend the House when summoned by parliament.

The significance of the Fr. Phillips affair is that it highlights the great suspicion that the Long Parliament held towards members of the Catholic clergy. This wariness was certainly not a result of the Irish rebellion. As discussed earlier, the hatred for priests as agents of a popish plot was a widely held feeling before the rebellion, but news of the troubles in Ireland reinvigorated this antipathy and provided a concrete and pressing example of why popery needed to be addressed as a national security issue immediately. Indeed, Fr. Phillips was protected from the full brunt of the Long Parliament’s anti-popish rage by the fact that he was a member of the Queen’s household. Queen Henrietta Maria was allowed to keep a retinue of priests, due to the terms of the marriage alliance that betrothed her to Charles. A similar arrangement was provided for a number of embassies of foreign Catholic powers. Though the presence of these priests, especially those at Court with the Queen, would be used as a chief argument by parliament to justify their criticisms that Charles was surrounded by evil counselors, these individual priests were, for the most part, spared persecution. Other Catholic priests who were discovered in England would not be so lucky.

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62 D’Ewes, Coates, 213.

63 Hibbard, 218.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., 219.
The hunt for Catholic priests in England was also influenced by another significant discovery presented to the House of Commons. On 15 November 1641, the proceedings of the House of Commons were interrupted by the arrival of Thomas Beale, a tailor who claimed to have news of a Catholic scheme to usurp parliament. Beale then proceeded to relate to the House that he had overheard two Catholic men speaking about a plan to assassinate members of parliament on November 18th, as the prelude to a general Catholic uprising. Some reports suggested that as many as 108 MPs were targeted and that each one was assigned an individual assassin. After being discovered by the conspirators, Beale alleged that they stabbed him through his cloak and left him for dead. Gathering himself, he proceeded directly to Westminster to inform parliament. To prove the veracity of his claims, he displayed his wounds to the House. According to Giustinian’s report to the Doge and Senate in Venice, “On hearing this report many judged it foolish and malicious. But those who seek their own safety in the midst of trouble and the preservation of their authority, said that it must be accepted and remedies taken.” The numbers of those within the House of Commons looking to protect themselves must have been substantial, because whether or not some members deemed the story a fabrication, a measure was passed later the same day for the apprehending of priests. Giustinian also relates in his correspondence that all English Catholics were expelled from the city of London as a precaution. It was after this incident that the persecution of Catholic priests in England began in earnest. As is evidenced by the speedy resolution for the apprehension of Catholic priests, this incident

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66 House of Commons, 316.

67 Hibbard, 217.


69 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 19/29 November, 1641, in Cal SP Venice, no. 291.

70 House of Commons, 316.
added an increased sense of urgency to the project of eliminating the clerical element of the popish plot that had already taken hold in Ireland.

The House of Commons’ attempts at extirpating Catholic priests from the kingdom met with mixed success. One of their first targets had been the Capuchin friars at Somerset House. However, their attempts to dissolve the community and have the priests expelled from England faltered, as that particular community was protected by the Queen’s marriage treaty. However, after the Beale revelation the Commons secured the support of the Upper House in their efforts to dissolve the community and ordered it to leave the country. The Capuchins would remain in London, in defiance of parliament but seemingly unmolested, until 1643. It was only then that they departed England, after their house and chapel were attacked. On the other hand, parliament successfully executed two priests on 21 January 1642 in London, while executions were also being carried out in other regions of the country. The Venetian ambassador wrote of the former incident that many “abhor shedding the blood of such innocent victims.”

Of all the priests who were captured and sentenced to death, the most famous group became the center of what was known as the Seven Priests Incident. What makes this case of particular relevance is the fact that the priests were held under suspicion of aiding in the development of the rebellion in Ireland. All seven of the priests were convicted of involvement in the treasonous plot and sentenced to death. However, Charles sought parliamentary

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71 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 12/22 November, 1641, in Cal SP Venice, no. 285.
72 Hibbard, 219.
73 Ibid.
74 Giovanni Giustinian to the Doge and Senate, 21/31 January, 1642, in Cal SP Venice, no. 331.
75 Hibbard, 219.
76 House of Commons, 339.
permission to pardon the seven priests after receiving an intercession on their behalf from the French ambassador. At the urging of Sir Simonds D’Ewes, the House voted on whether or not to comply with the King’s request on a case by case basis. In his journal, D’Ewes explained his logic as follows:

If then the question bee put of the whole seven together those that would have some of them executed must say I to that part of it and Noe to the rest of it because they would have others spared and then it being likelie that it may soe fall out that mercy will outstrip Justice perhapps the number of Noe’s may bee the greater and soe save all seven.

Apparently, D’Ewes did not want to see the guilty set free along with the innocent, and so the House proceeded to vote on each of the seven priests’ death sentences individually. Though two of the priests had been reprieved in the vote, by 15 December 1641, the mood in the house had shifted and parliament resolved that all seven should be executed. The matter was further complicated when the King began to call for the sentences to be commuted from death to banishment. In the end, only two would be executed and not until after the war in England had already begun. The rest died in prison. The Seven Priests Incident provides another example of how parliament’s actions indicate that it believed Catholic clergy to be a threat to the security of the true religion and parliamentary government. This threat, combined with fears of a popish conspiracy surrounding the King, would delay the aid promised to the Irish government.

77 Hibbard, 219.
78 D’Ewes, Coates, 273.
79 Ibid., 274.
80 House of Commons, 339.
81 D’Ewes, Coates, 294.
82 Hibbard, 219-20.
The mistrust of the King and the rumors of Catholic clerical involvement in a scheme to instigate a rebellion in England were two of the main factors explaining why parliament had not sent the 8,000 troops they promised to the Lords Justices. Attempts were made to dispatch numbers of troops to Ireland, but most of the fighting forces that came from Britain to help the Irish government were provided by the Scots. But the fear—engendered largely by the reports of Catholic clerical involvement in the violence in Ireland—that a Catholic plot, originating from the King’s popish counselors, would include violent uprisings led by Catholic priests, preoccupied parliament with issues at home. A fundamental example of this is the debate over who had the authority to raise the army to be sent into Ireland. Parliamentarians were not willing to trust the King with an armed force that they suspected he would turn on them, and the King was also mistrustful of his parliament. Caroline Hibbard has suggested that this wrangle over the control of the army to be sent to Ireland was the catalyst of the English Civil War.\textsuperscript{83} Since the two parties could not agree over who should have ultimate control of the Irish army, two different armies were assembled for the same purpose. It was only a matter of time before the boiling point was reached. In March of 1642, the Long Parliament reached the point of no return when they issued the Militia Ordinance. The ordinance provided for the raising of trained bands in order to combat “the bloody counsels of Papists.”\textsuperscript{84} But the ordinance was also a direct challenge to the authority of the King, arguing that the people were answerable to the parliament and not the King.\textsuperscript{85} There was really no turning back from this point on. The armies that had

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 214.

\textsuperscript{84} “Militia Ordinance,” 5 March 1641, in Gardiner, Constitutional Documents, 167.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
been raised for the purpose of protecting English interests in Ireland would be used instead to resolve the questions of parliamentary government in England.  

Conrad Russell argues that “the Irish Rebellion therefore made it impossible to avoid the debate which ultimately led to the Militia Ordinance.” While this assertion is supported by the evidence provided in this chapter, the object of this chapter has been to prove a narrower point—that fears of a radical Catholic clergy within the Irish rebellion, which had their origins in the hyperbolic dispatches of the Lords Justices, shaped a policy in England, in which the parliament focused on the threat posed by Catholicism at home. This policy had two unforeseen consequences. Firstly, the parliament’s attempts to purge England of its Catholic influences led to increased conflict with the King. Parliament’s assumption that the popish plot in all three Stuart kingdoms could be traced back to the evil counselors surrounding the King also meant that this project was given priority. Consequently, the project of dealing with the rebellion in Ireland was relegated to secondary importance. In this way, the perceptions of Catholic radical clericalism in the Irish rebellion led to the formulation of a policy that had repercussions on both England and Ireland well into the two nations’ futures.

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86 Perceval-Maxwell, 282.
87 Russell, 417.
Chapter Six

The Role of Pamphlet Literature

The emergence of a vibrant political print culture in England during the immediate aftermath of the Irish rebellion is an issue that complicates an examination of the role of the Catholic clergy in the insurrection. As argued earlier, in some ways the role that the clergy were perceived to play was more important than the role they actually played. This is especially true with regard to images of the Catholic clergy in the pamphlet literature of 1641 and 1642. In many ways, the specific issue of the role of the Catholic clergy is subsumed into the larger question of the threat of a popish plot in general. There are some examples, however, of the unique place that the Catholic clergy held in the minds of the propagandists charged with explaining the Irish rebellion to a public hungry for information. Oftentimes, this information was exaggerated. Sometimes, it was fabricated altogether.¹ The generation of stories that captured the attention and persuaded the reader of the rightness of a particular cause demonstrates that both royalists and parliamentarians felt the need to appeal for popular support. In the following pages, the methods, extent and success of these attempts at engagement and persuasion are examined.

Until the reign of James I, propaganda had been used as a political tool primarily by the King. The early Stuart monarchs, however, were ambivalent in employing propaganda to support their policies. Some historians have attributed this to the Stuarts’ more absolutist tendencies,

arguing that the Stuart monarchs felt that they should not have to explain their decisions as King to anyone.\textsuperscript{2} The propaganda that was produced in the first half of the seventeenth century, therefore, had more to do with ecclesiastical governance than with political policy. For both reformers and traditional members of the Protestant church, the growing print culture provided an effective outlet to teach the public about the value of their position and the error of their opponents, and also to correct misinformation provided by their opponents.\textsuperscript{3} In 1640, the Short and Long Parliaments were called, and a number of pressing political issues of the day became the subject of propaganda pamphlets.

Popular involvement and press publication were increased dramatically after the calling of the Long Parliament with the effective collapse of the censorship controls that had been in place until that point.\textsuperscript{4} In 1538, following the introduction of the printing press to England, Henry VIII issued the first royal decree on censorship in order to regulate the output of the presses. It was followed by a series of similar decrees that ruled against the printing of seditious materials.\textsuperscript{5} In accordance with these decrees, manuscripts had to be submitted to and vetted by a licenser. Licensing was the primary form of print censorship practiced by the English government and all manuscripts had to be issued a license to print before they could be published. To a large extent, the opinion of the individual licenser could decide the fate of a manuscript. Licensing proved to be a flawed system, however, and it was not at all uncommon for manuscripts to be submitted for vetting in one form to ensure their approval and to then be

\begin{thebibliography}{9}

\bibitem{2} Peacey, 31.

\bibitem{3} Ibid., 31-3.


\bibitem{5} Peacey, 133.
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printed in an unapproved form. To combat this behavior, a number of post-publication sanctions were enforced, including punishments for heresy, libel, sedition and treason. An additional element of control was guaranteed by granting the Stationer’s Company a monopoly on book production and giving them the authority to create copyright laws and regulate the printing industry.  

Jason Peacey, in his Politicians and Pamphleteers, posits that “the reformers in the Long Parliament were opposed to the substance rather than the form of licensing,” as it was exercised under the direction of Archbishop Laud. Laud was unpopular among many members of the Long Parliament because of his religious views, which were manifested in his role overseeing licensing. Laud set about excising passages from books and pamphlets that espoused the views of religious dissenters, and punishing a number of authors whom he deemed seditious. One of the most prominent of Laud’s targets was William Prynne, a young and vocal critic of what he perceived as the Arminian tenets of the Church of England. Prynne had been incarcerated and mutilated by the order of the Star Chamber in 1633 for the publication of an anti-theater treatise named Histriomastix. Despite the removal of portions of his ears, Prynne published a number of anti-Laudian tracts from prison through the use of the illicit printing system that had been

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7 Peacey, 134.

8 Ibid., 138.


10 Peacey, 136.

11 Ibid., 135.
established in England and the Netherlands. Consequently, the authorities ordered that the remainder of his ears be removed and that he be branded with the letters “SL,” which stood for “seditious libeler.” Prynne would later be released by the Long Parliament as part of its attempts to dismantle Laud’s system of licensing. This process also included the abolition of the High Commission and the Star Chamber, and the establishment of a committee to investigate printing procedures. Parliament would later impeach Laud and a number of his prominent licensers. Peacey argues that what the Long Parliament found most offensive about Laud’s system was that it exhibited a number of popish tendencies.

In their eagerness to undo Laud’s system, however, the parliamentarians threw the baby out with the bathwater. As an unintended consequence of the measures they took to destroy any trace of popery in the licensing system, the Long Parliament presided over an explosion of printing regarding political, religious, and constitutional issues. The lack of a functional licensing system meant that authors could print pamphlets concerning a number of controversial issues which would previously have been banned. It was in this context that a vast majority of the pamphlets concerning Ireland were printed.

The news of the Irish rebellion reached England on 1 November 1641. Immediately, the printing presses of London began to generate pamphlets attempting to make sense out of the

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14 Peacey, 137.

15 Ibid.

16 Harris, 48.
events occurring in Ireland. As Bernard Capp explains, the nature of the English press in the seventeenth century was such that “news was frequently ‘improved’ to broaden its appeal and bring it more into line with popular taste.” This was particularly true of the propaganda that was produced in response to the outbreak of the Irish rebellion. The sheer bulk of material printed concerning the activities of the rebels in Ireland was a result of the symbiotic relationship between the production of exaggerated retellings of events in Ireland and the presence of an avid audience for the printed word eager for this type of narrative. The urge to embellish news stories was combined with the tendency of authors to also add moralizing elements to their stories. The result was generally a mixture of titillating and graphic descriptions of violence and mayhem with a didactic overtone that would mollify the more scrupulous readers who objected to the events detailed in the pamphlets. This strategy was employed with some success to ensure that pamphlets sold well and to ensure that they reached the largest audience possible.

A vast number of the pamphlets produced concerning the Irish rebellion are filled with gory retellings of alleged massacres. An anonymously authored pamphlet entitled “A Brief Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealing of the Northern Irish Rebels” illustrates the graphic nature of a majority of the pamphlet literature concerning the rebellion. As an example of the type of description prevalent throughout virtually all of the pamphlet literature concerning the rebellion the following description—only one of many that occur in the pamphlet—merits extended quotation:

On Saturday the 23. of October, that day the Calendar notes with Romanus Episcopus, that day wherein Titus slew 8000 of the Jewes, that day the Mac-

17 Shagan, 7.
19 Shagan, 8.
Guiers began to murther, first at the House of Christopher Coates, and out seat in the County of Farmannagh, killed the Gentleman, slew his wife, his soane and daughter, and so went on; and in this their furie they spared neither widowes nor children, nor any Protestant they met with, and coming soone to Shannogge Castle, that day they brought two Rogues whose hands were bound with wicthes (that they might be the lesse suspected) before Master Arthur Champion, a Justice of the Peace, but after some few words passing on both sides, one Redmund Mac Guier, Tenant to the said Master Champion, told him he was his prisoner, and so stabbed him to the heart, and afterwards, slew his brother Thomas Champion, Mr. Midleborrough sub-Sheriffe of Farmannagh, and Mr. Thomas Ironmonger Clerke of the peace for the Countie of Cavan, in all nine men who were there, and lodged that night; An Irish youth was saine to give five shillings for to have leave for to burie Mr. Champion and Mr. Ironmonger his Master in old sheetes of Mr. Champions, or such things as he could get; but the other leven they threw into a ditch to bee meate for the fowles of the ayre, and beasts of the field, killing their Doggs, and throwing them on their dead corps in despite, not suffering to bury them.20

This excerpt illustrates a number of characteristics of the pamphlet literature that emerged subsequent to the Irish rebellion. Firstly, the notion of Irish barbarity is evident throughout. The extent of purported Irish cruelty is not limited to the acts of physical violence perpetrated by them. The excerpt also makes a point of explaining that the Irish did not bury their victims, but instead allowed them to become carrion for the “fowles of the ayre and beasts of the field.” In addition, the Irish are said to have killed the Protestants dogs and thrown them into the same ditch with their masters, a demeaning gesture and a manifestation of the inhumanity of the Irish rebels. The notion of Irish barbarity was not an innovation of the pamphlet literature on the Irish rebellion. Edmund Spenser, in A View of the Present State of Ireland, which was published in 1596, depicted the Irish “delight of licensious barbarisme.”21 Indeed, by the mid-seventeenth century, the myth of Irish barbarism had become solidified in the popular Protestant imagination.

20 “A Brief Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northern Irish Rebels” (London: A.N., 1641) 3-4.
The myth of Irish barbarism was complemented and compounded in the Protestant mind, by the prevailing Protestant assumptions about the authoritarian and sadistic nature of Catholicism. In the mind of most Protestants, the cruelty and malevolence of the Irish rebels was attributable to their religious profession. This fact is evidenced in the excerpt from “A Brief Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northern Irish Rebels.” In the beginning of the excerpt, the author begins to ascribe a number of epithets to October 23rd—the day the rebellion broke out. Two of these references allude to the malevolence of Catholics and their violence upon Protestant martyrs. The reference to the Roman general, Titus, who laid siege to Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and subsequently slaughtered and enslaved the Jews and destroyed the Temple, establishes a martyrological analogy for the events in Ireland. More significantly though, in regards to clerical involvement in the rebellion, is the first reference the author makes. Namely, that October 23rd is referred to as “that day the Calendar notes with Romanus Episcopus.”22 The term Romanus Episcopus is a Latin phrase, translated “Roman Bishop.” The first Bishop of Rome, in the Catholic tradition, was St. Peter. Subsequently, the successors of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome were those men elected Pope by the College of Cardinals. While this does not directly assert any Catholic clerical involvement, it is in some ways implied. Elsewhere in the pamphlet the author asserts more concretely the Pope’s role in facilitating the rebellion. According to the author, the rebels were “animated thereto [to rebel on the twenty-third] by their Popes pardoning Bull.”23 The calendar date was denoted by the Pope, according to this pamphleteer, as the appropriate time for the outbreak of the rebellion. The relationship drawn for the reader in this pamphlet, then, is that the ensuing butchery was associated with the Papal Bull.

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22 “A Brief Declaration,” 3.

23 Ibid., 3.
Consequently, the confessional identity of the Catholic rebels led many Protestants to believe that they were acting under the direct orders of the Antichrist.

The Irish rebellion was not the first time that Catholics were depicted as agents of cruel violence in the English press. John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, better known as *The Book of Martyrs*, was a veritable cornucopia of anti-Catholic imagery, and included many violent episodes. Of particular interest, though, is the relation within Foxe’s book of the case of William Wiseman. Wiseman had died in a state of ignominy—in prison—and was denied a proper burial by Catholic priests. “After the sayd William was de parted (as is sayde) in the Tower, the holy Catholike church men, cast hym out into the fieldes, commanded that no man should bury him, according as theyr deuout maner is to do ḳ all such as dye in lyke sort, who~ they account as prophane, and worthy of no buriall, but to be cast to dogs and birdes.”24 The parallel between this excerpt and the imagery at the end of the description from “A Brief Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northern Irish Rebels” is striking. This similarity points to the utility of referring to Catholics in this manner. Protestants would have recognized the behavior of the rebels in the pamphlet as being characteristic of the Foxean depiction of Catholicism. As Shagan points out, *The Book of Martyrs* was available for perusal at almost every church in England and was extremely popular.25

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24 John Foxe, *Acts and monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happenyng in the Church with an vniversall history of the same, wherein is set forth at large the whole race and course of the Church, from the primitiue age to these latter tymes of ours, with the bloudy times, horrible troubles, and great persecutions against the true martyrs of Christ, sought and wrought as well by heathen emperours, as nowe lately practised by Romish prelates, especially in this realme of England and Scotland. Newly reuised and recognised, partly also augmented, and now the fourth time agayne published and recommended to the studious reader, by the author (through the helpe of Christ our Lord) John Foxe, which desireth thee good reader to helpe him with thy prayer* (London: John Daye, 1583), 2: 1795.

25 Shagan, 7-8.
“A Brief Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northern Irish Rebels” is only one example of a multitude of atrocity pamphlets that were published in the wake of the Irish rebellion. Pamphlets that illustrated the rebels “putting Christians to unheard of torments,”26 proliferated in this atmosphere. The tales of slaughter, infanticide, rapine and torture are horrifying to the modern reader.27 The veracity of the claims in these pamphlets has been called into question, though. Ethan Shagan and Jason Peacey both point out that while these pamphlets may have contained elements of truth, many were often embellished, if not entirely fabricated.28 Indeed, Shagan also argues that the atrocity stories and illustrations about Catholics emerging from the Thirty Years War in Europe—another conflict that pitted Catholic against Protestant—probably had a significant influence on the cruelty attributed to the Irish during the rebellion.29 More convincingly, a number of contemporary voices argue that the tales printed in London were ridiculously overblown. Sir John Penington, who was a prominent member of the admiralty, received a number of letters now preserved in the Public Record Office, in which the authors complain of the exaggeration of the press.30 In one of those letters, Thomas Wiseman wrote concerning the situation in Ireland that “ofttimes we have much more printed than is true,

26 “The Rebels Turkish Tyranny in their March” (London: W.R., 1641), 5.

27 Almost all of the pamphlets reviewed for this project had at least one of the listed elements. However, “The Rebels Turkish Tyranny in their March” provides all of this in one pamphlet. William Ryan in his Henry Rutgers Thesis entitled “A Tale of Two Myths: The Great Popish Massacre, The Curse of Cromwell and the Construction of Irish Identity 1641-1998,” posits that this pamphlet is one of the most gruesome pamphlets to come out of the early 1640s regarding the Irish rebellion. William Ryan , “A Tale of Two Myths: The Great Popish Massacre, The Curse of Cromwell and the Construction of Irish Identity 1641-1998,” (Henry Rutgers Thesis, Rutgers College, 1998), 17.

28 Shagan, 7-8. and Peacey, 140-2.

29 Shagan, 13.

especially when anything concerns the Papists, whom, though, they are bad enough, our Preciser sort strive to make yet worse.”

Whether or not the claims outlined in the pamphlet literature were accurate, it is important to recognize their effectiveness as a persuasive tool available to propagandists. Peacey argues that “it would be misleading either to assess the importance of polemic, or to judge the quality of propaganda, in terms of its ideas and expression, rather than in terms of its ability to fulfill particular political functions at specific moments.” In other words, more important than the accuracy of the details put forth by the propagandist was the argument’s ability to elicit the desired reaction from the reader. Sometimes, to achieve this goal, propagandists would frame events in rhetoric that had a broad appeal. Tim Harris has suggested “that propagandists, in order to win public support for their position, needed to appeal to the middle ground—to commonly held values and principles—and try to convince people that holding of such principles should lead them to support their (the propagandists’) particular cause.” By the mid-seventeenth century, the aforementioned Foxean conceptions of Catholicism as violently serving the Antichrist had become the middle ground for the English populace. Those disposed to support either parliament or the King were familiar with and comfortable with the language of Foxean anti-Catholicism. Whether or not they chose to emphasize it is another matter, which is addressed later. Irrespective of the level of emphasis, though, the language of a popish plot pervades a majority of the pamphlet literature concerning the Irish rebellion, in an effort to persuade the reader that the propagandist’s side had the right idea to combat the problem.

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31 Thomas Wiseman to [Sir John Penington], 11 November 1641, in *Cal SP Dom*, 163.
32 Peacey, 8.
33 Harris, 49.
34 Shagan, 10-3.
middle ground anti-Catholicism incorporated an implicit mistrust of the Catholic clergy. To a large extent, the issue of Catholic clerical involvement in the rebellion in Ireland was just assumed and, as such, does not garner too many explicit mentions in the pamphlet literature. However, it formed part of the larger concern about the popish plot in England.

Jason Peacey argues that “Irish news was manipulated by politicians so that atrocity stories stoked long-standing fears of a popish plot sufficiently to prompt popular acquiescence to the passage of provocative political measures.” This position is supported by an examination of the pamphlet literature produced in London after the outbreak of the Irish rebellion. The following paragraphs explore this argument in greater depth, dealing first with the parliamentarians’ attempt to frame the issue. The primary support that Peacey provides for his claim is that a sizable portion of the pamphlets produced in this period were printed under the auspices of John Thomas. The printer, John Thomas, was a favorite of the more radically Puritan and anti-monarchical elements of the Long Parliament. He had also worked closely in his professional capacity with John Pym, on the production of parliamentarian propaganda earlier in 1641.

Seventeenth century printers such as John Thomas would often try to reconcile three competing interests: their desire to make a profit, their political and religious agendas, and avoidance of punishment by the censorship laws. In pursuit of the first goal, Ethan Shagan has noted that they could be completely mercenary in their decisions to publish certain materials. To illustrate this point, he uses the example of Nathaniel Butter, who printed both royalist and

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35 Peacey, 240-1.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 118.
parliamentarian pamphlets. Many publishers, though, worked with various political figures in the creation of propaganda, and were more principled in their adherence to a particular set of political ideas. In order to protect their sources and themselves from punishment by the censorship laws, many pamphleteers printed their pamphlets without authorial credit. Some publishers undoubtedly hired professional authors to provide a better quality narrative approach to their propaganda pamphlets, but the information that formed the basis for a good number of the pamphlets produced in this period came from insiders within the parliamentarian or royalist factions. Printers, therefore, were a crucial element in the production of propaganda. Not only did they provide the mechanical apparatus necessary for the publishing of pamphlets, but they also served to convert the information provided to them by their informants into a form that was palatable to the popular reader.

Thomas’ pamphlets provide a good illustration of how the rebellion in Ireland was presented, through a parliamentarian lens, for the populace of England. Through a combination of ubiquitous use of images of clerical involvement in the rebellion with more specific descriptions of individual Irish atrocities, Thomas’ pamphlets were used to illustrate the threat that the rebellion in Ireland posed and the reasons why the parliamentarian solutions to these problems would be most effective.

Though most of the parliamentarian literature that dealt with the Irish rebellion concerned itself with the popish plot in a wider sense, Thomas’ pamphlets do single out the Catholic clergy as a cause for concern in Ireland. On the other hand, some of Thomas’ pamphlets illustrate this concern even before the outbreak of the rebellion. In a pamphlet entitled “Irelands Complaint

38 Shagan, 8-9.
39 Peacey, 118.
40 Ibid., 10-5.
Against Sir George Ratcliffe,” the author rails against the perceived abuses of Sir George Ratcliffe. The unfortunate Ratcliffe was an associate of Wentworth and was thus tarred with the same brush as his master, ultimately being punished along with him. Among the numerous allegations made against Ratcliffe in the pamphlet, the author claims “he also countenanced Papists and yielded to the building of Monasteryes, to alienate the affections of the Irish from the subjection of England.”41 This comment appears as an off-hand remark in the wider context of the pamphlet, which deals in more detail with Ratcliffe’s collusion with the late Thomas Wentworth. This serves to illustrate the ubiquity of anti-clerical and anti-Catholic rhetoric in the pamphlet literature of the early 1640s. Not only was Ratcliffe complicit with the Earl of Stafford in such behaviors as the implementation of arbitrary government—itself evidence of Wentworth’s role in a wider popish plot42—and his involvement in trying to draw the Scots away from the King, he was also guilty of tolerating Catholic clerical activity and the proliferation of monasteries.43 The veracity of this claim is hard to verify, as it seems to be deliberately vague. The use of the verb “countenanced,” in this usage meaning to support or favor,44 does not clearly define what role he actually played. It may imply that he tacitly approved the building of new monasteries, that he took an active role in approving the process, or that through his own negligence he let this happen while he was in charge. In the investigations undertaken for this paper, no concrete evidence could be found that such monasteries were constructed at all. The remark in question may have been included to appeal to the middle ground of the English public,

41 “Irelands Complaint Against Sir George Ratcliffe” (London: John Thomas, 1641), 3.
42 See chapter four.
43 “Irelands Complaint,” 6.
who viewed Catholicism as a threat and viewed the Catholic clergy as particularly insidious agents of the Antichrist. Such an appeal would have helped broaden the attractiveness of the argument and perhaps garnered more support for the punishment of Ratcliffe, who was on trial in the House of Lords.\(^{45}\)

Once the rebellion broke out, the number of pamphlets concerning Catholic machinations increased. In “More Newes from Ireland,” the anonymous author relates the details of an attempt on the “chiefe Justice of Ireland his life and person.”\(^{46}\) In this pamphlet, the author explains how John Andrewes, an English Catholic, gained access to the unidentified Justice by using the excuse of presenting him with a redress of grievances. Once he had gained access to his target, Andrewes drew a dagger from his coat and attacked. He was only prevented from achieving his task by a nearby servant who intervened to help save his master’s life.\(^{47}\) The author makes two references to the role of the clergy in the plot. The first identified the would-be assassin as an associate of the “Society of Rome,” so acting under the aegis of the Pope’s designs for the extirpation of Protestantism.\(^{48}\) The next reference makes an allusion to the more direct involvement of members of the Irish Catholic clergy. The author writes, “There is a flying Rumour that he was bought to this attempt by the Priests and Jesuites in Ireland, but we dare not trouble the Reader with that Report untill wee shall have it confirmed by a more certain and sure Testimoniall, the sallery and wages of his labour was reported to be at the rate of 200 Crownes.”\(^{49}\) The text of this excerpt presents an interesting paradox. While the author protests


\(^{46}\) “More Newes from Ireland” (London: John Thomas, 1641), 4.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., 4-5.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 5-6.
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that he will not worry the reader by reporting on the involvement of members of the Irish Catholic clergy, he does exactly that by broaching the subject in the first place. Moreover, in the latter portion of the excerpt he goes on to give the precise sum that was discussed as part of the deal for Andrewes’ services. One cannot un-ring a bell, and for an English public already predisposed to believe that Catholics were seeking to overthrow the English government and religion, the suggestion of clerical involvement in such a design would have seemed perfectly reasonable. The suggestion with which the author teases the reader would have served to harden the public’s conviction that the Catholic clergy in Ireland were playing a violent and insidious role in the rebellion.

Another example of the use of anti-Catholic imagery in Thomas’ pamphlets is provided by “The Last Newes from Ireland,” in which the anonymous author relates in brief the outbreak of the rebellion. He then goes on to explain how the plot was foiled, and argues that God preserved the Protestants in Dublin by the revelation of the plot. “It is reported that some of these Rebels confessed they were to have an Army of 7,000 men from severall parts of Ireland, which should be all Papists and Jesuites, and to surprise all the fortes and Castles about Dublin, and to cut the throates of the chiepest Noble-men, Gentry, and others of this Kingdome that then were present.”50 This argument, like so many in pamphlets such as these, is based purely on hearsay. Indeed, in this instance the hearsay is twice removed from the author, bringing its veracity into more dubious territory. This reliance on hearsay is in stark contrast with the rest of the pamphlet, which ascribes its content to more factual, if not equally hyperbolic, sources. The unsubstantiated mention of “Papists and Jesuits” seems again to point to the ubiquity of using tried and trusted schemas in the writing of pamphlets for popular consumption. The English preoccupation with scheming Jesuits may well have rested on their experiences of Catholicism since the

50 “The Last Newes from Ireland” (London: John Thomas, 1641), 6.
Reformation. However, the role of the Jesuits in the Irish rebellion was vastly overstated in both the popular and political rhetoric.\textsuperscript{51} In terms of activity within the context of the rebellion, the Franciscans were far more involved. However, as Tim Harris notes, the authors of pamphlets and propaganda had to appeal to the familiar images that would elicit the most visceral response from the public.

One of the most useful tools the propagandist had at his disposal in relation to the Irish rebellion was the ability to invoke images of past Catholic scheming—in particular, Catholic clerical scheming—to undermine Protestant English authority and religion. By drawing comparisons between current events in Ireland and the perils that England had faced in the past, such as the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot and the Spanish Match, the propagandist could garner support for parliamentarian policies that were alleged to be directed against the agents of Antichrist, wherever they resided, even if this meant taking the King and his immediate circle to task. It was after all, in the Protestant imagination, English virtue and God’s providence that had saved England from Catholic aggression so many times before. If the English had ceased to be virtuous, however, as the propagandist might argue in order to convince the public to support parliamentarian policies, then God might remove his protection. In this way, fear of impiety was associated with fear of the destruction of the Protestant religion and English state. This would probably have garnered considerable support for parliamentarian policies allegedly designed to prevent such an outcome, especially as the propagandists compared the current troubles with past events.

An example of this tactic is provided by the pamphlet “A Gun-Powder-Plot in Ireland.” In this pamphlet the author relates the details of an attempt to destroy the Cathedral in Dublin.

The brief description of events provided in this pamphlet states:

\textsuperscript{51} See chapters two and four.
The Papists and Popish Priests had undermined the chiefest Church in Dublin, and there placed great store of Faggots and Barrels of Gunpowder, intending when the Lords and Privy Counsell in Ireland had beene at Church to have blowne them all up at once, and at that time to have set upon all the rest of the Protestants in Dublin, and to have massacred them, had they not been miraculously prevented.\textsuperscript{52}

Much of the imagery used in this pamphlet alludes to one of the most notorious of the Catholic plots against the English, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The similarity of the plots is the most obvious way in which the author attempts to compare the events in Ireland with past treacheries of Catholics. In both cases, the basic idea of the plot was to destroy the majority of the ruling class of the kingdom in one fell swoop. In the instance presented in this pamphlet, the Lords and Privy Councilors were meant to gather at Dublin Cathedral. In the earlier plot, the parliament and King were meant to be gathered in the Houses of Parliament. In both cases, the Catholic plotters were alleged to have attempted to destroy the meeting places with explosives. The death of the ruling class would then presumably lead to a collapse of Protestant authority. Catholic forces, including a significant clerical presence attested to in the pamphlet, would then install themselves in authority. The pamphlet also makes a subtler allusion to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The date of the testimony that revealed the later Irish plot is given as 5 November 1641. This would have been the thirty-sixth anniversary of the original Gunpowder Plot and the fact that the two events were planned to occur on the same date would probably have not escaped the notice of the popular reader.\textsuperscript{53}

When subtle comparisons simply would not do the trick, though, propagandists employed blunter rhetoric. In “Admirable Good Newes Againe From Ireland,” amidst the trumpeting of significant English victories against the rebels, the author, Sir Thomas Lucas, writes about the threat the Catholic clergy still pose:

\textsuperscript{52} Thomas Creamor, “A Gun-Powder-Plot in Ireland” (London: John Thomas, 1641), 3.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 2-3.
We have Notice of a Roman Priest, that was sent from the Pope, that is landed in England, and hath there wrought with divers English Catholiques, for to prepare themselves in readinesse to put in Execution any designe that shall bee propounded to them, for the defence of their Religion and the destruction in that Kingdome, which Priest is (as is reported) intended to come for Ireland, and his Journey did deale with a Papist skilfull in making of Granadues, and all sorts of Fire-workes, to practice the same Act, and to put the same in Execution against the chiefest Cities of England for Conquering the same when the rebels had conquered Ireland.  

This excerpt illustrates the common fear in the English parliament, as discussed in the preceding chapter, that the rebellion in Ireland was merely the first stage of a future design against England itself. There was no surer way for a propagandist to strike fear into the hearts of Protestant Englishmen than to explicate bluntly how the popish plot was unfolding before their very eyes.

Interestingly, this pamphlet also begins to signal a shift in the nature of the polemical literature in England at this time. The letter that this pamphlet is based on was sent to an unidentified member of the House of Commons in late February of 1642. We can assume, therefore, that the pamphlet was probably not printed until March, which would mean that it was published in the midst of the debate surrounding the Militia Ordinance. Not only does this pamphlet show how successful an English army in Ireland could be against the rebels, but in the preceding excerpt it illustrates the price of failing to support the parliament in their plans for dealing with the rebellion. The Militia Ordinance was allegedly a significant part of this plan, but was far more significant in its assertion that it did not require the royal assent. However, this pamphlet was far bolder

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54 Sir Thomas Lucas, “Admirable Good Newes Againe From Ireland” (London: John Thomas, 1642), 3-4.
55 Ibid., 1.
56 See chapter five.
57 Lucas, 1-3.
than the four pamphlets previously examined here, because this one acknowledges official parliamentarian involvement in its production. All five pamphlets examined were printed by John Thomas, who was working with the Long Parliament. His collusion with the parliament was, for the most part, tacit in regards to these pamphlets. It is only in this final pamphlet that we see an official acknowledgement of parliamentary involvement on the opening pages. The solidification of the parliamentarian and royalist parties meant that there was now little point in hiding one’s allegiance any longer, and so we begin to see a shift to far more openly partisan pamphlets.

It seems reasonably likely, therefore, that a large number of pamphlets published between the outbreak of the rebellion in 1641 and the calcification of two rival factions in 1642 were published with a polarizing intent. However, Shagan argues against the idea that the pamphlet literature surrounding the Irish rebellion was written to motivate its readers politically. Peacey’s argument, in support of the view that the pamphlets written in response to the Irish rebellion were propaganda, has been preferred to Shagan’s argument in this thesis because Shagan seems to ignore the activities of printers with close ties to members of parliament. The reader should also not assume that Peacey’s and Shagan’s accounts are completely irreconcilable, though, as to a large extent they both deal with separate issues and are both coming at the larger issue of the print culture of this time from different perspectives. Both arguments are supported with documentary evidence from the period, and both are probably true to some extent. However, in regards to the development of the argument that the political machinations of members of the

58 Ibid., frontispiece-1.
59 Shagan, 8.
Long Parliament were behind the production of a significant proportion of pamphlets dealing with the Irish rebellion, Peacey provides a preponderance of evidence in support of his claim. Whereas, Shagan’s brief assertion that “there is no reason to believe that most pamphlets dealing with the Irish Rebellion were intended to motivate people politically,” is supported primarily by the fact that he can provide evidence that some printers did not, in fact, fall into Peacey’s paradigm. This does not exclude the possibility that some did, though. Indeed, it is not the goal of this project to resolve whether or not a majority of the pamphlet literature produced in this period was intended to politically motivate the population. However, it seems apparent from Peacey’s research that a significant proportion—no concrete figure is provided in Peacey’s book—of the pamphlets produced concerning the Irish rebellion had propagandistic value. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to examine these pamphlets for evidence of the phenomenon that formed the particular basis of this project and to search for evidence of the inclusion of allusions to clerical involvement in the rebellion.

The pamphlets explored to this point have been purely parliamentarian. Jason Peacey notes that the royalists were far less adept at utilizing propaganda than their parliamentarian counterparts, but there are a few examples of royalist propaganda concerning the Irish rebellion. Notably, though, the royalist pamphlets have a distinct tone. Shagan argues that the perception of the Irish rebellion as a manifestation of the popish plot was not a foregone conclusion. This argument is supported by the fact that

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60 Ibid., 8.

61 Peacey, 33-4.
the royalists tended to construct the rebellion in terms of order versus disorder. An example of this is provided in the pamphlet “No Pamphlet, but a Detestation Against All Such Pamphlets As Are Printed, Concerning the Irish Rebellion, Plainely Demonstrating the Falshood of Them.” In this pamphlet, the author eschews the use of religious imagery and atrocity stories and focuses on loyalty to the King as the primary virtue threatened by the rebellion in Ireland. To illustrate this point, the author uses the example of a Protestant under siege by the rebels who “would stand upon his defence, and would rather lose his life, then succour any that were the Kings Enemies.” The use of the rhetoric of loyalty to the King distinguishes this pamphlet as one of the few pieces of royalist propaganda to be issued in the wake of the Irish rebellion. The real evil, as it is portrayed in the pamphlet, is disobedience to the King. In fact, the question of toleration for Catholicism is given a rather sympathetic hearing in the pamphlet, a fact that surely would have confirmed the suspicions of parliamentarian readers concerning the King’s part in the popish plot.

But what was the public reaction to the news of the rebellion in Ireland? Tim Harris has commented on the lack of research performed on this subject, and while it is an interesting question, and one worthy of further examination, it is also fraught with difficulties. What can be said with some degree of certainty, though, is that pamphlets received fairly wide distribution.
The wide levels of distribution were concomitant with the growing literacy rates in seventeenth century England. The level of literacy in mid-seventeenth century England is often thought to be around thirty percent of adult males. However, historians, such as Harris and Margaret Spufford, have suggested that the conventional means of measuring literacy during the period, namely the ability of an individual to sign their name, is an inadequate indicator because people more often learned to read before they learned to write. Whatever the exact percentage, those that could read did so avidly and it seems that they were well supplied by a steady stream of new pamphlets concerning the rebellion in Ireland. All of the pamphlets that were examined in this chapter were of the cheapest sort, printed on a single sheet of paper and then folded to form four pages with space for eight sides of text. These types of pamphlets were targeted towards the poorer elements of society, and were priced at one or two pence. Pamphlets were also made more accessible to the lower classes by the inclusion of illustrations for the illiterate, although no illustrated pamphlets examined for this project included allusions to clerical activity.

A number of other strategies were developed to address the issue of illiteracy, so that those who could not read were not excluded from the news cycle. It was a common practice for the literate to read to assembled groups of illiterate people. It was also common for news to be posted in alehouses across the country, and subsequently to become the subject of barroom

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66 Peacey, 33-4.
67 Harris, 51.
68 Ibid. and Margaret Spufford, “First Steps in Literacy: the reading and writing experience of the humblest seventeenth century spiritual autobiographers,” Social History 4, no. 3 (October 1979): 434-5.
69 Capp, 226.
70 Shagan, 8.
71 Peacey, 203.
discussions. Though levels of literacy decreased in the remoter parts of the country, the tracts that were read aloud or posted in these towns would have been available at local booksellers. Peacey also argues that on occasion political grandees were willing to circulate various political tracts for free in order to ensure that their message was broadcast to a wider audience. The message broadcast by these individuals may or may not have urged a public response to take action.

As a result of the growth of literacy and the development of other means of obtaining the news, the populace became, as Harris puts it, “politicized to some degree.” The political awareness of a majority of the English populace relied mainly upon their direct experience of the laws that governed England at the time. That is to say, when parliamentarians began to rail against the innovations in English law introduced since the dissolution of parliament in 1629, their fulminations were received by a populace that had already formed opinions about the policies in question based on their own experiences with them. There is evidence to support Harris’ claim about the politicization of the population, particularly in London. Historian Alastair Bellany explores the role of political media in the development of popular politicization in his article, “The Murder of John Lambe.” In his article, Bellany explores how newsletters and other media shaped public opinion concerning the affairs of John Lambe, an infamous doctor and

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72 Harris, 51.
73 Spufford, 434-5.
74 Peacey, 167-8.
75 Ibid., 50.
76 Ibid.
reported sorcerer in 1620s London. Lambe had escaped punishment for an alleged rape on an eleven-year-old girl. Adding to the public disdain for Lambe, the press of the 1620s had associated him, in the public consciousness, as the favorite of the deeply unpopular Duke of Buckingham. Both men had been accused of sorcery and sexual transgressions, and the political media—including oral, scribal and printed elements—had successfully made the case for the people of London that these two men were the embodiment of a series of political and religious disorders. Therefore, when John Lambe was brutally murdered by a London mob, not only was it a political act in the sense that the crowd was administering vigilante justice for the young girl Lambe was meant to have defiled, but it was also, according to Bellany, “acting out on the decrepit body of John Lambe their [the crowd’s] violent impulses towards the all-too-vigorous body of George Villiers [the Duke of Buckingham].” The attack of John Lambe was an expression of the public’s disapproval of the moral inversions that he and Buckingham had come to embody. In this episode we see an example of how, as early as the 1620s, political media motivated popular politicization. Similarly, the populace of London, in particular, would become an important factor in the evolution of the political crisis that developed into the outbreak of the Civil War. This latter population was motivated, to some extent, by the construction of the role of Catholicism—and the role of the Catholic clergy, in particular—in the pamphlet literature concerning the Irish rebellion.

What makes study of the question of causation between propaganda and practice so difficult, though, is the lack of primary sources that address the opinions of the common people. While literacy in England may have been substantially higher than present estimations have

78 Ibid., 50.
79 Ibid., 62.
80 Ibid., 64.
heretofore posited, there is a scarcity of surviving written material from the lower orders of English society. The examination of how Foxean conceptions of anti-Catholicism and Spenserian assertions of Irish barbarity had become a fairly standard opinion among large segments of the English population, which is presented earlier in this chapter, suggests that the English populace may have received the reiteration of these models in the pamphlet literature positively. However, it only provides one example of a multitude of ways in which the English public could have constructed the role of Catholicism and clerical involvement in the rebellion. One cannot be certain that this model would have certainly received a sympathetic reading, despite its apparent utility in the political rhetoric of the day. Consequently, one cannot be certain of the causal relationship between propaganda and public action without evidence from other primary sources. The only usable sources available for this study to monitor the attitudes of this segment of society are the mass petitions, which were presented to parliament and sometimes printed. Even these sources end up providing lackluster results with regard to the question of the causal relationship between the pamphlet literature and the popular political actions taken in support of either cause. A number of petitions which make reference to the Irish rebellion were presented to the House of Commons in the aftermath of the insurrection. One example of such a petition is the Petition of the Common Council, subsidy men, and other inhabitants of the City of London. This petition emphasizes that the people of the City of London support parliament’s measures to deal with the rebellion but urges them to act quickly in securing the necessary aid. The petition states that it hopes that “the destructive plots of the Papists may be defeated,” both at home and in Ireland, which seems to echo the language of a number of the parliamentarian pamphlets. However, no positive correlation between the effectiveness of the propaganda campaign and the presentation of the petition can be conclusively drawn. Modern historians who have had access
to larger collections of material, though, do assert that there is a positive relationship between the publication of propaganda pamphlets and the political actions of the people.\textsuperscript{81} In \textit{Politicians and Pamphleteers}, Peacey writes—referring to the propaganda efforts of both the royalists and parliamentarians—that “print was a means of convincing people, not just about political ‘ideas’, but also about specific policies and actions. Such attempts at persuasion were vital in forming and defining parties.”\textsuperscript{82}

The effect of the pamphlet literature, therefore, was to help mobilize large scale public support behind one of the two armed camps emerging in England in the middle of 1642. As such, the role of the Catholic clergy in the pamphlet literature emerging after the outbreak of the Irish rebellion was a part of one of the most significant and divisive questions in the kingdom at that time, the question of the popish plot. Where people came down on the issue of the popish plot to a large degree coincided with which side they took in the dispute between the King and Parliament. Those who focused on the popish plot as the main problem of the Irish rebellion generally sided with the parliament, and those who viewed loyalty to the monarch and order as the main issues sided with the King.\textsuperscript{83} According to modern historians, the pamphlet literature of the 1640s was instrumental in convincing elements of the population of the merits of each side’s argument. Despite the fact that most of the pamphlet literature exaggerated the roles of Catholicism and the clergy in the rebellion, the language and rhetoric used in these pamphlets appealed to a increasingly literate populace.

\textsuperscript{81} Peacey, 241.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 38.

\textsuperscript{83} Shagan, 18.
**Conclusion**

A crucial distinction that has hopefully been well established and maintained in the course of this paper is the difference between the perception of the role of the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland and their actual behavior. This disparity is important to maintain because the false perceptions of Protestants, in both England and Ireland, caused them to react to clerical involvement in ways that were not conducive to solving the actual problems in Ireland in the short term. The Protestant perception of “radical clericalism,” as is best enumerated by the four main assumptions about the role of Irish Catholic priests in Sir John Temple’s magisterial *Irish Rebellion*, was seriously flawed. Temple asserted that the Catholic clergy in Ireland were violent, responsible for the organization of the rebellion, were part of a universal Catholic plot designed to destroy Protestantism, and were responsible for the dissemination of information among the rebels. Despite its inaccuracies, this perception was prevalent among a vast majority of Protestants.

The position advanced in this paper is that the Irish Catholic clergy were active in the rebellion, but not in the ways that the Irish government portrayed them. The clergy viewed the rebellion as an opportunity to reestablish Catholicism in Ireland, or at least to secure religious toleration. While the clergy were involved in the administration of the rebellion, they only assumed this role after the failure of the native Irish rebel leaders, and thus were not intrinsic to the planning of the rebellion. Finally, the clergy were, on the whole, not the violent force that they were portrayed to be by the Irish government. Indeed, it has been suggested by modern historians, that the reason the clergy assumed an organizational role in the rebellion was to reestablish law and order and to moderate the rebels’ more violent tendencies. The extent to
which they succeeded in this endeavor was limited, at least until the establishment of the
Confederation of Kilkenny. A testament to this fact is that—though it was nowhere near the
numbers purported by the Protestant authorities in Ireland—the rebels’ rampage cost around
4,000 Protestants their lives. In mid 1642, both the clerical and lay leaders of the rebellion met at
Kilkenny to discuss the proposition of establishing a national government to put an end to
rampant violence that had broken out in Ireland. In this regard, the establishment of the
Confederation was a success and marks the end of the first, chaotic phase of the rebellion and the
transition into a more organized movement in opposition to English rule.

Furthermore, it has been argued in this thesis that the Irish government’s policy was
based on erroneous assumptions and half-truths concerning the nature of clerical involvement in
the rebellion. In turn, the government’s policies that were spawned as a result naturally
developed into the rather unsophisticated plan of destroying the rebellion militarily and then
segregating the native population. These strategies were unsuccessful in the short term.
Admittedly, this also had a lot to do with the state of the English government in Ireland. But the
limited resources that were available for the suppression of the rebellion were misdirected
because the Irish government did not recognize the legitimate complaints posed by the native
Irish, and instead relied on their assumptions of a Catholic conspiracy to undermine Protestant
authority and true religion. As is pointed out in Chapter Three, this is not merely a case of
armchair punditry. The example of the Earl of Clanricarde, who called for a vigorous military
campaign as well a plan to address native Irish grievances, had only been in Ireland for a month
before the outbreak of the rebellion and realized the importance of addressing the issues as they
actually stood. Indeed, as was discussed, Clanricarde was not afraid to use the Irish Catholic
clergy to help him achieve his own goals. The Lords Justices, though, were not interested in
Clanricarde’s plan, and instead set about trying to convince the government in Westminster to send military aid.

The notion that the illusion of a radical clergy played a significant role in the development of political attitudes among the Irish government is, perhaps, not entirely surprising. It is an important idea to establish and expound upon, though, especially when the perception differed so much from the reality of the situation. This disparity is important to understand, particularly as it relates to the Irish government’s attempts to secure military and financial aid from England. Whether or not they fully believed it themselves, the Lords Justices showed no compunction in utilizing the imagery of clerically organized Catholic conspiracy in order to convince the Westminster Parliament to send help. It has been suggested in this thesis that this plan failed in two crucial, and from the point of view of the Lords Justices, unforeseeable ways.

The images of radical Catholic clerics inciting violence towards Irish Protestants certainly did stir the strong emotions among the parliamentarians in London that the Lords Justices had hoped. However, instead of devoting their full attention to the situation in Ireland immediately, the members of the Long Parliament responded to the Irish government’s dispatches by combating popery at home. The parliamentarians decided that in order to effectively stamp out the popish plot, they needed to strike at the heart of the issue. In the view of the English parliament, this was the King’s court, which they suspected was filled with crypto-Catholics, and definitely included Henrietta Maria, the Catholic Queen and her retinue of priests. This “England first” policy had two consequences. Firstly, focusing on eradicating the popish plot in England meant that the rebellion in Ireland was not addressed in a comprehensive manner. In this regard, the Lords Justices’ attempts at securing military and financial support
through the use of reports of priestly violence and scheming backfired. Secondly, through instruments such as the Grand Remonstrance, which addressed the issues of Catholic clerical machinations and the rebellion in Ireland, the King and parliament were drawn into increasingly bitter disputes. It has been argued in this thesis, therefore, that the perceptions of and reactions to the idea of radical clericalism in the Irish rebellion was one of the significant causes that led to the crescendo in the political tensions between the King and parliament. Essentially, what ended up happening was that both the King and parliament raised armies to serve in Ireland because neither entity trusted the other. In the end, these armies were used to fight each other as the first civil war broke out in late 1642.

Popular support for either the Royalists or the Parliamentarians was mobilized by the emergence of a vibrant political print culture in England in the wake of the Irish rebellion. The role of the Catholic clergy in the pamphlet literature concerning the rebellion in Ireland was a crucial element of one of the most important questions in early modern England, the question of the popish plot. The extent to which individuals bought into the myth of a radical clergy and a popish plot is a fairly accurate indicator of which side they took in the dispute between the King and parliament. Members of the public that emphasized the popish plot as the primary issue of the rebellion in Ireland generally sided with the parliament, and people who viewed loyalty to the monarch and order as the main problems sided with the King.\footnote{Ethan Shagan, “Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda, and English Responses to the Irish Rebellion of 1641,” \textit{Journal of British Studies} 36, no. 1 (January 1997): 18.} Modern historians have asserted that the pamphlets produced in the 1640s were an essential part of the polarization of an increasingly literate English public between the two rival factions.

The decisions that were made in England and Ireland in relation to the role of the Roman Catholic clergy in the rebellion left lasting effects on both countries. To the extent that radical
clericalism played a significant role in the Protestant conception of a popish plot, it was at least partly responsible for the outbreak of the first civil war in England. This, in turn, would eventually lead to the regicide, the establishment of the Protectorate and the rise of Oliver Cromwell. In Ireland, Cromwell’s rise to prominence in the New Model Army and more importantly the ferocity of his tenure as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland would indelibly shape Irish perceptions of history and the English, and in some quarters still do to this day. The clergy’s involvement in the rebellion also had a significant impact on a more short term basis in Ireland. The establishment of the Confederation of Kilkenny, which lasted until Cromwell’s arrival in 1649, is a testament to the Roman Catholic clergy’s determination to maintain order in Ireland. On the other hand, Cromwell justified some of his more brutal actions by arguing that they were in retaliation for the slaughter of innocent Protestants during the rebellion of 1641. And so, one can see another way in which the failure of the Roman Catholic clergy to ensure order earlier in the rebellion came back to haunt them.

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A discussion of the King’s perception of the role of the Irish Catholic clergy is perhaps overdue. Or, rather, a discussion of why Charles’ perceptions are not considered within these pages is perhaps more appropriate. There was a distinct lack of primary material available for this project in which the King addresses the issue of the Catholic clergy’s involvement in the Irish rebellion. Despite this fact, the nature of the relationship between Charles and parliament requires some appreciation of how Charles viewed and reacted to the rebellion. The correspondence of the King that was available for review, in various collections such as the Calendar of State Papers series and the letter collections of the Marquesses of Clanricarde and Ormond, deals with the issue of the rebellion purely as one of law and order, with negligible reference to religion. For example, in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant the King explains his perception of events as follows: “we are given to understand that within our realms of Ireland there are many ill-affected persons who not only themselves imagine mischief but labour with much industry and cunning to infuse discontentment into the hearts of others, thereby to fit them for disloyal attempts.” As is evident in this excerpt, the King framed the major issue of the entire rebellion as a question of loyalty versus disloyalty, as opposed to the parliamentarian conflict of Christ versus Antichrist. This is also true of the proto-royalist propaganda that was

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2 The King to the Lord Lieutenant, 3 December 1641, in Public Record Office, Calendar of State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reign of Charles I, 1633-1647 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1901), 353.
generated in response to the rebellion. More specifically, this dynamic was used in royalist responses to the parliamentarian propaganda that was produced to accuse the King of complicity in the rebellion.

While Charles’ part in the outbreak of the rebellion is by no means certain, the rebels did not aid the King’s attempts to exonerate himself from the accusations that he had arranged the rebellion. From the beginning of the rebellion, the native Irish gentry asserted their loyalty to Charles and argued that they were rebelling against the parliamentarians seeking to truncate the prerogatives of the King and the destruction of the Catholic faith. Sir Phelim O’Neill claimed in a proclamation issued after his victory at Dungannon on October 24th that he was not rebelling against the King and meant no harm to the English or Scottish inhabitants of Ireland. On November 4th, Sir Phelim and Roger Moore met in Newry and issued another proclamation, this time asserting that they held a commission from the King and had been urged by Charles to publish it. Urging the rebels to publish the commission would have made very little sense for Charles given the dynamic that had developed between the King and Parliament by that point. This illustrates the tendentious nature of the claim that Charles was somehow involved in the orchestration of the Irish rebellion.

On the other hand, Charles did not do himself many favors either. He stubbornly resisted labeling the Irish insurgents “rebels.” This combined with Charles’ former clandestine machinations, such as the Incident and the Army Plots, made parliamentarians all the more

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5 Perceval-Maxwell, 218.

6 Ibid., 263.
skeptical of his claims to have nothing to do with the rebels. The proclamation, when it was finally issued, came only as the result of a direct request from the Lords Justices in Ireland. Michael Perceval-Maxwell explains that the “request was made to counter the Irish claim that they acted with the king’s approval.”\textsuperscript{7} This gave the appearance that Charles only exercised this option when he could procrastinate no longer.

Modern historians disagree over the issue of whether or not Charles was involved in planning the rebellion. For years, the prevailing thinking was that the commission presented by the rebels was a forgery, and that he was not involved in the development of the rebellion. Even after this view was challenged, it remained popular with a significant portion of early modern historians. For example, Conrad Russell, on the subject of the King’s involvement with the rebels, still argues that “Charles I was guilty of many plots, but this appears not to have been one of them.”\textsuperscript{8} The logic behind this position is that the King pursued a number of policies designed to suppress the rebellion after its outbreak. However, a number of studies of the political crises of the 1640s have begun to accept the possibility of royal complicity in the outbreak of the rebellion. Both Jane Ohlmeyer and Caroline Hibbard argue in favor of the view that the King was involved in the plotting of the rebellion to differing degrees.\textsuperscript{9} Hibbard asserts that “the authenticity of the royal commission to the Irish rebels has been disputed, but the king’s involvement with the rebels can no longer reasonably be questioned, although the details remain hazy.”\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{10} Hibbard, 214.
The truth is we may never know for sure, unless new evidence comes to light. The argument in favor of the King’s surreptitious involvement relies on the testimony of the Marquess of Antrim. In 1650, Antrim outlined for Henry Ireton and other Cromwellian officials in Ireland a version of events that implicated the King in the planning of the rebellion in 1641.\textsuperscript{11} In return for his testimony, Antrim received a number of political favors including the assurance of his estates in Ireland. The fact that Antrim benefited from relating his version of events, of course, does not mean that this version was necessarily untrue. However, it opens up his testimony to criticism from those who question his motives. Further, suspicion is raised that Antrim was merely trying to weasel his way out of trouble because in 1661 he recanted his testimony once the monarchy had been restored.\textsuperscript{12} It is possible, though, that Antrim was lying in this instance and had told the truth in the 1650 testimony. The skeptics argue that Antrim’s 1650 testimony was all too convenient. Russell has also suggested that if the King was looking for someone to execute a plot in Ireland, Antrim was an unlikely choice.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore, not much can be conclusively said about Charles’ potential involvement in the development of the rebellion. It is an important possibility to keep in mind, though, when considering the outbreak of the Irish rebellion and its effects in England.

Though it is of dubious authorship, the King’s \textit{Eikon Basilike} is a fitting place to end this discussion of the King and his relation to the rebellion. \textit{Eikon Basilike} was released in the aftermath of Charles’ execution. After the Restoration, John Gauden, the bishop of Worcester, laid claim to having written it, but this claim has in turn come under some scrutiny. Whoever authored the text, it is almost certain that it was produced with the King’s approval. In this regard

\textsuperscript{11} Ohlmeyer, 237.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 260.

\textsuperscript{13} Russell, 394.
it may be taken to be an indication of Charles’ general attitudes towards a number of issues in the period immediately prior to his death. In the chapter on Ireland, Charles absolves himself of any complicity in the rebellion. Charles asserts that “there was nothing which could be more abhorred by me,”14 than the rebellion. Still, no mention is made of the role of the clergy. However, the chapter does give one a good idea of how Charles viewed the way he had been portrayed by parliament as he came to the end of his life. In the following excerpt Charles takes a subtle swipe at his parliamentarian antagonists:

Some men took it very ill not to be believed when they affirmed that what the Irish rebels did was done with my privity at least, if not by my commission. But these knew too well that it is no news for some of my subjects to fight, not only without my commission, but against my command and person too, yet all the while to pretend they fight by my authority for my safety.15

Here, Charles compared the parliamentarians, who had used the rhetoric of saving the King from the grasps of a popish plot to justify their actions, to the rebels in Ireland, who had claimed to be defending the King against the encroachment of the Long Parliament. Towards the end of his life, then, Charles viewed both parliament and the Irish rebels as causes of his misfortune.

_Eikon Basilike_ proved to be widely popular among the population of England. Despite the Rump Parliament’s best efforts to try and suppress its printing, thirty editions of the alleged memoir of Charles I were printed in a year.16 One might draw the conclusion that Antrim’s aforementioned testimony may have been an attempt by Parliamentarians to undermine the popularity of _Eikon Basilike_ by illustrating the late monarch’s follies. Indeed, Jane Ohlmeyer suggests that “Antrim’s confessions clearly delighted the Cromwellians, who then insisted that he formally swear to their authenticity, since they offered further justification for the recent

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14 _Eikon Basilike_ (London, 1649), 85.
15 Ibid. 86.
decision to execute their late sovereign."\(^{17}\) However, a direct causal relationship between the publication of *Eikon Basilike* and the transcription of Antrim’s testimony cannot be readily established. If Antrim’s testimony had any utility for the Rump Parliament as a piece of propaganda, all the pamphlet literature available for examination in this project suggests they did not take advantage of it.

\(^{17}\) Ohlmeyer, 237.
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