

The War of Three Kingdoms in Ireland, 1641-48

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Background

The Irish

Ireland has been home to native Irish, Scots and English since the 12th century. The native Irish, referred to as “mere Irish” by the English, lived for the most part under the rule of a local chief or noble. The succession for the noble class was not assured a smooth transition so there were numerous struggles and conflicts with associated shifting alliances and no central ruler. A relatively primitive form of agriculture and a semi-nomadic pastoral life following herds of cattle characterized the means of production in late medieval native Ireland with trade becoming more important in the early modern period. The native Irish retained their unique form of Catholicism that permitted divorce, trial marriage and married clergy after the Reformation and from the mid 16th century on looked to Spain and France for trade, clergy, and military assistance. By the middle of the 16th century, those local nobles who lived near the ever expanding English settled land, found themselves assigned English captains to serve as seneschals, or sheriffs, living in established strong houses on their property. These English captains were all too often more than willing to goad the Irish nobility into rash action, hoping it would result in more land lost to them as a penalty for rebellion and more gained by the English.

The Old English

The first Anglo-Norman settlements were established on the east coast in the 12th century and were militarily important to early England in order to control the sea which separated England and Ireland. As time went on, the English involved the Irish in their internal politics and continental adventures, occupying more and more land in an effort to civilize Ireland that did not include assimilation of the native Irish but rather insured their isolation. The English who settled in Ireland were seen as more Irish and less English by those who remained in England. The English Protestant Reformation and the consequent inclination of the English in Ireland to remain Catholics only increased this division. These, then, were known as the “Old English.” They represented a land owning aristocracy that, in the view of some authors, were becoming virtually indistinguishable from the native Irish by the 17th century. By the mid 16th century their property rights were under threat. English recognized land titles could only be guaranteed by a system in which part of the land was surrendered to the English Crown. As the 17th century progressed, particularly after the Gunpowder Plot of 1607 and the subsequent decline of religious freedom, the Old English saw less representation in the Irish Privy Council and Parliament and a subsequent loss in influence over decisions being made about Ireland.

The Antrim Scots

Scottish mercenaries had served Irish nobles for several hundred years before they began to settle in Antrim in the 15th century. These were the “redshanks” of Clan Donald who were able to retain their lands in northern Antrim after the Lordship of the Western Isles was broken by Scotland in the 16th century. The Antrim Scots lived with and intermarried with the native Irish, retaining their Catholicism as well as their long standing blood feud with Clan Campbell who had engineered their loss of land and influence in Scotland. By the 17th century Randall MacDonnel, the Earl of Antrim, was accepting tenants on his land from Scotland, and, to a limited degree England as well.

The importance of religion and its inherent political identity cannot be underestimated in 17th century society and in this regard Ireland was no different than the rest of Europe. The shared Catholicism of the native Irish, Old English and Antrim Scots created a strong basis for political and military cooperation.

The New English and New Scots

The Munster Plantation

The Desmond rebellion, 1579-83, was seen by many English soldiers and administrators familiar with Ireland as a chance to acquire large tracts of land at the expense of the Irish rebels, even before the rebels were defeated. The Desmond rebellion was also the first time the Papacy and Spain took an active role in supporting the Irish and Old English, making this and all subsequent conflicts at least in part religious. Once the rebellion was over, there was a conflict between unpaid officers of the English army and those Old English nobles who had remained loyal to the English, as both sought to take possession of the “escheated,” or confiscated land. The English crown resolved this conflict with the Plantation of Munster. With establishment of the Plantation of Munster, large numbers of English Protestant settlers began arriving at the end of the 16th century. Many of them were unpaid soldiers who had been discharge from the English army. Those assigned to divide up the land found a shortage of English settlers, so in many areas the Munster Plantation retained Irish inhabitants. The English settlers for the most part fled back to England or were killed in the 9 Years War (1594-1603).

East Ulster

In the early 17th century, English settlements were established at Carrickfergus and Belfast by Sir Arthur Chichester and elsewhere in Antrim by Sir Fulke Conway, the Clotworthy’s and Langfords. In Down, the Bagenals and Hills established themselves as well.

In 1605 an Irish noble with considerable land holdings in the north of County Down named Con O’Neill was involved in a drunken brawl in which an English soldier was killed. The English Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Sir Arthur Chichester, had him thrown in the prison of Castle Carrickfergus for the offense. The wife of Con O’Neil appealed to

the Scotsman, Hugh Montgomery, Lord of Braidstane, to get him released. Hugh Montgomery in turn arranged for a relative, Thomas Montgomery, to ingratiate himself to the keeper and garrison of the castle. Thomas also managed to ingratiate himself to the keeper's daughter, whom he later married. Con was able to escape after being provided with a rope while the garrison was drunk from wine and ale provided by Thomas Montgomery. Hugh Montgomery, later styled Lord Montgomery of the Ards and an influential associate, Sir James Hamilton, later styled Viscount Clanboyne, arranged for a royal pardon for Con O'Neill. The royal pardon and audience with James I cost O'Neill all of his land, which Montgomery and Hamilton used to establish a predominantly Scottish plantation. Those Scots who came to settle on Montgomery's and Hamilton's plantations tended to come from the south or lowlands of Scotland and in many cases had a pre-existing relationship either as tenants or family with these two men or their undertakers. These settlers brought their Presbyterianism with them and relied primarily on a pastoral economy raising livestock and limited crops.

The Ulster Plantation

With the end of the 9 Years War in 1603, the Earl of Tyrone made his submission to James I and VII. Tyrone's minimal loss of land as a result of his rebellion was not satisfactory to those English who hoped for a major confiscation to their benefit. Tyrone's departure with his followers for Spain, described as the "Flight of the Earl's" in 1607 set the stage for the Plantation of Ulster on the lands subsequently abandoned and confiscated from the absent Tyrone. The land confiscated from Tyrone was augmented by land confiscated from Cahir O'Dogherty following his brief failed uprising in 1607. An interesting footnote to O'Dogherty's uprising is the deployment of two Scottish companies in June 1607 under Patrick Crawford and William Stewart in order to put down the uprising. These companies were sent by Scotland at the request of England. Both men received land grants and presumably most of their men remained in Ulster.

The establishment of the Ulster plantation in 1610 resulted in large numbers of English and Scots settling in west and central Ulster. Undertakers divided up the land and sold it or rented it to Scots and English settlers. Servitors were given land grants directly as a result of service, as were universities.

The Scottish settlers of the Plantation were concentrated in Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh and Tyrone Counties. The Ulster plantation was a means of removing troublesome Scottish Presbyterian Dissenters and Lowland Scots Rievers from the border marches with England. Population pressures on England were relieved by the establishment and settling of the Plantations as well, although it proved difficult to convince the English to settle in Ireland. Much of the land originally intended for English settlers ended up in the hands of the far more numerous Scots and Irish. The Scots that went to the Ulster plantation also brought their Presbyterianism with them and relied on a pastoral way of life. Despite their numerical superiority and adaptability of the Scots to conditions in Ireland, the vast majority of positions of responsibility and prestige were consistently occupied by Englishmen.

Native Irish who were permitted to live in the Plantation were relatively few in number and subject to paying exorbitant rent to Scots and English landlords. The resentment among the native Irish caused by the plantations was considerable and this resentment was a factor in popular support for the rebellion of 1641. Religious, cultural and social differences as well as a sense of impending persecution from increasingly radicalized Protestants were doubtless contributing factors as well.

1633-1641

The already tense situation in Ireland was exacerbated when Charles I's Lord Deputy, Thomas Wentworth, arrived in Dublin in 1633 with the objectives of increasing Crown revenue, reducing the influence of Catholics and enforcing religious conformity on the Protestants, all goals bound to increase disaffection in every part of Irish society.

Wentworth took advantage of what was, in effect, a bribe of the native Irish and Old English promulgated by his predecessor over a list of rights for Catholics called "the Graces." The Graces would, among other things, allow for no changes in current land ownership as well as limited political rights for Catholics. The price of the Graces was a government subsidy that Catholics were already paying in hopes of legal recognition of the Graces. Wentworth, and the English Crown, wanting to create another plantation in Connacht and avoiding more opposition from the Protestants was unwilling to grant legal status to the Graces. They were however, more than willing to continue to take money from the Catholics while leading them to believe there was hope of legal recognition. The dissolution of the Irish Parliament in August of 1641 on the verge of approving the Graces after numerous attempts in previous Irish Parliaments made it clear that there was no intention on the part of the English administration to ever approve them.

The English effort to impose an Anglican prayer book and liturgy in Scotland had dire consequences when Scotland revolted against the imposition and challenged England militarily in the two Bishops Wars of 1639 and 1640. Both were limited wars of short duration. The English lost strategically because they were unable to mobilize sufficient well trained forces and coordinate their movements in England and Ireland against Scottish forces. Reluctant support by an English Parliament filled with those who felt some affinity with Presbyterian Scotland and a half hearted prosecution of the war by all sectors of society had an adverse impact as well. The treaties between England and Scotland granted considerable concessions to Scotland in religious self determination.

The concessions made to Scotland concerning religious conformity did not apply to the Ulster Scots. In April of 1640 Wentworth created an army in Ireland, ostensibly for service in the 1640 Bishops War. Concerned about the loyalty and actions of the Ulster Scots, he sent it to Ulster to maintain order as well as pre-position for embarkation for Scotland. The army lacked the resources to be self supporting and ended up causing chaos and hardship as it preyed upon the people of the province. He dismissed any "nonconformist" or Presbyterian clergy from the Protestant Church of Ireland and also required that, in May of 1639, all take what has become known as the "Black Oath", requiring that Scots swear to support Charles I. The loyalty of the Ulster Scots to the English monarchy was further damaged by a well publicized plot by Charles I to support

the Catholic Randall MacDonnell, Earl of Antrim in his effort to conduct military operation against his hereditary foe, the Protestant Earl of Argyle and his Campbell adherents.

In the Bishops Wars, Charles I raised the specter of using Irish Catholic soldiers with Catholic and Protestant officers in Britain for the first time, causing considerable unease among his more radical Protestant subjects who feared not only a Catholic army but an army loyal to the king that they could not control through Parliament. The unexecuted plans of the Bishops War presaged events to follow. The Earl of Antrim had plans to invade the western highlands on behalf of Charles I and the Scottish Parliament planned to occupy Ulster.

Wentworth's army in Ulster remained in place after his departure for England in 1640 and was to be commanded by Ormond, his eventual successor. The events of the Bishops War made Wentworth's army unnecessary. In May of 1641 a public proclamation of the dissolution of this Irish Army was made, with decisions still to be made about which regiments would disband, stay in Ireland or go into French or Spanish service. It was in the context of this confusion that the conspiracy for the Irish Rebellion took shape. Irish Catholic mercenary officers began returning from Flanders and France under the guise of transferring units into foreign service, but in reality were returning to assist in an Irish rebellion. The literature indicates a possibility that Charles I also had plans for his Irish Army that did not include foreign service but did include capture of Dublin Castle, a declaration by the Irish Parliament for the King against the English Parliament and mobilization of Ireland on his behalf. If so, the King's conspiracy was overtaken by the native Irish conspiracy that resulted in the Rebellion of 1641.

1641, The Rebellion

The events of October 1641 in Ireland have been described as a "rising" or "rebellion" and perhaps even other terms, depending on the author's bias and perspective on the legitimacy of the event. I will use the term rebellion and rebel, not in a pejorative manner but to describe a secretive military plan and execution occurring without the approval or knowledge of the government of Charles I and those involved in aforesaid plan and execution.

It is likely that the Irish Catholics were encouraged by the results achieved by the Scots in the Bishops Wars, seeing no reason for the same kind of concessions from England after a successful military action. The original conspiracy for rebellion in Ireland foresaw a rapid takeover of the government with Dublin Castle, the seat of English power, as a primary target. Speed of execution would, in the conspirators view, limit the response from opposition in Ireland and prevent reinforcements from England arriving in time to change the outcome. As events developed, the original conspiracy failed in its objectives and was accompanied by a disorganized, disorderly, and vicious popular Irish uprising.

A drinking bout in Dublin resulted in discovery of the attempt to be made on Dublin Castle and its subsequent failure on 22 October 1641. This failure proved critical not just for political reasons but for logistical reasons as well because of the black powder in the castle, which the rebels desperately needed and was eventually made available to those opposing them. On the 23rd, Sir Philem O'Neil captured Charlemont and Dungannon. Within a few days the rebels controlled much of Ulster with the exception of Antrim, Carrickfergus, northern Down, Londonderry, Enniskillen and some isolated castles and forts. In Leinster, Dublin and Drogheda held out, as did Cork, Kinsale, Youghal and Limerick in Munster and Galway in Connaught. Initially the rebels spared the Scots settlers in an effort to show common cause with them against the English Protestants. This effort either failed in the disorganized conduct of the rebels against any and all settlers and the defensive posture adopted by the Scots settlers who distrusted the rebels. The massacre of the Scottish garrison of Augher, left in place by Sir William Stewart in his movement to Derry, and the rapid dissemination of news of this event also did much to dispel any hope of Scottish neutrality in the coming struggle.

On the 4th of November the Irish Catholic leader Sir Philem O'Neil produced a commission, supposedly signed by Charles I, calling for armed resistance in the King's name. The literature tends to discount the validity of this claim, but suffice it to say that it was believed by many at the time to be an authentic document. If this was an effort to provide legitimacy to the rebellion and garner support among the protestants, it failed. It only served to increase Protestant suspicion of Charles I among those who chose to believe it was a valid.

Initially the prominent Old English and native Irish aristocracy withheld overt support for the rebellion. Revulsion at the role and conduct of the common people was at least a contributing factor. The Old English initial response was to some degree perhaps influenced by a measure of conservatism and a property owner's natural concern over repercussions if the revolt failed.

By early November the Earl of Ormond, newly appointed Lieutenant General of the Army in Ireland, began recalling the army to Dublin and forming new regiments commanded by Sir Henry Tichbourne, Sir Charles Coote, Sir Piers Crosby and Lord Lambard to defend Dublin and Drogheda. Commissions from Charles I were sent to Scottish settlers Sir Hugh Montgomery, Lord of the Ards, Sir James Montgomery, Sir William Stewart and Sir Robert Stewart and the English settlers Sir William Cole and Sir Ralph Gore in Ulster to raise regiments for defense against the rebels. The rebellion spread in Ulster, resulting in the capture of Dundalk and Lisburn near Belfast. The rebels were prevented from overrunning other Protestant settlements as a result of the efforts of Sir Robert Stewart and his Laggan Army, comprised of many leaders and men who were veterans of the 30 Years War, in and around Derry as well as Sir George Rawdon and Lord Conway operating in east Ulster. Resistance against the uprising held out, but there was no coordinated attempt to carry out offensive operations of any scale against the rebels. Ormond was waiting for relief from England.

England was under considerable pressure to provide an adequate military response to the crisis in Ireland but was on the verge of civil war and so unable to take action. The

solution was found in the Scottish Army of the Solemn League. The Scottish Army at the time had proven its worth, both against the English Army and the civil strife of the Bishops Wars. Led, and in many cases manned, by veterans of the 30 Years War and 80 Years War on the continent, it was a brutal force. Not long after the beginning of the rebellion, Parliament was starting the long negotiations with Scotland over the command, pay, logistical support, area of operations and port of entry that would eventually result in the deployment of the Scottish Army of Ulster to Ireland.

By late November the threat from the rebels was sufficient to cause two columns to be sent out from Dublin. One was sent under the command of Sergeant Major Roper to reinforce Drogheda which was ambushed and routed at Julianstown bridge despite warnings that the enemy was near. The expedition to Wicklow led by Sir Charles Coote garrisoned New Castle and relieved Wicklow Castle, with brutal force. The Government's loss at Julianstown, brutal victory at Wicklow and unwillingness to negotiate on the rights of Catholics to hold office and practice their religion led those remaining Old English Catholic and Irish into supporting the rebellion, in many cases reluctantly. In an effort to relieve the pressure on besieged Drogheda, Sir Charles Coote, the Mayor of Dublin, was killed while routing rebels at Swords and Captain Armstrong scattered a rebel encampment at Rathcoole in December.

In the first year of the rebellion the military conflict was carried out by local levies on both sides. The leadership roles were, at least in some cases, filled by professionally trained soldiers who had seen service in the 30 Years War and 80 Years War on the continent. This prior experience contributed to the brutal nature of the conflict, especially when combined with the sectarian hatred between the Catholics and Protestants. There are a variety of claims in the literature on the massacres conducted by all parties in this conflict. It is enough, for the purposes of this brief narrative to say that there were massacres and wanton destruction of property committed, which served as a justification in the minds of some for even more acts of destruction and cruelty.

1642

The Catholic Earl of Antrim had managed to prevent the rebellion from spreading into Antrim and north Down, remaining neutral in the early stages of the rebellion and even going so far as to raising a regiment with Protestant and Catholic companies to fight the rebels. Two Catholic company commanders, Alasdair MacColla and Tirlough O'Cahan turned on their Protestant compatriots and besieged their former commander Archibald Stewart in Coleraine but were forced to lift the siege due to a lack of artillery and the approach of the Army of Ulster.

The government's first major expedition took place on 1-3 February with the unopposed burning of Newcastle and plunder of Naas. Later that same month, Lieutenant Colonel Monck landed with the Lord Lieutenant's Regiment but no supplies or provisions accompanied it from England. It was soon in action taking Kilsallagan Castle north of Dublin. The besieged garrison of Coleraine was attacked while on a foraging expedition outside the city walls on 11 February in an event called 'Black Friday.' By March the besieged Drogheda forces of Sir Henry Tichbourne had gone on

the offensive taking Ardee and Dundalk and Carlingford in May. Sir Robert Stewart went on the offensive that same month in northwest Ulster turning a rebel ambush into a rout at Barnesmore, capturing Strabane and routing the rebels in a battle at Glenmaquin in Donegal, thus reducing military activity of the rebels in Ulster to small unit actions.

The Scots Army of Ulster, paid for by the English Parliament, landed at Carrickfergus on 3 April and held its first muster on 7 April. The Scottish expedition sent to Ireland was initially led by Alexander Leslie, a former General in the Swedish Army, who soon departed leaving it in the hands of Sir Robert Monro, past commander of the Swedish Green Brigade and a veteran of 10 years service on the Continent. By August, all the regiments were in Ireland and occupying garrisons throughout Antrim and Derry.

In April, Ormond marched to Naas and spreading devastation on his way to Kilcullen, Athy, relieved the castles of Carlow and Cloghrenan. His column was escorting refugees back to Dublin when it was ambushed by a larger force of rebels at Kirlish, which he subsequently defeated. Coote relieved Castlegeasel and Castlejordan, capturing Trim. The siege of Cork, garrisoned by a force under the command of Earl Inchiquin, was lifted and the castle of Limerick was besieged by the rebels.

On 27 April, Monro led a force out of Carrickfergus towards Belfast and Lisburn, incorporating Ulster settler forces enroute. He then moved south skirmishing with rebel forces storming Loughbrickland Castle as well as taking and garrisoning Newry.

As he approached Carlingford, the rebel garrison fled and Tichbourne, one of Monro's subordinate commanders, sent a garrison to occupy it. Monro then moved back to Carrickfergus with his force divided into several smaller contingents to round up as much cattle as possible. County Down was, for the most part, subdued by this initial expedition. Monro's operation was, as were all to follow, hampered by financial support, available supplies, an absence of improved roads, terrain that was inhospitable for cavalry and an enemy that would come and go with relative freedom striking when and where conditions made them most effective. In late May Monro marched north towards Coleraine to relieve it as well as to cut the line of retreat of the rebel forces in Antrim. On the 29th of May he arrived at Dunluce Castle, the home of the Earl of Antrim, who Monro assumed had gone over to the rebels. This assumption may or not have been valid. Antrim was under suspicion as a result of his Catholicism and because some of his followers had joined the rebellion and were besieging Coleraine and its Protestant Scots garrison. Monro arrested and imprisoned Antrim. Once the siege of Coleraine had been lifted, Monro marched east through Antrim returning to Carrickfergus, having effectively cleared Antrim of rebels.

Monro's expedition forced the rebels into Londonderry and the Laggan Army area of operations. The rebel forces out of Antrim under the command of Alasdair MacColla and Philem O'Neil established an encampment at Glenmaquin enroute to Ulster. On the morning of the 16th of June, Sir Robert Stewart's Laggan Army forces woke the camp with harassing fires from a small force causing a pursuit by the rebel forces into a position occupied by the Laggan main body. The efforts of Alasdair MacColla and his

Antrim Scots prevented the pursuit of Philem O'Neil's fleeing forces. Stewart then defeated a force commanded by Manus O'Cahan enroute to assisting Munro in the lifting of the siege of Coleraine. O'Cahan was captured at the siege of Dungiven not long after and sent to Derry as a prisoner.

In June the Scots under Munro moved towards the rebel headquarters at Charlemont. Finding himself low on supplies and in danger of being cut off, he retreated to Newry. From Newry, he sent raiding parties to collect rebel cattle. Indiscriminant raids in July conducted by Lord Forbes along the Munster coast complicated matters for Earl Inchiquin, the Protestant commander, threatening the neutrality of the local population. Earl Inchiquin defeated a larger force led by Barry at Lisscarroll effectively making it impossible for Confederation forces to gather an army in Munster for another two years.

On 7 July the Irish Catholic Confederation met at Kilkenny electing a General Assembly and Supreme Council. All members of the Confederation took an oath of allegiance to Charles I and to uphold Catholicism. The goals of the Confederation were to reach an agreement with Charles I granting full rights to Catholics, toleration for the Catholic faith and self-government for Ireland. This was the beginning of an organized effort to conduct the war across Ireland and to move beyond the previous uncoordinated military actions.

In August Owen O'Neil arrived in Donegal with an experienced cadre of officers from the continent and was made commander of the beleaguered Confederation forces in Ulster. The following month Thomas Preston arrived at Wexford with arms and officers from the continent and was made the commander of the Confederation forces in Leinster. Both Owen O'Neil and Preston began training their forces.

On August 22 1642 Charles I raised his standard and began the First Civil War. The impact on the Army of Ulster was an immediate halt of supplies from Parliament which had agreed to supply them in a treaty with Scotland. The loyalty of the Army of Ulster's loyalty was not an issue, but that of the Laggan Army was soon to be. David Leslie, the Earl of Leven, arrived in August as well. His arrival was followed by two expeditions under his command, the first being essentially an unopposed circuit around Ulster. The second expedition was an abortive attempt to attack Charlemont, cut short by a lack of supplies. While Leslie's column was on its circuit, Dungannon and its settler garrison fell to the rebels in County Tyrone. One of the more peculiar events of Leslie's time in Ulster was the brief service in the Army of Ulster of Alasdair MacColla. Leslie departed in November leaving the Army of Ulster, once more, in George Munro's command.

Colonel Monck was sent to relieve Ballynekill in December just 18 miles from the Confederation's headquarters at Kilkenny. He was ambushed on his return to Dublin at Timahoe by a larger force led by Thomas Preston which he easily outmaneuvered and routed. Despite Monck's efforts, the garrison at Ballynekill surrendered to the rebels.

Throughout 1642 there were repeated efforts by Ormond and the English Parliament to order the Army of Ulster to conduct operations in the other three provinces, but to no

avail. Monro was able to influence the Scottish settler forces in Antrim and Down who refused to respond to orders from Dublin or Parliament as well. It may have been possible for the Army of Ulster to put down the rebellion had it been willing and able to conduct military operations in the other three provinces.

1643

In March Ormond and Monck moved south to clear Wicklow and Wexford of Confederation forces. Preston moved to block the expedition at Old Ross, where on the 18th of March, concentrated small arms and artillery fire halted his forces and he was forced to withdraw. By the end of March Ormond was moving back to Dublin having cleared Wicklow and Wexford.

In April the offensive capability of the Confederation forces was enhanced by the arrival of heavy siege artillery, courtesy of Spain and large subsidies from the Pope and Spain. This allowed the Confederation forces to provide pay and logistical support to a military force freed from local support. The heavy siege artillery would have been useful, had the road network and logistical support been available for it to be used. There were however a few occasions when the artillery was put to use, the appearance of which was enough to cause capitulation.

In April 1643 Sir Robert Stewart was appointed governor of Londonderry by Ormond and in June his Laggan army defeated O'Neill at Clones as Owen O'Neil was attempting to withdraw from Ulster into Connacht. Most of Owen O'Neil's continental veterans were lost as a result of the battle. It was the timely arrival of Philem O'Neil's force out of Kilkenny that allowed for reinforcement and continued viability of a Confederation force in the region.

May found Monro at Dumbro, massing a force to move into Armagh. He was in the process of conducting clearing operations and made an attempt to surprise Owen Roe O'Neil at Charlemont before he could be reinforced by Preston and Philem O'Neil. The attempt resulted in a hard fought battle, but no siege due to a lack of required supplies. From there Monro moved to Newcastle to reinforce Colonel Home's siege. Antrim was, once more, captured in the process.

Antrim was captured while negotiating support for Charles I from the royalist government in Dublin and the Irish rebels. He was also prepared to offer the Army of Ulster a bribe, failing that they were to be destroyed by the combined efforts of the Dublin forces and rebel Irish. Planning for an expedition to Scotland under Alasdair MacColla was in the works as well. Knowledge of his efforts doubtless had a positive influence on Scottish support for Parliament. Being an embarrassing prisoner, he did Monro the kindness of escaping again.

In August, Monro began making plans for a siege of Charlemont, the capital of the Irish Confederacy, but his efforts were thwarted by the startling discovery of a cessation of hostilities between the rebels and his supposed ally the Earl of Ormond. By September 1643 a year's cessation of arms between Royalists under Ormond and Irish Confederation was agreed to and signed. The Cessation was not recognized by Scots

Army and by most of the Ulster Protestants. Colonel Monck remained in action up until the Cessation Agreement in attempting to relieve Trim.

The war in England had made Parliamentary financial support for the Army of Ulster difficult to afford and so Scotland began to assume some of the responsibility of supporting the army, while efforts continued to get the English Parliament to live up to its treaty obligations. The financial support of the Army of Ulster continued to be a burden on both the Scots and English governments until its disbandment in 1648. There can be no doubt that the Army of Ulster was also a burden on those it was sent to defend and the people of Ulster paid a high price for its presence as well.

On 25 September Solemn League and Covenant between Scotland and English Parliamentarians was agreed to, creating an alliance between the two, obligating the Scots to provide an army to use against the Royalists in return for English conformity to Presbyterian worship, or so the Scots thought.

1644

The cessation created an opportunity for both Ormond and the Catholic Earl of Antrim to reinforce Royalist forces in Scotland and England. Early in the year while there was much discussion about the Army of Ulster returning to Scotland to serve under Leven's expedition into England, three regiments left Ireland for Scotland of their own accord. Sinclair's, Lothian's and Lawer's Regiments all departed Ireland and eventually joined Leven in England. In 1644 Ormond sent regiments to Bristol and Chester, which were destroyed at Naseby and Langport. The Earl of Antrim sent three regiments of Irish mercenaries totaling perhaps as many as 2,000 men, recently released from Spanish service, to support the Marquis of Montrose in Scotland. Despite the transfer of forces to England and Scotland, both Ormond and Monro retained sufficient forces to influence events in Ireland. Parliament recognized Monro as the commander of all English and Scottish forces in Ulster and resupplied him, perhaps in the hopes that he could prevent other regiments from deserting Ireland. He made an attempt to take Dundalk and Drogheda in the name of Parliament and failed. Monro, concerned about Sir Arthur Chichester's occupation of Belfast, acceptance of the cessation and denouncing of the covenant occupied Belfast without firing a shot on 14 May 1644 disbanding Chichester's regiment in the process .

The cessation caused a split in the Laggan Army, part of which followed the lead of Sir Robert Stewart and complied with the terms of the cessation. Another part of the Laggan army under the lead of Sir Thomas's brother William sided with Monro and did not accept the terms of the cessation.

In April, the Army of Ulster followed Scotland's lead by agreeing to the Solemn League and Covenant but the Ulster settlers were divided into those who would and those who would not follow the Earl of Ormond and his royalists. With plans in the works for an invasion of England in support of Parliament, the Scots settlers provided many of the soldiers for the new Scottish Army. By June Monro, supported by elements of the Laggan Army, was prepared to advance toward an army led by the Earl of Castlehaven

and moved south into Leinster, capturing Granard and Longford as well as burning Kells and Navan before running low on supplies and withdrawing north back into Ulster. Castlehaven's army retreated as Monro advanced but by July, entered Ulster. Monro advanced to Kilwarlin Woods waiting for Argyll's and Leven's regiments but in the process ran out of supplies delaying his advance until he could forage in the local area. By August once reinforced by the Lagan army and re-supplied, he advanced into Armagh finding himself in a stalemate with Castlehaven until September and unable to follow due to bad weather he withdrew, having forced Castlehaven south to Clones.

Monro's successes in Leinster may have influenced the Earl Inchiquin, commander of Royalist forces in Munster, to declare for Parliament in July, as it seemed that the royalists were unable or unwilling to take action to support the protestants in Ireland. This change gave Parliament access to the ports of Youghal, Cork and Kinsale giving them the option of landing and supplying their own forces in Ireland.

The Army of Ulster by the end of the year once again found itself neglected and short on supplies and all sides wanting it to remain in Ireland. It began, however, to operate independent of both Scotland who wanted it to send more troops to Scotland which it refused to do and English demands that Belfast be turned over to Parliament went unheeded.

1645

Duncannon was besieged by rebel forces from January to March of 1645 and eventually captured, preventing Parliament from using it as a base of operations. Castlehaven campaigned from April to August in Munster against Inchiquin in an effort to eliminate the territory under his control, reducing his garrisons to Cork, Kinsale, Bandon and Youghal. In May of 1645 Sir Charles Coote, son and namesake of the late Mayor of Dublin, arrived in Ireland with a Parliamentary commission for the Presidency of Connaught. With the assistance of the Laggan army he conducted an expedition through Galway and besieged Sligo which fell to him in July. August found Monro attempting to besiege Charlemont but unable to maintain the siege due to lack of supply.

November of 1645 saw the arrival of the Papal Nuncio Rinuccini with arms, ammunition and Papal financial support for the Confederation as well as instructions to expel all Protestants from Ireland and establish the primacy of the Catholic Church. This view of the conflict made cooperation and negotiation with Royalist, Commonwealth and Covenanters nearly impossible. With his arrival there emerged three factions within the Confederation, with one under the influence of Rinuccini. The other two factions were the Supreme Council of the Confederation led by Ormond's brother in law, Lord Muskerry and Nicholas Plunkett's faction, both of whom were more inclined to negotiate a less "zero-sum" arrangement. Ormond was in negotiations with the Confederation and at the same time another Royalist negotiator, the Earl of Glamorgan, was attempting at the time to negotiate a secret treaty, both with the goal of securing forces for Charles I in England but with differing degrees of religious concession in mind for the agreement.

1646

In March of 1646 Ormond signed a secret peace agreement with the rebels while at the same time being urged by a desperate Charles I to negotiate with the Army of Ulster as well. By May, Royalist resistance in England had been crushed and Charles I had joined the Scottish army at Newark.

As a result of Rinuccini's contribution to the Confederation war effort, Owen O'Neil was able to assemble a force he moved towards Ulster in March. His route took him down the Blackwater towards Charlemont. Monro was on the move as well in May and planning to join forces with his nephew, George Monro, and a force from Coleraine. The Laggan Army was on the move into Connaught. There is some controversy about the reason for Monro's movement, as to whether it was another of his now familiar sweeps through Ulster or a precursor to a major offensive operation outside Ulster.

Monro became aware of O'Neil's force on the 4th of June as he crossed the Bann. This apparently came as a complete surprise and occurred as he was attempting to link up with the Coleraine force. O'Neil was found to be between the two forces and once he became aware of this O'Neil established a position at Benburb, a river crossing site on the Blackwater. Monro positioned himself to the south of O'Neil's force along the rebel's line of communications and could have not engaged him, but Monro was under pressure from his subordinates to engage the rebels and was also concerned about the Coleraine force that was as yet unaware of O'Neil's force. As Monro moved up the same side of the river as Benburb, O'Neil's skirmishers contributed to the exhaustion already plaguing Monro's force. Monro attacked O'Neil's left flank along the Blackwater late in the day but the attack stalled. His force was also unnerved by the arrival of rebel forces from the direction of the expected Coleraine force which O'Neil had scattered prior to their arrival. A standoff of at least two hours occurred until the Irish counter attacked, eventually breaking and pursuing Monro's force. Monro lost his siege train and baggage train to the rebels and perhaps as many as one in three of his men. Monro was forced to withdraw to Carrickfergus, his field army having been rendered combat ineffective. From this point on, the Army of Ulster was reduced to a force only able to garrison Carrickfergus and Coleraine lacking an offensive capability.

Owen O'Neil failed to follow up his victory, perhaps due to a lack of supplies which was a constant problem for armies in Ireland, but also perhaps knowing that he had only scattered a part of the forces available in Ulster that would oppose him.

In July the peace agreement between Ormond and the Confederation Supreme Council was denounced by Rinuccini, who arrested those associated with the Peace treaty and replaced the Supreme Council, assuming its leadership. Owen O'Neil moved his force to Kilkenny in support of Rinuccini. O'Neil and Preston, under orders from the new Supreme Council, marched on Dublin but were unable to achieve much due to logistical challenges and mutual distrust.

The failure of the Ormond peace and difficulty in holding Dublin in the face of Confederation forces, led the Earl of Ormond to open negotiations with Monro for turn

over of Dublin to the Army of Ulster. These negotiations failed, but the negotiations with Parliament were successful, setting the stage for the arrival of Parliamentary forces.

1647

In February, the Scottish Army in England withdrew into Scotland and Charles I fell into the hands of the Parliamentarians. Parliament also informed the Army of Ulster that its services were no longer needed in Ireland, but with no agreement on pay, it remained in place. The Scottish Parliament protested the abduction of King Charles and Scotland and the King began secretly negotiating Scottish military intervention on his behalf in England. On 7 June 1647 Colonel Michael Jones and regiments of the New Model Army arrive in Ireland. On the 19th of June Ormond turned Dublin over to Parliament and departed Ireland for France and exile. In June Preston and his Leinster army, took Fort Carlow, with Fort Naas and Fort Maynooth falling to him in June. Preston then besieged Trim but the siege was lifted by Jones. On the 17 July 1647, Monck took command of Parliamentary and settler forces in Ireland while Coote commanded the Lagan Army for Parliament. A combined force of Parliamentarians under Jones and forces under Sir Henry Tichbourne, the governor of Drogheda, defeated Preston at Dugan's Hill 8 August 1647.

The Earl Inchiquin seized Cashel on Sep 1647 leaving no prisoners and defeated Taffe and Alasdair McColla's forces at Knockanauss on 13 Nov 1647. By November King Charles had fled to the Isle of Wight and in December, he and Scottish commissioners had agreed to an "Engagement" exchanging a Scottish invasion of England for the union of the two nations and three years of Presbyterianism in England. The Engagement split the government of Scotland between those who supported the Engagement and those who did not.

1648

On 3 April 1648 Lord Inchiquin renounced Parliament after the arrest of King Charles I, declared for King Charles I and began negotiations for a truce with the Confederation. The Supreme Council agreed to negotiate and declared Rinuccini, O'Neil and their followers all traitors. Rinuccini opposed the peace but was not supported by the majority of the Supreme Council whom he excommunicated for opposing him. O'Neil supported Rinuccini by declaring war on the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council was supported by Clanricarde, Preston and Taffe in its efforts to make peace with the royalists. O'Neil's Ulster army marched on Kilkenny, the Confederation capital, but was eventually driven back by the combined forces of Inchiquin and Preston.

In May the Scottish Parliament voted in favor of war with Parliamentary England and began recruiting soldiers for an army to invade England. Robert Monro sent elements of his forces under the command of his nephew George Monro to reinforce the Duke of Hamilton and "the Engagers", as they were known. The Engager army having invaded England, was destroyed at Preston in August. George Monro and his forces, left in reserve in Scotland, departed Edinburgh in the face of the anti-Engager "Wiggamore

Raid” of lowland Scots on 31 August. George Monro returned to Ireland after Engager regime was eliminated in September.

In September 1648 the remnants of the Army of Ulster refused to surrender Carrickfergus, Coleraine and Belfast to Jones and his Parliamentary forces and return to Scotland. Carrickfergus was taken by treachery with Sir George Monro thrown in the Tower by Monck until his release and retirement in Ireland in 1654. The Scottish Army of Ulster was disbanded shortly thereafter. At least one of the regiments went into English service and some of the officers and soldiers of the disbanded regiments did as well.

Aftermath

On 30 September 1648 Ormond landed at Cork with arms and ammunition paid for by France and joined forces with Inchiquin. In December 1648 Scotland declared for Charles II and Sir Charles Coote seized Londonderry arresting the governor, Sir Robert Stewart. Stewart escaped to join the, now royalist, settler forces. Londonderry was besieged by a royalist coalition of Laggan, Irish Confederates, Scots and Scots Irish under Lord Montgomery of Ards until April 1649 when the siege was lifted by Owen O’Neil.

17 Jan 1649 Ormond reached agreement with the Supreme Council offering Catholic toleration in exchange for 18,000 Irish troops for King Charles I but on 30 January 1649 Charles I was executed. In February of 1649 Rinuccini departed Ireland at command of Confederation.

In March 1649 Monck required a loyalty oath of his soldiers and officers. Scottish forces taken into Parliamentary service in Ireland resigned or were cashiered as a result of refusing to serve under the Regicides. In May, a 3 month ceasefire between Monck and O’Neil was arranged as a result of military weakness in both forces. Drogheda was captured by Earl Inchiquin in June 1649 and Monck was captured at the fall of Dundalk and surrendered to Inchiquin.

In August of 1649, Ormond was threatening Dublin with a combined force of royalists and Confederation troops when he was surprised and defeated at Rathmines by Jones, who had been recently reinforced by four English regiments. This defeat set the stage for Cromwell’s arrival with overwhelming force to eliminate all military opposition to the Parliamentarians in Ireland.

Operational Conditions

The conditions in which all the armies in Ireland had a direct, and usually adverse, impact on the conduct of military operations. The inability of the local agriculture and industry to support the arming, massing and movement of large formations forced all armies to rely on support external to Ireland. The intermittent and limited nature of this external support made it difficult if not impossible to follow up tactical victories with pursuits leading to strategic overwhelming victory.

Relations with the populace were strained when efforts were made by armies to rely on local support to sustain themselves, doubtless having an adverse impact on support for their respective causes. The damage caused by such a breakdown in relations cannot have helped further local re-supply efforts, recruiting or intelligence gathering, thus adding to the difficulty in any one of the armies achieving overwhelming victory.

Certain branches of the army, i.e. artillery and horse were unable to operate to maximum effect. The road network in Ireland was poor thus making it difficult to move artillery or to mass and move large formations of horse from one location to another. The limited logistical support experienced by all armies also limited the use of artillery and horse, as both are far more supply intensive than foot formations.

It was not until Cromwell's campaign that the logistical and movement obstacles to military operations in Ireland were overcome. Cromwell used all the port facilities under his control to rearm, refit and re-supply his forces in Ireland. He also had no need to rely on logistical support from Ireland, as he had control of the sea lines of communication and a steady flow of logistical support from England.

Significance of Army of Ulster

The immediate effect of the arrival of the Scottish army of Ulster was the stabilization of Antrim and Down and the prevention of further rebel action there. The operations of the Army of Ulster also forced rebels to operate elsewhere, increasing pressure on the Laggan Army in west Ulster. This forced shift in rebel forces did not result in increased logistical support for the Laggan army from Monro and did not diminish Monro's expectation that the Laggan Army support his expeditions in Ulster and Leinster.

The Army of Ulster was responsible for reinforcing the already considerable Scottish cultural foothold in Ulster by establishing the first Irish Presbytery in 1641. This may perhaps be the greatest legacy of the Army of Ulster along with the number of cashiered soldiers it left behind in Ireland.

The Army of Ulster was a unique force in the War of three Kingdoms in that it acted as an independent force, making its own decisions about whom it would support, much like those forces fighting on the continent in the 30 Years War and 80 Years War. It was a concern for the Royalist, Parliamentarian and Covenanter political interests during the period of its existence but remained true to its paymaster whoever that might be at the time. The army sent forces back to Scotland to counter Montrose's campaign of 1644-45 and joined the Engager movement of 1648 demonstrating a limited force projection capability that made it a participant in Scottish events while still in Ireland.

Role of Women

At no time and in none of the cultures present in Ireland were women able to hold elective or appointed office, nor they were not permitted to vote in Parliamentary elections. This did not however rule out the possibility of influencing events and people.

The role of women in late 16th and early 17th century native Irish society was limited to informal influence by virtue of social position and kinship. Women could and did wield considerable influence with the male members of their family, relationship and personality dependent. Aristocratic Scottish wives brought the added advantage of education, greater familiarity with the English and a dowry in the form of Scottish mercenaries. In Old English society socially prominent women were able to have a greater role in representing their husbands and families if required and were accepted in that role. In the Scots Presbyterian community women and men were viewed as equal in household matters. Women were literate and expected to teach their children to read and wielded considerable influence in social and religious matters.

In the early stages of the rebellion, women rose to prominence as leaders and active participants. However as the rebellion became a war, the role of women changed. During wartime, women occupied a critical logistical role in armies of the 16th and 17th century assuming roles in cooking, foraging, washing and medical aid that were almost never considered a priority by commanders. The armies operating in Ireland would have been no different in that regard.

Catholic Confederation Armies

Initially the forces of the Irish rebellion were local levies raised by local nobility or members of recognized prominent families. The ability to raise troops was a function of prestige or position in society. Experience was not necessarily a criteria for command positions other than those associated with training soldiers such as sergeants major. Veteran soldiers were available but only in small numbers, and there was a manpower drain throughout the Confederation period as Spain and France were still taking military aged males off of the island to reinforce their own Irish mercenary formations. In the period 1644-49 Spain received perhaps as many as 4,000 Irishmen and France received as many as 7,000.

Logistics played a critical role in the conduct of Confederation operations. There was a perpetual shortage of black powder preventing effective use of firearms and artillery. The presence of enemy garrisons in rear areas required observation if not siege and tied down forces even when there were insufficient resources to support siege operations. All the military formations in Ireland relied on external support and all lacked sufficient support for decisive operations but the Confederation suffered the most from a lack of sufficient and regular support from Spain and the Papacy, their primary sponsors.

Unity of command in military operations is absolutely critical. This was lacking in the strategic command structure of Confederation forces which was characterized by infighting and dissention at the highest levels all the way down to, and perhaps lower than, the army command level. The absence of unity of command made unity of purpose and action impossible.

Scottish Regiments (Army of Ulster) Marquis of Argyle's

(yellow saltire on black background)

Ireland 1642-1644, 1645-1648

Scotland 1644

1642 Invasion of Rathlin Island

1642 Garrisoned at Dunluce Castle, Ballycastle, Ballymoney Ballantree, Ballintoy

1644 Expedition to Leinster

1644 Scotland

1645 Ireland

1645 Sent contingent to Scotland under Col Robert Home

1645 Invasion of Islay

1648 Commander and Major cashiered for opposition to Engagement

1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland

1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture

Sir Mungo Campbell of Lawer's

(white saltire on blue background)

Ireland 1642- March 1644

1642 Coleriane Expedition

1642 Templepatrick garrison

1644 Scotland

1647 Ireland

1648 Scotland

Earl of Lindsay's

Ireland 1642

1642 Bangor Garrison

1643 Claneboys Wood expedition

1644 Leinster expedition

1644 Castlehaven campaign

1645 Sent contingent to Scotland under Col Robert Home

1645 Benburb

1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland

1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture

Earl of Eglinton's 1642-1644 /James Montgomery's 1644-1648

Ireland 1642-1648

1642 Bangor garrison

1643 Claneboys Wood expedition

1644 Leinster expedition

1645 Sent contingent to Scotland under Col Robert Home

1645 Benburb

1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland

1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture

Earl of Glencairn's

Ireland 1642-1648

1642 Carrickfergus garrison

1643 Siege of Charlemont

1644 Leinster expedition
1644 Castlehaven campaign
1645 Sent contingent to Scotland under Col Robert Home
1645 Benburb
1648 Ejected from Army of Ulster
1648 Joined Monck's army
1648 Assisted in capture of Robert Monro at Carrickfergus

Col Robert Home's 1642-1644 /Col John Maxwell's 1645/ Col Robert Home's 1646-1648

(white saltire on green background)
(conjecture: incorporated Earl of Leven's Lifeguard Company of Foot)
Ireland 1642-1644
1642 Newry
1642 Leven's expeditions
1643 Carrickfergus Garrison
1643 Claneboys Wood expedition
1643 Siege of Newcastle
1644 Seizure and occupation of Belfast
1644 Leinster expedition
1644 Castlehaven campaign
Scotland 1645 (*in red coats*)
1646 Home returns to Ireland to command regiment
1645 Benburb
1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland
1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture

Earl of Lothian's Regiment

Ireland 1642-1644
1642 Leven's expeditions
Scotland 1644

Earl of Leven's 1642 /Col George Monro's Regt 1643-1648

(conjectural: white saltire on blue background in upper left of a solid red field)
Ireland 1642-1648
1642 Apperly Hills expedition
1642 Garrsion Dunluce Castle
1642 Garrison Coleraine
1642 Leven's expeditions
1644 Leinster expedition
1644 Castlehaven campaign
1645 Sent contingent to Scotland under Col Robert Home
1645 Benburb
1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland
1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture and enters Parliamentary service as Conways Regiment
1648 Mutinies and elects Montgomery of Ards as commander

1648 Joins Col George Monro in siege of Londonderry
1649 Re-occupies Colerain after siege of Londonderry is lifted

MAJ Gen Sir Robert Monro's 1642-1648

1642 Coleraine expedition
1644 Seizure of Belfast
1644 Leinster expedition
1644 Castlehaven campaign
1645 Benburb
1648 Sent contingent under Col George Monro to Scotland
1648 Disbanded by Monck after Robert Monro's capture

Lord Sinclair's Regt

Ireland 1642-1644
Scotland 1644-1647

Train of Artillery, General Sir Alexander Hamilton

Horse in troop sized (100 or less) elements

Settler Regiments

Regiments of the Laggan Army (West Ulster) 1641-48

Sir Robert Stewart's (Scots) (Donegal/Tyrone)
Sir William Stewart (Scots) (Donegal/Tyrone)
Sir Ralph Gore/Colonel Audley Mervin (English) (Donegal)
Sir William Cole (English) (Enniskillen)

East Ulster Regiments 1641-48

Sir James Montgomery (Scots) (Down)
Sir George Rawdon (Scots) (Down)
Sir John Clotworthy (English) (Antrim)
Sir Edward, Lord Conway (English) (Antrim)
Sir James Hamilton, Lord Claneboye (Scots) (Down)
Sir Hugh Montgomery, Lord of Ards (Scots) (Down)
Sir Arthur Chichester (English) disbanded 1644 (Antrim)

Leinster Regiments 1641-48

Sir Henry Tichbourne (English)
Sir Charles Coote (English)
Sir Piers Crosby (English)
Lord Lambard (English)

Parliamentarian Regiments

Munster Regiments 1642-44

Sir William Leger, Lord President of Munster/Lord Inchiquin (English)
Sir Charles Vavasour (English)

Sir William Ogle (English)
Sir John Paulet (English)

Connaught Regiments 1642-44

Lord Ranelagh (English)
Sir Michael Earnley (English)

Lienster Regiments 1642-44

Lord Lieutenants (commanded by Col George Monck) (English)
Sir Simon Harcourt (English)
Sir Fulk Hunck (English)
Lord Lisle's Horse (English)

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