

‘The Rebels Turkish Tyranny’: Understanding Sexual Violence in Ireland during the 1640s

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In August 1642 Tristram Whitcombe, the mayor of Kinsale, Co. Cork, published a pamphlet in London under the title, *The Truest Intelligence from the Province of Munster in the Kingdome of Ireland*. In order to persuade an English audience that the plight of Protestants during a widespread uprising by Irish Catholics justified urgent help in the form of money, men and arms, he began by offering evidence of the inhumanity of the Irish enemy, characterising them as “impious in their cruelty and that the very Turkes and Mahumetans were never so sanguinean as those Tygers have beene. They have ravished Matrons, vitiated wives, defloured virgins, fired cities”.¹ Whitcombe and other pamphleteers aimed to elicit support for Irish Protestants by referring to the worst violence that they knew: describing in horrifying detail bloody massacres; the killing and dismemberment of men who were held in high esteem by their communities; numerous lingering deaths from starvation and cold; as well as the humiliation and rape of innocent women and girls. Whitcombe’s use of rape as a supreme example of the violence suffered by Protestant settlers points to the powerful and multiple meanings of sexual violence in Ireland during the troubled years of the mid seventeenth century.

As many historians have noted, scholarly study of the 1641 Irish rebellion has long been impeded by the fact that the event swiftly became the focus of intense political and religious propaganda, which continued into the nineteenth century and even beyond.² Only in the last twenty or thirty years have Irish historians started to study the 1640s seriously, both for the period’s significance to Irish history and to the broader history of the civil wars of the three kingdoms.³ While great progress has been made in disentangling the complex political and military aspects of the 1641 rebellion, more recently attention has turned to the investigation of the experiences of both Protestant and Catholic civilians during the upheaval.⁴ Stimulated in part by the researches of Nicholas Canny and also by developments in the English historiography of the 1640s, Irish scholars have begun to tackle previously neglected topics like atrocity and massacre,⁵ and to attempt to understand how ordinary people suffered during these violent years.⁶ Historians of women particularly have been interested for some time in the seventeenth century, and important articles have examined the evidence for women’s involvement in the rebellion and its aftermath.⁷ But there are major barriers to research on sexual violence during the rebellion, one of the most serious of which has been the unreliability of the published sources. The largest published collection of eyewitness evidence, which appeared in 1884, excised without comment every reference to sexual violence and rape.⁸ Using the original sources, Mary O’Dowd, in her groundbreaking 1991 article on women and war in seventeenth-century Ireland, did briefly address the question of sexual violence during the 1641 rebellion, but finding few examples of rape she simply concluded that women must have been too ashamed to report such violence.⁹

Rape in pre-modern European societies is a notoriously difficult crime to investigate, as O'Dowd found. Legal records are of limited value, even when they exist, as rape constituted a tiny number of the cases prosecuted. In early modern English courts, which have left generally good records, rape cases were less than 1 per cent of indicted felonies and had an extremely low conviction rate.¹⁰ While historians do not regard these low levels of prosecution and conviction as an indication of the incidence of rape in early modern societies, paucity of sources means that analysis of statements such as those made by Whitcombe cannot depend upon legal records for any understanding of rape or other forms of sexual violence. Whitcombe's assertions can be examined, however, within a framework that analyses the meanings or understandings of sexual violence in the communities that produced and consumed his words.

While any attempt to measure the extent of sexual violence during the wars of the 1640s must be considered impractical because of lack of evidence, analysis of the range of meanings that were attached to sexual assault is possible through close reading of reported episodes of rape and other forms of sexual violence, such as stripping and genital mutilation. In order to probe the ways in which sexual violence was perceived in mid seventeenth-century Ireland, this article investigates accounts of "real" violence reported by witnesses during the 1641 rebellion, then juxtaposes the meanings of these accounts with the use of sexual violence as a trope in pamphlets such as Whitcombe's. The disjunction revealed between the accounts contained in these different types of sources points to the existence of varied meanings of sexual violence that shifted depending upon the context and intention of the narratives.

The 1641 Rebellion: Catholic and Turkish Violence

On 22 and 23 October 1641 Phelim O'Neil and other Irish lords in Ulster rose in rebellion against the crown. The politics of the rebellion are complex and intimately linked with the civil war then brewing in England. However, as the rebellion quickly spread through Ireland, the leaders appear to have lost control of many of their followers, and especially in the north. Widespread and brutal attacks by Catholics on Protestant settlers began, aimed primarily at dispossessing them of their land and property. Many Protestant women and children, as well as men, were killed or died from exposure after being turned out of their homes during winter without clothes, food or money.¹¹ These events were swiftly followed by retaliatory attacks on Catholic communities by Protestant militias and civilians, with substantial but untold loss of life and damage to property.¹² Within days, the attacks on Protestant non-combatants were reported to the English parliament and to a news-hungry English public – although not the similar attacks on Catholics. The rebellion was described in a report sent to parliament, as early as the beginning of November, as characterised by "so much inhumanity and cruelty as cannot be imagined from Christians even towards infidels".¹³

Shortly after the outbreak, the government in Dublin appointed special commissioners to collect sworn testimony on the losses sustained by the Protestant settlers. Eventually, over a period of ten years, evidence was gathered by various enquiries from around 3,000 people.¹⁴ These "depositions", as they are called, are an invaluable, if still underused,

repository of eyewitness accounts, as well as of uncorroborated testimony and hearsay.¹⁵ They were collected overwhelmingly from Protestant settlers and so give their perspective on events, meaning they are far less useful for gauging reactions from Catholic communities. The depositions are vital, however, in establishing the levels and types of violence considered acceptable at the time; who could inflict violence and who could not; and which victims were likely to be seen as innocent and which as deserving of their fate. Thus, as well as telling us much about what actually occurred in 1641, the depositions also tell us much about what participants accepted would occur or feared might occur.

While only roughly 40 per cent of deponents testified to personally witnessing or even hearing about violence against others, the deponents were agreed in depicting Protestant communities as composed of law-abiding and God-fearing people who were the unwitting victims of irrational and brutal Irish Catholics.¹⁶ This is not surprising as deponents had been invited to give their versions of events in order, firstly, to be eligible for compensation and, secondly, to be witnesses in the criminal prosecution of perpetrators. These Protestant survivors were encouraged to give evidence of what they had heard as well as what they had seen, thus making the depositions a valuable archive of rumours.¹⁷ Rumours largely spread about events that were feared, and so this hearsay evidence can be used to understand the anxieties and perceived vulnerabilities of Protestant civilians.

In order to be credible, rumours need to have a basis in shared understandings of events and motives. Anti-Irish and associated anti-popery attitudes are well documented among Protestant clergy and political leaders in Ireland during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁸ Catholicism was conflated with barbarity and inhumanity on many levels, and particularly in political discourses that justified harsh treatment of the native Gaelic Irish and the colonisation of Irish lands by Protestant settlers. Memories also survived among Protestants of the violent 1590s when Protestant settlers, particularly in Munster, were attacked and their fledgling homes and communities destroyed in a major rebellion.¹⁹ However, it was not only fears of home-grown Catholic conspiracy and aggression that fed Protestant anxieties during the 1640s. The bloody religious wars in Germany, that began in 1618 and did not end till 1648, and the St Bartholomew's Day massacre of Protestants in France in 1572 were well known, having been publicised through the rapidly developing trade in cheaply printed pamphlets and broadsheets.²⁰

Yet, despite the widespread and intense anti-popery current in the early decades of the seventeenth century, there is also considerable evidence that, on the eve of the rebellion, many Protestants and Catholics were living together in Ireland in relative harmony.²¹ This in itself explains some of the shock obviously felt by the settlers: they were not expecting a rebellion, and the violence that accompanied it was also not anticipated. However, once they heard about or experienced violence, then it appears that the prevailing context of anti-Irish and anti-Catholic fears helped the settlers make sense of the chaotic events that were engulfing them. What was occurring, though unexpected, was not inexplicable; it could be understood by reference to the past violent history of the "primitive" Irish and the inherent cruelty of Catholicism, which was comparable to the

cruelty of barbarians like the Muslim Ottoman Turks, who had been threatening Europe for over a century. The rumours that fed fear and anxiety among Protestant settlers in the dark months after the outbreak of the rebellion in late October 1641 were grounded therefore in a variety of contexts, in addition to the events that were occurring in Ireland at the time.²²

Those English-born Protestants who wrote about the rebellion from Ireland demonstrated that they were familiar with the rhetoric and metaphors of anti-popery literature, which included identification of gendered violence with Catholics. Whitcombe's association of "Turkes and Mahumetans" with rape recalls a long tradition of equating non-Christians with barbarity reaching back into the medieval period, which was given particular resonance during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both by Turkish incursions into eastern Europe and also by divisions among Christians.²³ In this literature Turks and Muslims were often depicted, in both narratives and iconography, as raping women and killing children.²⁴ Such accounts of continental religious conflicts combined easily with one of the most widely known anti-Catholic texts in England: John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Christian Martyrs*, first published in 1563 and frequently reprinted and updated throughout the seventeenth century.²⁵ Foxe devoted a whole chapter to the cruelty of the Turks, and throughout his long book he repeatedly equated the cruelty of Catholics with this heathen standard of barbarism.²⁶

Although few extant copies of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* survive from seventeenth-century Ireland, it is clear that some of the settlers who were caught up in the 1641 rebellion had substantial libraries which were likely to have held copies of such a text. The depositions report significant losses of libraries, indicating that settlers had ready access to English publications.²⁷ For example, Dr Robert Maxwell, a minister from Co. Armagh, reported that his destroyed library had been worth the substantial sum of around £700.²⁸ Given that anti-popery was ubiquitous in England at this time and that links between English Protestants and English Protestant settlers in Ireland were close, there is little doubt that the two groups shared a common worldview, shaped in part by texts like Foxe's immensely popular book.²⁹

Indeed, there are telling similarities between Foxe's rhetoric, on the one hand, and that of the 1641 deponents and pamphleteers, on the other. For example, Foxe wrote that

... to kill man, woman and child, without all mercy, sparyng none: no otherwise then the infidels & cruel Turkes haue dealt with the Christians, as before in the story of the Turkes, you may read.

For as the Papistes and Turkes are like in their Religion, so are the sayd Papistes like, or rather exceede them, in all kyndes of cruelty that can be deuised...³⁰

Witnesses who appeared before the commissioners used similar language when equating the barbarity of their Irish attackers with that of the "Turkes", reflecting Protestant Ireland's familiarity with the imagery of Foxe and similar English writers. John Moore, a clerk of Co. Kilkenny, was recorded as saying that the Irish, "by cruell meanes compeled

many to abjure their religion upon promise of restitution of their goods, yet having obtained their end had not so much respect unto their promises as Ethnicks or Turks would".³¹ Meanwhile, in Co. Tipperary, a friar was reported by a Protestant witness as saying that the Irish planned to kill the captured English: "for we have an example in France in the like, for until their great massacre there they could never be freed of the Hereticks".³² Clearly, deponents were well aware of recent massacres of Protestants and Christians committed by Catholics and Turks in various parts of Europe, and they made sense of their experiences in Ireland against this background, as well as through the lens of books such as Foxe. Later pamphlet and tract writers were also very conscious of such connections. John Temple, for example, in his extremely influential 1646 work, *The Irish Rebellion*, referred both implicitly and explicitly to Foxe.³³

Foxe's huge text provided many gruesome examples of the sort of violence that Protestants might expect from rebellious Catholics behaving like Turks, and this certainly included sexual violence against women and children. In one description of a Turk slaughtering Christian civilians, Foxe wrote that: "The maidens he corrupted, the matrones had their brestes cut of, and such as were with childe, were ript and their children cast into the fire".³⁴ In another description of three women burnt to death by Catholics on the island of Guernsey, Foxe claimed that one who was pregnant gave birth on the point of death and the Catholics killed the infant as well.³⁵ During the winter of 1641/2 in Ireland widespread fears of attacks on pregnant women are evident in reports from the many witnesses. One typical account is that of a Protestant soldier:

...he was put into prison with him a barbarous and bloody Rebel who had a very long skeane [knife] and bragged how he had killed an English woman and what good it had done him to see her child sprawle after he had ripped it out of her womb.³⁶

John Wisdome from Co. Armagh also described how, during his escape south to Dublin, he was told of two instances of heavily pregnant women being killed and their babies delivered at the moment of death or shortly afterwards.³⁷ Dame Anne Butler from Co. Carlow reported that she had been told of a woman newly delivered of twins who had been mistreated and the infants killed.³⁸ Such reports travelled long distances, far from their geographical origins, and were repeated endlessly as the terrified survivors struggled to reach Dublin and other ports, before many embarked for the safety of England where such tales were told again. These horrific stories spread widely and were believed partly because they fitted into the worldview of Protestants, both in Ireland and England, fostered by texts such as Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

The female victims of these assaults were by definition innocent and had been attacked while fulfilling their essential roles as wives and mothers. Eyewitness testimony given by women or by their male relatives also emphasised female vulnerability, and the distress experienced by those who were stripped and driven from their homes, especially when heavily pregnant. Thomas Taylor from Cloonbrassell, Co. Armagh, testified that his pregnant mother had been forced to spend the night outdoors lying in water. When she was brought inside again she went into labour, but the child died and she died soon

after.³⁹ Some women described trying to find protection whilst they were in labour, and the births of dead or sick infants as a result of their ordeal. Mary Hamond gave an account of her journey to Galway town when heavily pregnant, during which she was repeatedly beaten before finally giving birth to a dead infant.⁴⁰ Both first-hand evidence and rumours of these attacks emphasised the respectable married status of the women concerned; the fact that they were forced out of their homes; and that this took place at a time in their lives when they should have been cared for and protected. The literature plainly recognises these women as innocents fulfilling their God-given roles, and any violence used against them as especially reprehensible.⁴¹

The 1641 Depositions: Rape

Such accounts of the mistreatment of pregnant women contrast sharply with deponents' accounts of rape. Although Whitcombe and other pamphleteers stated that rape was commonplace, few deponents were prepared to publicly describe specific instances of rape. Historians who have examined the issue have come to different conclusions regarding the extent of rape, and sexual violence more generally. Mary O'Dowd, for instance, argues the shame of rape was so great that women were reluctant to speak about it, but she is convinced that rape "must have" occurred during the desperate days of 1641.⁴² Nicholas Canny, on the other hand, is more inclined to believe that rapes were rare. He suggests that for the Catholic insurgents rape may have been far more morally reprehensible than murder, and so they were constrained from raping their victims by their own or their companions' repugnance.⁴³ Canny further speculates that the process of stripping Protestant women naked may have contained for many Irish men a sexual element, but he does not consider that this was always predominant.⁴⁴ While diverging in their analyses, O'Dowd and Canny do agree in highlighting the insurmountable difficulties involved in assessing the frequency of rape and sexual assault during the rebellion. However, detailed study of the depositions reveals the diversity of meanings attached to rape and sexual assault, and this diversity offers an explanation as to why so few cases were reported. As well, such a study provides important insights into the ways in which reports of gendered violence were employed by Protestants in Ireland and England to construct an image of the barbarous Catholic Irish.

Rape was regarded as a serious violent crime in Ireland during the 1640s by both Catholics and Protestants. Yet, a group of Irish Catholic men disagreed over whether Elizabeth Bird from Co. Kildare should be raped when she and her husband were captured.⁴⁵ The case against raping this woman was successfully argued by the earls of Antrim and Castlehaven, which suggests that some commanders were able to exercise control over their men when it came to violence against women. Castlehaven himself later published prohibitions against rape in his "Laws and Orders of Warr".⁴⁶ This incident demonstrates that when commanders or officers were present and opposed rape, it did not occur. But, on the other hand, in the absence of such restraining influences, those favouring rape might well have carried the day.

Certainly William Collis, also from Kildare, reported in a terse marginal addition to his deposition, that he had heard "divers" of the Irish boasting that seven rebels had

“ravished and had carnall knowledge of an English Protestant woman one presently after another soo as they gave her not time to rise till the last act performed”.⁴⁷ The relaying of this information to Collis by Catholic rebels suggests that he was told about the incident during his captivity in an effort to frighten and humiliate him. The capacity of Irish men to treat Protestant women in this way, despite severe legal and religious sanctions against such behaviour, was thus seen as a demonstration of their power over the English, and over English men in particular.

Rape was a felony and a capital offence under English common law as it operated in seventeenth-century Ireland: “If any man from thence forcibly ravish any woman married, lady Damzell or otherwise with force where she did not consent neither before nor after the case he shall a judgement of life and member”.⁴⁸ However, as in England, it appears that there were few cases brought before the courts and even fewer convictions.⁴⁹ In Gaelic Irish law, which was still influential though not officially practised, rape was also an offence, though like most physical violence it was regulated by means of a system of fines and compensation.⁵⁰ However, during periods of warfare, the illegality of rape in Ireland, as in the rest of early-modern Europe, was much less clear cut.⁵¹ While civilians and non-combatants were meant to be protected during military engagements, there were situations in which this protection was lifted, most notably in the aftermath of sieges when the victorious besiegers were given licence to do whatever damage they liked, including rape and murder, without legal retribution.⁵² Writers and commentators on the art and ethics of war condemned raping women after sieges, however, there is little doubt that this practice was widespread throughout Europe during the seventeenth century.⁵³

These different legal frameworks collided in Ireland in the 1640s and meant that there was little in the way of legal recourse for victims of sexual assault or rape. Thus rapes were not reported in the depositions because of the expectation that the culprits would not be proceeded against in the courts for the crime of rape. Some allegations of rape form part of long lists of charges levelled against individuals in the hope that the accused would eventually be prosecuted for rebellion. Such allegations were usually advanced only after community scrutiny, and thus what was presented as evidence to the commissioners was not so much the claims of a particular individual, but rather the assessment of the community.

The depositions thus describe incidents in which local communities were in agreement over the meaning of a woman’s experience of sexual violence. For example, John Stubbs from Co. Longford stated in his list of the violent events he had heard about that: “Lambert ffarrell a servant of Oliver Fitzgarrett did commit a rape upon the body of Sarah Adgar and the offence was not punished”.⁵⁴ Suzan Steele from the same area also reported this incident, in almost the same words, saying that:

Lambert Farrell a servant and tenant to the said Oliver Fitzgarrett did committ a rape upon the body of Sarah Adgar the daughter of Joseph Adgar the deponents neer neighbour and she said Sarah afterwards told to her mother...and although that foul offence was so talked of and believed yet the offence escaped punishment.⁵⁵

This event was defined by members of the local community as an act of unlawful violence, and there was agreement as to the nature of the crime, the plight of the victim, and the identity of the perpetrator, and also that he should have been punished. Suzan Steele assured the commissioners that the veracity of woman's story had been tested by the community, and she had been believed. The outrage expressed by both Stubbs and Steele was not so much because rape had occurred, but because Farrell had not been punished. What that punishment should have been is not specified, but because this narrative was included in an indictment against Oliver Fitzgarrett, it is likely that Fitzgarrett was considered to have been partly responsible for Farrell's conduct. To both deponents this was evidence of the perfidy of their Catholic neighbours: they could get away with shielding a man who had committed a serious crime. Suzan Steele went on to describe an attempted rape committed by another of the Farrell clan, Edmund Duffe Farrell, who had wounded Thomas Duff when he rescued the intended victim.⁵⁶ This incident joined others in Steele's testimony as part of a long list of outrages committed by the Farrells and their supporters during the first months of the rebellion.

Another violent incident defined as rape by a community involved a young female servant from Tuam, Co. Galway, who reported her assault to a merchant's wife. The merchant, Christopher Cove, then included the incident, naming the perpetrator, in his deposition to the commissioners. The narrative was framed by his respectability, as he was not a witness to the assault. He clearly considered that it had taken place, however, and presented as evidence for this the fact that the girl had reported the assault to his wife, a respectable woman, and that the victim was deeply distressed by what had occurred. Here the violence and its aftermath were emphasised, and there was no suggestion that the female victim was complicit in her attack in any way.⁵⁷

The narrative of this servant girl's sufferings accorded with contemporary legal and social definitions of rape and how women's testimony was evaluated. Violence was employed, the girl reported the event straight away to an authority figure, and she was obviously traumatised by her experience. Even when there was no legal prosecution, as in these cases, the ways in which rape victims and their supporters framed narratives of sexual violence as violence, rather than sex, is similar to how evidence was presented in formal legal proceedings. In English courts, for example, women highlighted violence and injuries in evidence against the men they accused of raping them; and it was also these details that judges and lawyers looked to for corroboration of a woman's story.⁵⁸ For an attack to be understood as rape or attempted rape, both obvious lack of consent and obvious physical violence were essential.

Yet not every incident reported of forced sexual activity was defined as rape by the deponents. The key factor determining the results of community scrutiny was the presence or absence of violence, signified by the use of weapons or the infliction of physical injury. Elizabeth Powill's story was told by her uncle, Gilbert Pemberton, who gave a deposition to the commissioners on behalf of his niece and her husband, describing their material losses in Co. Armagh, where they had been living when the rebellion broke out. Thomas Powill was imprisoned and his wife "being a pretty woman,

they took...alive to keep her to wife or rather abuse her as a whore”.⁵⁹ Here there is little suggestion of physical violence, and it is Elizabeth Powill’s sexual attractiveness that is highlighted and given as the reason for her abduction from her husband and community. The words “wife” and “whore” in the narrative suggest that in Pemberton’s view there was the possibility of consent, or at least of acquiescence on the part of his niece. His choice of words is in marked contrast to that of other deponents. For example, in the narratives of William Collis, Suzan Steele and Christopher Cove, the words “ravish” and “carnall knowledge” are employed, with connotations of force and lack of consent, to describe incidents that were classified as rape. Although the guilt of the rebel perpetrators was not in doubt in the attack on the Powill household, group or community support for Elizabeth Powill’s individual plight would appear to be absent. Her ordeal was not classified as rape or ravishment, but rather was seen to be in the ambiguous arena of sexual activity with a rebel, where her conduct could have been construed as that of a “whore” rather than of an innocent victim. In Pemberton’s worldview sexual contact between a woman of his family and a rebel man without verifiable violence or threat of violence could not be defined as rape, no matter what other forms of coercion may have been used upon Elizabeth.

Although there are few reports of rumours of rape among the depositions, it is likely that such rumours were in circulation. William Collis’s claim that he was told by his Catholic captors of a pack rape suggests that reports of rape, whether true or not, were sometimes used to humiliate Protestant men. In these circumstances it is likely that fears of abduction and rape were common among Protestant communities, even if they were not often spelt out in the depositions. There are certainly indications in the depositions of women’s fears of sexual assault, and also of the methods they employed to protect themselves. According to one testimony, Mary Redferne, a servant in an inn owned by Ralph Walmsley at Birr, King’s Co., carried a candlestick to the room of a friar who was a guest in the house. He “would need inforce her to lye with him, but shee refusing and crying out, he layd his hand upon his skeane, and threatened to kill her, if she made any more noise”. But his plans were thwarted when Walmsley’s wife, “mistrusting him”, followed Mary to his room and rescued her.⁶⁰ In this account of attempted rape the victim complied with communal expectations of her behavior, and she was both rescued and validated by a respectable woman. The abortive attack was defined as violence with a weapon. The mistrust felt by Mrs Walmsley indicates that there were fears of rape prevalent among Protestant women at this time. She suspected the Catholic friar from the start and, although that did not prevent her from sending a young female servant up to his room, it did mean that she gave her servant the protection of her own presence and witness against any possible attack. Such fears are likely to have been compounded by popular Protestant perceptions of friars and priests as particularly vicious, and often drunken, sexual predators. Many Protestants also made sense of the deterioration in relations with their Catholic neighbours by blaming priests who they claimed incited the Irish to rebel.⁶¹

Reports from Protestant settlers defining coerced sex as rape or ravishment emphasised the innocence of the victims and their standing in the community, as well as their position within their households. Many also suggested that the women involved were young and

unmarried, and so presumably sexually inexperienced. Their virginal state reinforced their innocence within the narratives. It is almost certainly significant that, where the status of the women attacked can be determined, they were not from the upper classes, being rather servants or the wives and daughters of farmers and artisans. This may denote a reluctance on the part of the Irish rebels, mostly themselves from the lower orders, to sexually assault upper-class Protestant women.⁶² However, it is equally possible that young or single servant women, who could prove that they had been the unwitting victims of violent assault, may have felt that they had some chance of retaining their status within their communities even if what happened to them was made public. Upper-class women, on the other hand, would have had more to lose in terms of social status and family honour if it became known that they had been sexually assaulted by Irish Catholic men.

It is also important to note that the reports of rape contained in the depositions were not made by the women victims themselves. In each incident discussed, the sexual assault formed part of a list of depredations either suffered by male householders or perpetrated by named male rebels. These assaults were interpreted as attacks on male heads of households. Married women, likewise, were not generally described as suffering rape, unless they were attacked in the presence of their husbands. The best known and most often quoted incident of this kind in the depositions is the attack on the Allen family: Mrs Allen was reported to have been raped in front of her husband before both were killed.⁶³ In such cases women's status as married and respectable community members remained intact despite sexual assault; their sexuality was not in any way questioned, rather it was the violence of their ordeals that was stressed. It was also understood at the time that, although they were attacked, it was their husbands who were being targeted as well, for an assault on a man's wife, especially when conducted in front of him, was an attack upon his status as the head of a household, and protector of his wife and family.

These varied narratives point to the wide range of reactions that Protestant settlers had to sexual assaults against women during the 1640s. If the community accepted that there had been violence employed, then they were likely to agree that what had happened was rape or attempted rape. The circumstances in which this might occur were when the victim had a reputation as a respectable and God-fearing woman, as defined by other respectable women, such as neighbours or employers, or when she was attacked in the presence of her husband. In these circumstances she was assaulted while fulfilling her role as a member of a godly household. However, if the woman was removed from witnesses to her respectability and to her resistance, as when Elizabeth Powill was taken away from her husband, then a woman's sexuality came under closer scrutiny and what occurred was more likely to be seen in an equivocal light, with narrators reluctant to describe the incident as rape or sexual assault.

So far all the examples discussed have involved Protestant victims of Catholic violence. This is because the Protestant survivors produced such a large volume of written material documenting their sufferings. Catholics, embroiled in the bitter years of warfare that followed the rebellion, did not have the same opportunities to testify, and, until after the Restoration in 1660, they did not have the same access to the printing press with which to

put their point of view. Even then they were especially concerned to dissociate themselves from the violence of the outbreak of the wars and to prove their loyalty to the crown.⁶⁴ Catholic responses were always far less numerous than those of Protestants, who by the 1660s had the advantage of two decades of sensational and unchallenged publicity detailing the horrors to which they had been subjected.⁶⁵

Even when Catholics were able to respond in print to the accusations made against them, they faced official censorship. Thus one of the earliest and most important Catholic pamphlets, the 1662 *A Collection of Some of the Murthers and Massacres Committed on the Irish in Ireland since the 23rd of October 1641* by R. S., was banned and copies were burnt.⁶⁶ This pamphlet was a direct response to John Temple's 1646 *The Irish Rebellion*, with its long lists of atrocities and exaggerated numbers of Protestant casualties. Perhaps surprisingly, R.S. does not include any accounts of rape committed by Protestant men against Catholic women. The women in R.S.'s narrative are wives and mothers who are killed *en masse* while trying to protect their doomed infants. In a description of a massacre in Co. Kerry during the Cromwellian wars of 1649-50, R.S. reports that "many women were shamefully stripped naked and afterwards most inhumanely butchered...and the babes and infants to be tossed on pikes and halberds in sight of their dying parents".⁶⁷ R.S. in his account of atrocities committed against Catholic women would appear to be operating under similar constraints to the Protestant deponents. Stories of rape were open to the possible interpretation that the women were not wholly innocent victims of violence. R.S. thus did not include rape narratives, but focused instead on reports of mothers killed in the act of protecting their children: the virtue of such women could not possibly be impugned.

This interpretation is supported by the handful of reports of possible sexual violence against Catholic civilians, which were collected for use in cases involving individuals charged with specific crimes. One of these reports, from 1652, reveals ambiguous Catholic attitudes to an incident that may have involved sexual assault. Donogh Kelly of Co. Galway deposed that:

Captaine Thomas mc Ward murthered one named James O Lene in his owne house as he satt by the fyer, uppon a bedd, and further saith that by comon report he had heard that ye said Captain had ye use of ye said James O Leyne's wife both before ye death of ye said James and after.⁶⁸

There is no suggestion of violence or coercion being used against the woman in this incident, and the victim of the attack is identified as James O Lene, rather than his wife. As in the case of Elizabeth Powill, the sexuality of the woman concerned is stressed. There is a suggestion that O Lene's wife may have been complicit in her husband's murder by having sex with Mc Ward. The events then became the subject of discussion or "comon report" for some years, and it appears that the community judged the woman harshly and did not regard what happened to her as a sexual assault.⁶⁹ Donogh Kelly was using the incident partly to prove that Mc Ward was morally degenerate, as in the next sentence he testified that Mc Ward had kept a concubine for years. Mc Ward not only

murdered James O Lene, but he violated his household because he “had ye use of” O Lene’s wife “both before...and after” O’Lene’s death.

The evidence of the 1641 depositions and the more limited evidence from Catholic sources confirm that the sexual overtones of rape, coupled with the prevailing male mistrust of female sexuality, meant that rape was viewed as an awkward and ambiguous form of violence. It did not always fit easily into narratives meant to demonstrate unequivocally the sufferings of innocent and persecuted communities.

Stripping as Sexual Violence

If the ambiguous violence of rape was difficult to reconcile with narratives of innocence, the sexual aspect of the humiliation suffered by Protestant women stripped of their clothes was rather more easily accommodated. Stripping of settlers, particularly women and children, as they were turned out of their homes in the winter of 1641/2 was very common, and was reported from all over the country.⁷⁰ But, again, different meanings were attached to stripping. On one level, of course it was fairly straightforward theft: clothes were valuable possessions, particularly the outer clothes that were the first to be stolen. Protestant survivors’ fury at seeing their clothes being worn by Irish Catholics in the months after their theft demonstrates the value of clothes in monetary terms, but also their significance as symbols of class and status.⁷¹ On another level, at least some of the rebels were reluctant to kill women and children, for deponents testified they were told that the rebels had orders to kill the men, but only to strip the women and children.⁷² And, indeed, according to other evidence, women were more likely than men to be stripped and turned out into the cold, although many of them subsequently died from the hardships that they suffered.

Since the word “stripping” was also used for the theft of moveable goods from a house, the meaning of stripping is often ambiguous. Even if it did refer to clothes, it is still hard to determine what precisely was meant: some said quite definitely that they were stripped naked as they were born, or to the skin; others made clear that they were stripped of their valuable clothing, but were still left with smocks or shifts.⁷³ However, for many women there would have been little practical difference because the smock was a garment rarely changed and always worn next to the skin—to be seen in a smock was akin to being naked.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Protestant settlers were unambiguous in describing the experience as one during which they were “most barbarously and inhumanely” treated.⁷⁵ The humiliation and danger of being forced out-of-doors during winter without most or any clothing, and without food or money, was a key element in the way settlers made sense of their experiences: only barbarians in their view would resort to such tactics.

Another important aspect of stripping was the potential it offered for violence and humiliation that was specifically sexual, yet short of rape. While this is not always mentioned, it is likely that it was never far from the surface. For some women stripping left them vulnerable to assaults that, while not rape, were still clearly interpreted as sexualised and cruel. One of the most explicit examples is the case of Mary Everitt, the wife of a shoemaker from Askeaton, Co Limerick, who was stripped, held down and “her

privities” searched for money.⁷⁶ In another widely reported incident, Robert Maxwell, the Co. Armagh clergyman, whose respectability and social standing gave weight to his account, deposed that the rebels were “feeding the lusts of their eyes and cruelty of their hearts with the same object at the same time” when they drowned a naked elderly man and his two naked virginal daughters.⁷⁷ This reference to the “lusts of their eyes” indicates that, for this clerical reporter, there was sexual violence in the way that the two women were stripped and viewed by their captors, even though they were not raped. His remarks fit into the conventional piety of the time, as expressed in such popular texts as *The Whole Duty of Man*, where we are told: “this virtue of Chastity ... sets a guard upon our eyes”.⁷⁸ Looking at the naked body was as sinful as adultery or fornication.

Thus stripping the clothes from women and men had a variety of meanings for both the victims and the perpetrators, and a number of these could be operating at the same time. Theft, humiliation, loss of status, as well as non-physical sexual assault, were all part of the act of stripping.

The 1641 Pamphlets: the Rape of Protestant Ireland

The meanings of the rapes and sexualised violence suffered by Protestants in Ireland in 1641 were complex and multi-layered. So too were the uses to which sexual violence narratives were put by Protestant propagandists, like Whitcombe, writing to bolster images of Irish Catholic barbarism and of Protestant settler innocence.⁷⁹ One of the earliest and most authoritative of these published accounts was by a Protestant minister, Henry Jones, himself a victim of attack and also one of the commissioners appointed to collect witness reports. His first pamphlet, which was based on the depositions, was published as early as 1642.⁸⁰ Four years later John Temple, an official in the Dublin administration, who had access to the depositions and had a background of Calvinist anti-popery, published what was to become the best-known account of 1641, *The Irish Rebellion*.⁸¹ There continued to be a ready market for many years for pamphlets that reprinted extracts from Jones and Temple, as well as for pamphlets that were based on little more than hearsay, rumour and sheer imagination.⁸²

Temple, for all his sensationalising of the settlers’ experiences, was often not specific in his depictions of rape and sexual violence. In his many extensive quotes from the depositions he tended to infer sexualised violence rather than directly describing it. He, for instance, included the testimony of John Stone, whose pregnant daughter was hanged, her child ripped from her belly and “such barbarous beastly actions used to her as are not fit to be mentioned”.⁸³ Temple also quoted from the testimony of Robert Maxwell, who reported with horror the actions of the rebels’ children, who mutilated bodies of the dead by beating off the “privy members” of men and turning women’s bodies onto their backs and “censuring all parts of their bodies, but especially those such as are not fit to be named”.⁸⁴ In many similar accounts, Temple did not provide precise details of the violence, considering them “not fit to be mentioned”, rather he left spaces, which readers or imitators could fill with their own versions of the horrors. Perhaps he was relying on the fact that people’s imaginations were likely to be more vivid than even the survivors’ gruesome testimonies.

Early in the reporting of the rebellion there appeared a pamphlet with the evocative title, *The Rebels Turkish Tyranny*.⁸⁵ The sub-title neatly encapsulates the gendered aspect of the violent events described: *Shewing how cruelly they put them to the sword, ravished religious women and put their children upon red hot spits before their parents eyes*. In this text gender and violence are inextricably connected and frame the whole narrative, indicating that the most serious violence – aside from death – was rape perpetrated on innocent victims. Rape scenes in the pamphlets thus served to emphasise the barbarity of the perpetrators, rather than proving the innocence of the victims, who were safely not identified by name and became imagined stereotypes, rather than real women who continued to live with the stigma of rape in their families and communities. Most pamphlets used the rhetorical device of asserting in general terms that rape was commonplace, without giving specific examples. So in the 1641 pamphlet, *A Briefe Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northerne Irish Rebels*, the writer asks: “what shall we say of the ravishing of women before their owne husband’s faces, yea some green women lying in child-bed”?⁸⁶ Also in the 1641 *Worse and Worse News from Ireland*, there is a long litany of cruelties, including “ravishing wives before their husband’s faces and virgines before their parent’s faces”.⁸⁷ The women’s innocence and social status are foregrounded here in order to emphasise the effect of their sufferings upon their husbands and fathers, who thus in fact become the main victims of the violence. These generalised and unspecific accounts worked to create a narrative of widespread and indiscriminate rape, with respectable households being brutally attacked by inhuman rebels who had no respect for the bonds of family, society or religion.

The most explicit rape narratives appear in *The Teares of Ireland*, attributed to James Cranford, and in *Ireland’s Tragical Tyrannie*, both of which were published in 1642.⁸⁸ Cranford offers detailed descriptions of atrocities, many involving female victims, stressing the victims’ high standing within their communities and the terrible treatment that they received. Thus, after “Bloudhound” Rory Macqueere had killed a man, stripped his wife naked and forced her out of the house, he then turned his attention to the daughter, “a proper Gentlewoman”, and “satisfied his beastly luste on her”. Finally, “like an inhumane villain [he] cut off her garments by the middle and then turned her to the mercy of the common souldiers”.⁸⁹ It is not only the details of perpetrators’ names and specific examples that make *Teares* so authentic, its narrative of gendered violence was also consistent with its audience’s expectations of what would occur when pious Protestants were under attack from bloodthirsty Catholics. This was partly because of its similarities to another text, *The Lamentations of Germany* written by Philip Vincent and published in 1638, which chronicled the appalling sufferings of German Protestants during the Thirty Years War.⁹⁰ *The Teares*, with its similar title and similar illustrations, is no mere copy of *The Lamentations*, however, as it also includes a version of a rape narrative described in another pamphlet, *Ireland’s Tragical Tyrannie*. This is the story of a young girl sent to her uncle in England with letters containing news of the rebellion. She has been raped, her hair cut off and her tongue cut out. The details are slightly different in the two pamphlets, nevertheless, it is manifestly the same story. While historians have been quick to identify the probable sources of this story in fiction, suggesting Shakespeare’s Lavinia and Ovid’s Philomel as models, this does not detract

from the distressing images the pamphlets presented of innocent girls violated and torn from their murdered families and destroyed homes.⁹¹ This raped girl can thus be read as a metaphor for raped Protestant Ireland desperately appealing for help to the men of Protestant England.

Illustrations in the pamphlets served to further simplify, but also strengthen, the gendered messages about violence that were repeated in the texts. *The Teares of Ireland* included illustrations that were similar to those in *The Lamentations of Germany*. In the illustration of the rape of the young girl just mentioned, the girl is depicted bound, with her skirt raised and her hair loose — both signifiers of rape in seventeenth-century iconography.⁹² Similarly, in the illustration accompanying the episode of the rape, murder and dismemberment of a pregnant woman, the rapist is depicted kneeling between her legs, with the woman lying naked, her hair dishevelled.⁹³ *A Prospect of Bleeding Irelands Miseries*, a broadsheet published in London in 1647, has at its centre a picture of a praying woman with her hair down and in disorder, her breasts exposed and ghostly dismembered bodies of what may be her family scattered at her feet. The picture is captioned “Irelandes Lamentation”, in a direct reference to *The Lamentations of Germany*. The broadsheet lists atrocities, largely based on Temple and other earlier pamphlets, ending with the claim: “They have most villainously ravished Virgins and women, and afterwards have bin so bloody and hard-harted, as to dash their childrens brains out”.⁹⁴ The picture encapsulates the long list of violent acts that accompanies it into one powerful image of Protestant Ireland as a distressed matron, stripped of her outer clothes and trappings of status, her breasts exposed signifying the loss of her children, and her hair dishevelled invoking familiar images of distressed or raped women. This one-page broadsheet and its central illustration distilled the sufferings of the Protestants of Ireland into one overwhelming image of gendered and sexualised violence.

While the deponents certainly testified to the barbarity of particular Irish Catholic men, in the pamphlets more emphasis was placed upon the defective masculinity of the Irish rebels as a group. For the pamphleteers, attacks on women were proof that Irish Catholic men were deficient as men: they did not confront able-bodied male settlers directly, but preferred instead to attack their helpless women and children. The writers of pamphlets stressed repeatedly that the victims of Catholic men were the weakest amongst the Protestant community: pregnant women, young girls and infants, or, if men, then elderly and unarmed men or clergymen. Cranford is explicit on this point in *The Teares of Ireland*, claiming that: “All their cruelties have been usually on disarmed men in small villages, where was no strength to resist them, there they have tyrannized over the weaker sex, women, and they have basely triumphed over little children their rage hath been exercised”.⁹⁵ So not only are Irish Catholic men inhuman in their lack of respect for the established social and gender orders, but they are also unmanly in attacking only the weakest. Whitcombe, for example, asserted that, when they were confronted by experienced Protestant troops, the Irish rebels usually turned their backs and ran away. In this way narratives of sexual violence in Ireland during the 1640s were used, not only to highlight the barbarism of Catholics, which was compared to that of the heathen Turks, but also to impugn the masculinity of Irish men. The masculine role of Protestant settler men as heads of households was under challenge. But the challenge mounted by Catholic

Irish men was not a direct and honourable one, instead it was offered in an underhanded manner through the rape or threatened rape of settler women.

Conclusion: Resolving the Anomaly of Rape in the 1640s

Rape narratives appearing in the 1641 pamphlets spoke directly to an English Protestant male audience, inviting empathy and urging action. In many ways individual settler women and their experiences were effectively marginalised in these narratives.⁹⁶ The stories functioned as calls to assist the beleaguered Protestant male settlers, especially through the despatch of troops to Ireland. These pamphlets were in a way an opportunity for Protestant men in Ireland to communicate to Protestant men in England the danger of their situation, without having to specify in detail the sexual violence inflicted upon their wives, daughters and female servants. Generalised reports of widespread rapes and other sexualised violence, combined with the personification of Protestant Ireland as a raped and traumatised wife and mother, were more than sufficient.

Conversely, when presenting their versions of the events of that horrific winter of 1641/2, Protestant survivors needed to ensure that the governments in Dublin and London knew of their sufferings, compensated them for their losses and punished the perpetrators. Rape was certainly recognised as cruel and extreme violence, but, unlike many other types of violence, the innocence of the victim had to be proven beyond any doubt whatsoever for the perpetrator to be deemed guilty in the eyes of both the community and the law. This meant that Protestant survivors needed to be absolutely certain that what they were reporting was indeed rape, and could not possibly be interpreted as a Protestant woman acquiescing to sex with a Catholic man. It would appear from the surprisingly few depositions mentioning rape that only a comparatively small number of cases satisfied these strict requirements. The lack of rapes recorded as committed upon Catholic women further supports this interpretation, and highlights the fact that understandings of rape were similar in the two religious communities. Therefore the ambiguous violence of rape did not have a secure place in the versions of events presented by the survivors, whether Protestants in the 1640s or Catholics in the 1660s.

While such interpretations do not answer the question of how many rapes actually took place during the rebellion of 1641 and its aftermath, they do go some way at least towards offering an explanation for the anomaly of the low numbers reported in the survivors' depositions and the high numbers claimed by Whitcombe and his fellow pamphleteers.

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¹ Tristram Whitcombe, *The Truest Intelligence from the Province of Munster in the Kingdome of Ireland Extracted out of Several Letters of Very Serious Importance Lately Sent from Mr Tristram Whitcome, Sovereaine of Kinsale* (London, 1642).

² W. D. Love, 'Civil War in Ireland: Appearances in Three Centuries of Historical Writing', *Emory University Quarterly* 22 (1966) pp. 57–72; A. Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions', in P. Fox (ed.), *Treasures of the Library: Trinity College Dublin*, (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1986), pp. 111–22; Brian Walker, '1641, 1689, 1690 and All That: The Unionist Sense of History', in Brian Walker (ed.) *Dancing in History's Tune: History, Myth and Politics in Ireland*, (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast, 1996) pp. 1–14; T. C. Barnard, '1641: A Bibliographical Essay', in MacCuarta (ed.), *Ulster 1641*, pp. 173–86; "'Parlour Entertainment in an Evening'?: Histories of the 1640s", in Micheál Ó Siochrú (ed.) *Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), pp. 20–43;); Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 461–7.

³ Keith Lindley, 'The Impact of the 1641 Rebellion Upon England and Wales, 1641-5', *Irish Historical Studies* 18 (1972-3) pp. 143–76; Martyn Bennett, *The Civil Wars Experienced: Britain and Ireland 1638-1661* (London: Routledge, 2001); Robert Armstrong, *Protestant War: The 'British' of Ireland and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), pp. 156–181.

⁴ Robin Clifton, '“An Indiscriminate Blackness?” Massacre, Counter-Massacre and Ethnic Cleansing in Ireland, 1640-1660,' in Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (eds), *The Massacre in History* (New York: Berghahn, 1999) pp. 107–26; Joseph Cope, 'The Experience of Survival During the 1641 Irish Rebellion', *Historical Journal* 46 (2003), pp. 295–36; R. Gillespie, 'The End of an Era: Ulster and the Outbreak of the 1641 Rising', Ciaran Brady and R. Gillespie (eds), *Natives and Newcomers: Essays on the Making of Colonial Irish Society 1534-1641* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1986) pp. 191–248; R. Gillespie, 'The Murder of Arthur Champion and the 1641 Rising in Fermanagh', *Clogher Record* 14 (1993) pp. 52–66.

⁵ M. Perceval-Maxwell, 'The Ulster Rising of 1641 and the Depositions', *Irish Historical Studies* 21 (1978) pp. 144–67; M. Perceval-Maxwell, *Outbreak of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Nicholas Canny, 'The 1641 Depositions as a Source for the Writing of Social History: County Cork as a Case Study' in Patrick O'Flanagan and Cornelius G. Buttimer (eds) *Cork: History and Society* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1993) pp. 249–308; 'What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?' in Jane Ohlmeyer (ed.), *Ireland from Independence to Occupation 1641-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 24–42; Brian MacCuarta, ed., *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1997).

⁶ Barbara Donagan, 'Codes of Conduct in the English Civil War', *Past & Present* 118 (1988) pp. 65–94; David P. Edwards, P. Lenihan, and Clodagh Tait, eds. *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); Micheál Ó Siochrú, 'Atrocity, Codes of Conduct and the Irish in the British Civil

Wars 1641-1653', *Past & Present* 195 (2007) pp. 55-86; Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷ M. O'Dowd, 'Women and War in the 1640s', in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (eds), *Women in Early Modern Ireland*, ed. M. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991) pp. 91-111; Andrea Knox, '“Barbarous and Pestiferous Women”: Female Criminality, Violence and Aggression in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland and Ireland', in Yvonne Galloway Brown and Rona Ferguson (eds), *Twisted Sisters: Women, Crime and Deviance in Scotland since 1400*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002) pp. 13-31; 'Testimonies to History: Reassessing Women's Involvement in the 1641 Rising', in Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (eds), *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hag* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2004) pp. 14-28; Bernadette Whelan, '“The Weaker Vessel”?: The Impact of Warfare on Women in Seventeenth-Century Ireland', in C. Meek and Catherine Lawless (eds), *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005) pp. 120-41; Naomi McAreavey, '“Paper Bullets”: Gendering the 1641 Rebellion in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Dowdall and Lettice Fitzgerald, Baroness of Offaly', in Thomas Herren and Michael Potterton (eds), *Ireland in the Renaissance, 1540-1640* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); Anne Laurence, 'Real and Imagined Communities in the Lives of Women in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Identity and Gender', in Stephanie Tarbin and Susan Broomhall (eds) *Women, Identities and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 13-28,

⁸ Mary Hickson, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century: Or the Irish Massacres of 1641-2*. 2 volumes. (London: Longman and Green, 1884), for sexual humiliation, I, pp. 335, 337; for rape, I, p. 354, ; and for attempted rape, I, p. 356; II, pp. 84-5

⁹ O'Dowd, 'Women and War in the 1640s,' p. 101.

¹⁰ J. M. Beattie, *Crimes and the Courts in England, 1600-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 124-5; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 55.

¹¹ For an outline of events and some of their aftermath, see Canny, 'What Really Happened in Ireland in 1641?.'

¹² Kenneth Nicholls, 'The Other Massacre: English Killings of Irish, 1641-3', in David Edwards, Pádraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait (eds), *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 176-91. For a recent estimate of the proportion of Protestant casualties, see H. Simms, 'Violence in County Armagh, 1641', in MacCuarta (ed.) *Ulster 1641: Aspects of the Rising*, pp. 123-38.

¹³ Historical Manuscripts Commission, ed., *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde*, (London: HMSO, 1902-12), new series, vol. I, p. 12.

¹⁴ Clarke, 'The 1641 Depositions', 112-4.

¹⁵ The 32 volumes of deposition manuscripts are held in Trinity College Library, Dublin (TCD), MSS 809-41. A collaborative project to digitalise the manuscripts commenced in 2007, involving Trinity College, Dublin, the University of Aberdeen and Cambridge University: see <<http://www.tcd.ie/history/1641/>>. For this research the manuscript indices to the volumes of the Depositions [TCD MS Mun/lib/35/10/1-4] were searched for explicit references to rape, ravishment or forced sexual activity as well as implicit

references to women being mistreated or ‘hardly used’. All references to rape in the depositions noted by later writers, as well as all references to rape in the contemporary texts were followed where possible.

¹⁶ Clarke, ‘The 1641 Depositions’, p. 113 see also Joseph Cope, "Fashioning Victims: Dr. Henry Jones and the Plight of Irish Protestants, 1642," *Historical Research* 74 (2001) pp. 369–91 .

¹⁷ Barnard, ‘1641: A Bibliographical Essay’, p. 176 and Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, p. 465.

¹⁸ See among many others, Andrew Hadfield, *Spenser's Irish Experience: Wilde Fruit and Salvage Soyle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Aidan Clarke, ‘The 1641 Rebellion and Anti-Popery in Ireland’, in MacCuarta (ed.) *Ulster 1641*, pp. 139–50, Willy Maley, ‘How Milton and Some Contemporaries Read Spenser's View’, in Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield and Willy Maley (eds), *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) pp. 128–38.

¹⁹ T.C. Barnard, ‘Crises of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641-85’, *Past & Present* 127 (1990) pp. 49–58, see especially p. 50; Willy Maley, ‘The Supplication of the Blood of the English Most Lamentably Murdered in Ireland, Cryeng out of the Yearth For Revenge (1598)’, *Analecta Hibernica* 36 (1995) pp. 3–78.

²⁰ Joseph Cope, “‘Ireland Must Be Looked After’: Problems of Survival and Relief During the 1641 Irish Rebellion”, (Unpublished PhD thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 2001), pp. 42–4.

²¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650* pp. 455, 522.

²² Clarke, ‘The 1641 Depositions’, p. 120; Barnard, ‘1641: A Bibliographical Essay’, p. 176.

²³ Daniel Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty: Changing Perceptions, Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 159–60.

²⁴ Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The 'Heroic' Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) pp. 78–9.

²⁵ E.H. Shagan, ‘Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda and English Responses to the Irish Rebellion of 1641’, *Journal of British Studies* 36 (1997) pp. 4–34, see especially pp. 9-15.

²⁶ Baraz, *Medieval Cruelty*, pp.158–63.

²⁷ R. Gillespie, *Reading Ireland: Print, Reading and Social Change in Early Modern Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 172.

²⁸ Deposition of Robert Maxwell, Deposition dated 22 August 1642, TCD, MS 809, f. 7; see also Raymond Gillespie, ‘The Circulation of Print in Seventeenth-Century Ireland’, *Studia Hibernica* 29 (1995–7) pp. 31–58, see especially, p. 55.

²⁹ For anti-popery and anti-Catholic fears in England, see Clifton, “‘An Indiscriminate Blackness?’”; Peter Lake, ‘Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice’, in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (eds) *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, (London: Longman, 1989) pp. 72–106.

³⁰ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* [...] (1576 edition) (hriOnline, Sheffield) <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/7_1576_0915.jsp> .

³¹ Deposition of John Moore, Co. Kilkenny, Deposition dated 22 February 1642, TCD, MS 812, f. 197.

³² Deposition of Elizabeth Nelson, Co. Tipperary, Deposition dated 26 December 1642, TCD, MS 821, f. 154.

³³ Kathleen Noonan, 'Martyrs in Flames: Sir John Temple and the Conception of the Irish in English Martyrologies', *Albion* 36 (2004), pp. 223–33, see especially p. 231.

³⁴ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* [...] (1583 edition), (hriOnline, Sheffield). <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/6_1583_0748.jsp> .

³⁵ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* [...] (1563 edition), (hriOnline, Sheffield) <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/main/11_1563_1545.jsp> .

³⁶ Deposition of Hyber Scott, of Moystown, Kings Co. Deposition taken in Dublin, 20 December 1653 TCD, MS 830, f. 227.

³⁷ Deposition of John Wisdome, Co. Armagh, Deposition dated 8 February 1642, TCD, MS 836, f. 15.

³⁸ Deposition of Anne Butler, Co. Carlow, Deposition dated 7 September 1642, TCD, MS 812, f. 69.

³⁹ Deposition of Thomas Taylor, Co. Armagh, Deposition dated 24 February 1652, TCD, MS 836, f. 179.

⁴⁰ Deposition of Mary Hamond, Co. Galway, Deposition dated 16th August 1643, TCD, MS 830, f. 136.

⁴¹ Clodagh Tait, 'Safely Delivered: Childbirth, Wet-Nursing, Gossip-Feasts and Churching in Ireland, c. 1530-1690', *Irish Economic and social History* 30 (2003), pp. 1–23, see especially, pp. 16–17.

⁴² O'Dowd, 'Women and War in the 1640s' p. 101.

⁴³ Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, pp. 544–5.

⁴⁴ Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650*, pp. 542–3.

⁴⁵ Deposition of William Dynes, TCD, MS 813, f. 360.

⁴⁶ *Lawes and orderes of warre, MDCXLIII, established by Lord Castlehaven for the conduct of the armie designed for the expedition of Ulster*, (Waterford, 1643) reprinted in J.T. Gilbert ed. *A Contemporary History of Affairs in Ireland from 1641 to 1652*, (Dublin: Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1879), vol. III, p. 80.

⁴⁷ Deposition of William Collis, Co. Kildare, Deposition dated 6th May 1643, TCD, MS 813, f 285v.

⁴⁸ Richard Bolton, *A Declaration Setting Forthe, How and by What Means, the Laws and Statutes of England from Time to Time Came to Be of Force in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1779); see also a manuscript copy in TCD, MS 843. For an overview of the laws as they operated in Ireland, see James Kelly, "'A Most Inhuman and Barbarous Piece of Villainy": An Exploration of the Crime of Rape in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Eighteenth Century Ireland* 10 (1995) pp. 78–107, see especially, p. 82.

⁴⁹ For a summary of the rape laws in England, see J.B. Post, 'Ravishment of Women and the Statutes of Westminster', in J.H. Baker (ed.) *Legal Records and the Historian*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978) pp. 150–64; Julia Rudolph, 'Rape and Resistance: Women and Consent in Seventeenth-Century English Legal and Political Thought', *Journal of British Studies* 39 (2000), pp. 157–85, see especially, pp. 172–4.

⁵⁰ Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988) pp. 134–6.

⁵¹ Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, pp. 96–7. Donagan, *War in England, 1642–1649*, pp. 164–5.

⁵² Barbara Donagan, ‘Atrocity, War, Crime and Treason in the English Civil War’, *American Historical Review* 99 (1994), pp. 1137–56, see especially, p. 1142; Roland Littlewood, ‘Military Rape’, *Anthropology Today* 13, no. 2 (1997), pp. 7–16, see especially, pp. 8–9.

⁵³ Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, pp. 80–3, 91–8, Donagan, *War in England, 1642–1649*, pp. 180–1.

⁵⁴ Deposition of John Stubbs, Co. Longford, deposition dated 21st November 1642, TCD, MS 817, f. 203v.

⁵⁵ Deposition of Suzann Steele, Co. Longford, deposition dated 14th July 1645, TCD, MS 817, f. 213.

⁵⁶ Deposition of Suzann Steele, f. 215.

⁵⁷ Deposition of Christopher Cove, of Tuam, deposition dated 21st October 1645, TCD, MS 830, f. 172.

⁵⁸ Garthine Walker, ‘Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England’, *Gender and History* 10 (1998) pp. 1–25.

⁵⁹ Deposition of Gilbert Pemberton, of Dublin, deposition dated 2nd March 1642, TCD, MS 836, f. 8.

⁶⁰ Deposition of Ralph Walmsley, Kings Co. deposition dated 11th May 1645, TCD, MS 814, f. 108.

⁶¹ Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, p. 518.

⁶² A point made by Kenneth Nicholls with regard to violence of any sort against upper class women by Irish rebels, Nicholls, ‘The Other Massacre’, p. 179.

⁶³ Deposition of George Burne, Co. Donegal, deposition dated 12th January 1644, TCD, MS 839, f. 7v. This event was among the long list of crimes with which Sir Phelim O’Neill was convicted in 1652, see transcript published in Hickson (ed.), *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century*, vol. II, p. 187.

⁶⁴ Barnard, ‘Parlour Entertainment in an Evening?’ pp. 25–7.

⁶⁵ Barnard, ‘1641: A Bibliographical Essay’, pp. 176–8.

⁶⁶ Barnard, ‘1641: A Bibliographical Essay’, p. 177.

⁶⁷ R.S., *A Collection of Some of the Murthers and Massacres Committed on the Irish in Ireland since the 23d of October 1641, with Some Observations and Falsifications on the Late Printed Abstract of Murthers Said to Be Committed by the Irish. Now Published by R.S.* (London, 1662), pp. 22–3.

⁶⁸ Deposition of Donogh Kelly, Co. Galway, deposition dated 12th December 1652, TCD, MS 830, f. 195.

⁶⁹ From the depositions it is impossible to be tell whether the woman had consented or not, or whether the incident may have been a personal dispute.

⁷⁰ Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, pp. 476, 545.

⁷¹ Sumptuary laws, regulating the types of clothing to be worn by Irish and English, had been in operation in Ireland since the late medieval period, but were re-enacted and applied more rigorously from the sixteenth century. Perhaps ironically in the context of

1641, they generally sought to force the Irish to adopt English-style clothing. A.R. Jones and Peter Stallybrass, 'Dismantling Irena: the Sexualizing of Ireland in Early Modern England', in Andrew Parker, *et al.* (eds), *Nationalisms and Sexualities* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 157–71.

⁷² Deposition of Thomasin Pulsford, Co. Fermanagh, Deposition dated 15th January 1642, TCD, MS 835, f. 56. Deposition of Martha Piggott, Queens Co. Deposition dated October 1646, TCD MS 815, f. 376v.

⁷³ Deposition of John and Isabel Gowrly, Co. Armagh, Deposition dated 8th November 1642, TCD MS 809 f. 57, where Isabel described how she had been stripped seven times on her journey to safety, until she was left with 'not so much as her smock or her hair clasps'.

⁷⁴ Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Control*, p. 54.

⁷⁵ Deposition of Thomasin Pulsford, Co. Fermanagh, TCD, MS 835, f. 56.

⁷⁶ Deposition of William Eames, Co. Limerick, deposition 8th February 1643 TCD, MS 823, f. 157v; see also Canny, *Making Ireland British 1580-1650*, p. 542.

⁷⁷ Deposition of Robert Maxwell, Co. Armagh, Deposition dated 22nd August 1642, TCD, MS 809, f. 9.

⁷⁸ *The Whole Duty of Man Laid Down in a Plain and Familiar Way for the Use of All but Especially the Meanest Reader. Divided into xvii Chapters, One Whereof Being Read Every Lord's Day, the Whole May Be Read over Thrice in the Year. Necessary for All Families* (Dublin, 1699) p. 165. For the popularity of this book in Ireland, see R. Gillespie, *Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Making Ireland Modern*, vol. 3, *New Gill History of Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), p. 230.

⁷⁹ Cope, 'Fashioning Victims', pp. 389–90.

⁸⁰ Henry Jones, *A Perfect Relation of the Beginning and Continuation of the Irish-Rebellion, from May last to This Present 12th January 1641. With the Place Where and Persons Who Did Plot, Contrive and Put in Execution That Romish Damnable Designe. As Also Their Inhumane Cruelties Which They have and Still Execute with Divellish Hatred Upon the Protestants, Written by a Worthy Gentleman and Sent over by a Merchant Now Dwelling in Dublin* (London: 1642).

⁸¹ John Temple, *The Irish Rebellion: Or an History of the Beginning and the First Progress of the General Rebellion Raised with The Kingdom of Ireland Upon the Three and Twentieth Day of October in the Year 1641* (London: 1646). For discussion of Temple's motives and the political contexts, see Barnard, 'Crises of Identity among Irish Protestants, 1641-85', p. 54 and Raymond Gillespie, 'Temple's Fate: Reading *the Irish Rebellion* in Late Seventeenth-Century Ireland', in Ciaran Brady and Jane Ohlymeyer (eds), *British Interventions in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 315–33.

⁸² For a discussion of the fabrication of some of the early and influential pamphlets, see David O'Hara, *English Newsbooks and Irish Rebellion, 1641–1649* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006) pp. 37–41.

⁸³ Temple, *The Irish Rebellion*, p. 97.

⁸⁴ Temple, *The Irish Rebellion*, p. 124.; TCD, MS 809, f. 10.

⁸⁵ *The Rebels Turkish Tyranny in Their March December 24 1641*, (London, 1641).

⁸⁶ G.S., *A Briefe Declaration of the Barbarous and Inhumane Dealings of the Northerne Irish Rebels and Many Others in Severall Countries up-Rising against the English, That Dwelt Both Lovingly and Securely among Them. Written to Excite the English Nation to Relieve Our Poore Wives and Children, That Have Escaped the Rebels Savage Crueltie, and That Shall Arive Safe among Them in England* (London, 1641).

⁸⁷ Thomas Partington, *Worse and Worse News from Ireland Being a Coppy of a Letter Read in The House of Parliament, the 14 of This Instant Month of December, 1641. Where Is Contained Such Unheard-of Cruelties, Committed by the Papists against the Protestant, Not Sparing Age nor Sex, That It Would Make a Christian's Heart Bleed* (London, 1641).

⁸⁸ [James Cranford], *The Teares of Ireland: Wherein Is Lively Presented as in a Map, a List of the Unheard of Cruelties and Perfidious Treacheries of Blood Thirsty Jesuits and the Popish Faction* (London, 1642); John Robinson, *Ireland's Tragical Tyrannie Sent over in Two Letters by a Speechless Damzell*, (London, 1642).

⁸⁹ It is likely that the story was an amalgam of many stories in circulation about the activities of Maguire during the first weeks of the rebellion. It may relate in some way to the deposition of Sir Henry Spotswood who stated that his daughter Jane had been taken prisoner with three servants by Col. MacMahon, an associate of one of the leaders of the Ulster rebellion, Rory Maguire, at Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan. Deposition of Sir Henry Spotswoode, Co. Monaghan, deposition dated 15th January 1642, TCD MS 834 f. 141,

⁹⁰ Philip Vincent, *The Lamentations of Germany Wherein as in a Glasse We May Behold Her Miserable Condition and Reade the Woefull Effects of Sinne* (London, 1638).

⁹¹ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 198. On the sensationalist context in which the pamphlet writers produced their work, see Shagan, 'Constructing Discord'.

⁹² [Cranford], *The Teares of Ireland*, p 47, see also Wolfthal, *Images of Rape*, p. 94.

⁹³ [Cranford], *The Teares of Ireland*, p. 23.

⁹⁴ *A Prospect of Bleeding Ireland's Miseries: Presented in a Brief Recitement to the Eyes and Ears of All Her Commiserating Friends in England and Scotland as One Main Motive to Move Their Christian Courage for Her Assistance...* (London, 1647).

⁹⁵ [Cranford], *The Teares of Ireland*, p. 65, Whitcombe, *The Truest Intelligence from the Province of Munster*.

⁹⁶ Sharon Block, 'Rape without Women: Print Culture and the Politicization of Rape, 1765-1815', *The Journal of American History* 89 (2002), pp. 849–68.