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**Ó Siochrú, Mícheál, principal investigator. The Down Survey of Ireland Project. Other**

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can pursue. This special issue also demonstrates how digital objects can embed within themselves spatial methodologies, theory, and discourse that form the foundation of humanities-oriented spatial inquiry. In a few years there will be need for another special issue to consider the new technologies, new projects, and new insights that spatial humanities research brings to the early modern period. Here, the reviewers imagine creative and practical ways in which the boundaries of technologies can be pushed even further to accommodate humanities materials and herald new affordances for spatial humanities research.

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**Ó Siochrú, Mícheál, principal investigator.**

**The Down Survey of Ireland Project. Other.**

Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, 2013. Accessed July 2021.

[downsurvey.tcd.ie](http://downsurvey.tcd.ie).

The seventeenth century was an age of revolutions. Transformative change in a range of human experience—from the political to the economic, the military to the religious—is generally held to have marked the transition from medieval to modern. This understanding of historical development is culturally ingrained and the stuff of secondary school textbooks throughout Europe and North America. Students across borders and languages encounter some version of a narrative linking Bacon and Galileo at the century’s start to Leibniz and Newton at its end, tracing how an emergent rational awareness of the natural world and skepticism of received truths from the ancients helped awaken the secular and banish the “darkness” of religious intolerance. In the Anglophone world, particular attention is paid to political change that propelled England toward centuries of global dominance. Historians may still quarrel over dating the transformation from medieval to modern—Is it to be found in the “Puritan Revolution” of the 1640s when a democratizing Parliament triumphed over a tyrannical monarchy, or ca. 1689–90 with the “Glorious Revolution” of William of Orange’s defeat of the Catholic James II?—but they agree on the general point: England was merely first in line as western Europe moved inexorably toward the values of liberty, democracy, and tolerance.

Ireland, too, experienced revolution in the seventeenth century. That experience, however, does not align with the received narrative of the seventeenth century as harbinger of tolerance, reason, and liberty. Quite the opposite: the Irish experienced demographic disaster, the hardening of religious discrimination, and general expulsion from the corridors of politics and learning. It is estimated that 20 percent of the population fell victim to the war and related distress that engulfed the island from the outbreak of the Irish Rebellion in 1641 through to the surrender of Catholic royalist forces in 1653. In the wake of Parliament's victory, the governing regime of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell initiated a process of transferring lands from the vanquished to the victorious. Notwithstanding efforts by the restored Stuarts after 1660 to partly reverse that transfer in favour of their supporters, the initial dispossession-repossession proved immensely durable. Whereas Catholics in 1641 owned roughly the same percentage of "profitable" land as did Protestants—roughly 42 percent—that had dropped to less than 17 percent by the time Charles II's "second court of claims," empanelled to effect some redistribution to loyalists, wrapped in 1669. That massive transfer of land would support and sustain the Protestant ascendancy well into the nineteenth century. Revolutionary it may have been, but from the indigenous perspective, there was little glorious about it.

The maps produced by the Down Survey of Ireland Project offer the clearest visual record of that revolutionary change. The survey, named not for the county but for the process of laying down a chain to draw a scale, was begun in 1656 by William Petty with the goal of attaining an accurate record of land values and ownership. The regime had pressing economic and political need to get this data right and quickly. Faced at the start of hostilities with the need to raise troops for combat in Ireland, but lacking the funds to pay them, Parliament by means of the "Adventurers' Act" (1642) made a pitch for in-kind compensation: defeat the Irish and you can have their land. In an age when land was foundational to both wealth and status, and England had experienced a century of population expansion and subsequent land pressure, there was much to recommend this approach for government and soldier alike.

Simple in concept, the Act's promise proved difficult in practice. An initial attempt at mapping the island down to the level of individual plots and identifying their worth and owners—the Civil Survey—was roundly criticized for inaccuracies and quickly scrapped. In stepped Petty, a self-promoter assured of the technical superiority of his technique and advocate of a broader

demographic philosophy, “political arithmetic,” which claimed a scientific understanding of populations and how to organize them to maximize economic return and suppress any rebellious inclinations. By the survey’s conclusion in 1658, Ireland was the most accurately and minutely recorded territory in all of Europe. In a pattern that would be repeated around the globe, technical and intellectual advancements associated with the “scientific revolution” and early Enlightenment brought dispossession and oppression to an indigenous community.

The Down Survey of Ireland Project makes available Petty’s maps and sets them in a historical context. The originals no longer exist, some the victim of fire in 1711 with the remainder lost in the Custom House fire of 1922. Digitized on the site, therefore, are copies sourced from various seventeenth- and eighteenth-century compendia. Three types of maps were produced by Petty’s team and are reproduced here. The most granular represents individual parishes and provides information on size and ownership of landholdings and natural features. Zooming out from there are barony maps which, in addition to representing aspects of the natural and built environments, contain narrative descriptions (“*terriers*”) of the territory, its inhabitants, and commentary on economic potential and possibilities for development. The county maps represent the broadest cartographic gaze. There are naturally some gaps in the record as copies of all the originals produced in the survey could not be found; there are, for instance, no barony or parish maps for Galway. But the project team has done extraordinary work to sleuth out copies, and cartographic coverage reaches all four of the island’s provinces.

The project was undertaken not merely to make those maps available to the public but to set them in their historical contexts, both early modern and modern. Its website, hosted by Trinity College Dublin, is easily manageable and navigable, organized under four main tabs. The “Home” landing page offers brief historical background on the Down Survey and, critically, includes a visual depiction of how the Down Survey maps have been layered with contemporary Google street maps and satellite images. Thus, users can start at the parish level with the seventeenth-century maps and then move outward to barony, county, and present-day Google maps, and finish with photographic detail and geo-coordinates provided by satellite images.

Moving left to right across the site’s primary tabs, “About this Website” offers four sub-pages that provide greater historical contextualization, background

to the project, and tips for users wishing to search the maps. The “Historical Context” page serves as this section’s landing page. Down its left-hand side is a timeline of critical events running from 1641 (the “Outbreak of the Ulster rebellion”) to 1669 (end date of the “Second Court of Claims”); down the right-hand side is an illustrated narrative fleshing out the story framed by the timeline. The “Map Sources” tab then offers greater explanation of the four different kinds of maps available on the site—early modern and modern—and of their layering: “Country, County, Barony and Parish.” “GIS Sources” details the process by which the site’s team went about locating the places mentioned in the seventeenth-century documents and the sources and tools used in doing so. Information on the project and its team is available under “About the Project.” The final sub-tab here is the “User Guide,” which cleverly opens with a set of queries that visitors might bring to the page—e.g., “I want to see the 17<sup>th</sup> Century map of my Parish”—hyperlinked to brief, illustrated directions on how to navigate through the site in their pursuit.

Answers to those questions come courtesy of the remaining two main tabs: “Down Survey Maps” and “Historical GIS.” The former allows users to call up available images of the county, barony, and parish maps. It is worth noting that searches are determined by county. That is to say, you cannot use the barony or parish fields to search island-wide. For instance, if you are looking at baronies for Armagh and want to see how they compare to those in Antrim, you have to reset the search at the county level and go from there. The latter tab is more complex in that it allows users to move transhistorically across the seventeenth-century Down Survey maps, nineteenth-century Survey Ordinance maps, and Google maps. The first of the four sub-tabs explains how the searchable database was constructed and what information it contains, the second allows searching by landowner, the third by religion, while the fourth draws on the narratives of the 1641 Depositions to plot “the number of recorded murders in each townland.”

The cultural and heritage value of the data made available by the Down Survey of Ireland Project is extraordinary. Simply having the extant maps gathered in one place is a tremendous resource and, as we can assume from the website’s declaration that the “sheer volume of correspondence” makes responding to individual queries untenable, there is a public eager to pore over the maps and coordinate seventeenth-century place names and conditions with the present-day ones. There is also something of a satisfying reinvention of

Petty's innovations: created as tools of dispossession and records of disloyalty, they now operate to connect residents of Ireland and Northern Ireland more deeply to their history and localities.

The project's research possibilities are manifold. The search functions—described above—offer pathways to addressing critical questions related to changes in landownership, natural features, and the built environment, casualties of the conflict and chaos of 1641–53, synchronization of placenames across time—all subjects that are difficult to analyze with accuracy without the information included on the site. Building out from its “Historical GIS,” researchers can fruitfully use the Down Survey of Ireland Project alongside other digital projects and printed sources to further explicate the lived experience of Ireland's seventeenth-century revolution. Simply to draw out one possible example, the researcher interested in the indigenous experience could start with Irish language sources. There are not many, but those that exist are emotive and name names. The poem known as *Aiste Dháibhí Cúndún* consists of 315 lines of outrage over the fate of Catholics following the victory of Commonwealth forces. It mentions battles, names of great families now vanquished, and even includes the English loan word “transplantation.” To put details to the processes the author describes, one could turn to the Down Survey Project and search his county of Cork. Armed with that demographic and cartographic information, one could add a Protestant/Parliamentary perspective through connecting to the 1641 Depositions—linked on the Down Survey site and also hosted by Trinity College Dublin—and reading the narratives collected there for the county. The economic and geographic information contained therein could be usefully read alongside the terriers found on the Down barony maps. Then, one could move to the Irish Placenames Project ([logainm.ie](http://logainm.ie)) in an effort to track land designations across not only time but also language. Finally, one could complete the circle back to Cúndún's poem and offer thoughts on what was entailed in his reference to how the state was measured (*Do measadh an stat*; “The state was measured”) at the Cromwellian regime's demand.<sup>1</sup>

Useful for the researcher and the curious alike are the “glossary” and “further reading” features that are accessible at the bottom of each of the site's pages. The former is indispensable, as certain terms relevant to land use,

1. Cecile O'Rahilly, *Five Seventeenth-Century Poems* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1977), 35–49.

surveying, and politics will be obscure to some visitors to the site—such as “adventurer”—or might carry a specific meaning critical to understanding the materials in context, such as “soldier” which here refers specifically to members of the “Commonwealth army owed arrears in pay.” The list is not long, rather pithy and practical for maximizing accessibility and use. For those wishing to dig further into those terms and the maps’ broader historical context, the latter offers good entry. It is certainly not meant to be exhaustive but rather is intended as an introduction to a large and growing scholarly literature. That said, it might be updated, as the most recent entry is 2011. Particularly useful additions include *Enterprise and Empire: Money, Power and the Adventurers for Irish Land during the British Civil Wars* (2020), written by David Brown, member of the Down Survey project team, and Ted McCormick’s prize-winning study of William Petty, mastermind of the Survey and the “political arithmetic” that lay behind it (published 2009). But regardless of how far people wish to pursue their interest in Ireland’s mid-seventeenth-century revolution, the Down Survey Project offers stark expression of what can happen to those on the receiving end of a complex of processes that textbooks typically describe as “progress” and “modernity.”

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**Chinese Collections Digitization Project, Digital Bodleian, project creator. Selden Map of China. MS.Selden supra 105. Other.**

Oxford: University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2016. Accessed 2 December 2021.

[digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/58b9518f-d5ea-4cb3-aa15-f42640c50ef3](https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/58b9518f-d5ea-4cb3-aa15-f42640c50ef3).

The Selden Map of China, painted with watercolours and ink on Chinese paper, is a unique example of Chinese merchant cartography depicting a network of shipping routes starting from the port of Quanzhou, Fujian province, and reaching as far as Japan and Indonesia. The map, thought to date from the 1620s, arrived at the Bodleian in 1659 with the bequest of the London jurist and legal theorist John Selden, enriching one of the