

The 1641 Depositions **Volume V: Kildare and Meath**

Aidan Clarke, *principal editor*

The 1641 Depositions are witness testimonies mainly by Protestants, but also by some Catholics, from all social backgrounds, concerning their experiences of the 1641 Irish rebellion. The testimonies document the loss of goods, military activity, and the alleged crimes committed by the Irish insurgents.

This body of material is unparalleled anywhere in modern Europe, and provides a unique source of information for the cause of events surrounding the 1641 rebellion and for the social, economic, cultural, religious, and the political history of seventeenth-century Ireland, England and Scotland. In total, 19,010 manuscript pages in 31 bound volumes have been transcribed and are arranged for publication from 2014 onwards.

The depositions and examinations from Kildare and Meath provide graphic evidence of the difficulties confronted by the Old English of the pale in their dealings with a government which was not simply unwilling to trust or defend them, but tempted to provoke them. Both counties also contain valuable records of the later investigations into 'murders and massacres', conducted from 1652-4, which show that the proceedings were concerned in practice solely with murders and that they dealt with recent as well as historic crimes. The Kildare material has a unique interest in its inclusion of unprocessed material in the form of notes of interviews with deponents taken in Athy by three of the Dublin commissioners in an unrepeated 'outreach' experiment in April 1642. Many of these records were not written up as formal depositions, probably because the losses claimed were pitifully small: the deponents belonged to a social level of the settler community that the commissioners never encountered in Dublin and that historians rarely meet in the sources.

The first tranche of three volumes published in 2014 had to be reprinted owing to demand. This fifth volume covers counties Kildare and Meath and will be an essential resource for all local historians in these counties and contiguous areas as well as historians of Ireland and Europe in the 17th century.

- A mere 200 copies of this book have been printed. It will sell out soon.

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