In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Geography

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date 24th August 1999.
ABSTRACT

In 1825, two detachments of Royal Engineers were dispatched from their English headquarters and sent to Dublin to undertake the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland. This Survey aimed to set new standards for topographical mapping: however there was an anxiety to make the maps a standard of orthography as well as of topography. Place-names were to be examined and 'rectified' with the same ardour for precision as all other aspects of the Survey.

This thesis examines the textual processes by which the Ordnance Survey's journey through Ireland resulted in its place-names becoming fixed in print. From detailed readings of original documents of the Ordnance Survey I reconstruct the principles, policies and methods by which the surveyors collected and edited place-names for publication on the Ordnance Survey maps. I trace how orthographic knowledge was produced, manipulated and negotiated within the analytical spaces of the Ordnance Survey documentation. Having reconstructed the Survey's orthographic procedures I consider what the overall effect these various policies and practices was on the Irish namescape at large. I argue that the fixing of Ireland's place-names on the Ordnance Survey maps systematically modified these names. More specifically I argue that the Ordnance Survey anglicised Ireland's place-names.

Upon its completion in 1846, this cartographic operation had accomplished more than the production of a "representation of land on paper." These maps of the Irish Survey constructed a particular vision of Ireland through very particular modes of representation. This cartographic construction of Ireland comprised a profoundly pragmatic and politicised discourse. I situate the Survey's naming practices within the broader political context of English-Irish relations. The Ordnance Survey and its orthographic practices in particular are argued throughout this work to be important constituents of England's apparatus for extending political, cultural and economic control over Ireland during the nineteenth century.
# Table of Contents

- **Abstract** ....................................................................................................................... ii

- **Table of Contents** .......................................................................................................... iii

- **List of Figures** ............................................................................................................... v

- **Acknowledgements** ....................................................................................................... vi

- **Quotations** .................................................................................................................... vii

**Chapter One: PUTTING IRELAND ON THE MAP** ................................................................ 1

**Chapter Two: COLONIAL VISIONS OF (DIS)ORDER: the Irish survey and its antecedents** .... 12

- **THE POLITICS OF ENGLISH - IRISH RELATIONS** ........................................................... 13
  - What is "internal colonialism"? .......................................................................................... 13
  - Physical Occupation - 12th - 15th centuries ................................................................. 15
  - Plantations: 16th and 17th centuries .............................................................................. 16
  - Oliver Cromwell and the Act of Settlement .................................................................. 18
  - Penal Acts - 18th Century ............................................................................................... 19
  - Union Rule - 19th Century .............................................................................................. 22

- **IRELAND'S CARTOGRAPHIC CAPABILITY** ...................................................................... 26

- **AN INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OF BRITAIN** ............ 30
  - The Board of Ordnance and the development of military cartography in Britain .......... 31
  - The civilian contribution to the foundation of the Ordnance Survey ......................... 35
  - The scientific tradition and the establishment of the Ordnance Survey ...................... 36
  - Ordnance Survey orthography in Britain (1801-1824) .............................................. 40

**Chapter Three: SURVEYING THE NAMESCAPE: principles, policies and practices of the**
**Ordnance Survey of Ireland** .............................................................................................. 64

- **COLLECTING AUTHORITIES & SURVEYING THE FACTS** ........................................... 65
  - Colby's Instructions ........................................................................................................ 66
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Signpost for Ordnance Survey Office in Irish and English..........................viii
Figure 2: The Horrors of Irish Union ...........................................................................24
Figure 3: The Modern Gulliver Removing the Parliament of Lilliput ..........................25
Figure 4: The territorial and hierarchical structure of the Irish Survey .........................49
Figure 5: The Royal Sappers and Miners surveying in 1837 .......................................50
Figure 6: Districts, District Offices & District Officers of the six inch detail survey .......53
Figure 7: Pencil sketch of a surveyor at work ..............................................................55
Figure 8: Measuring Lough Foyle base, 1827 ............................................................57
Figure 9: Portraits of Colby and Larcom ....................................................................58
Figure 10: A blank page of a name book ....................................................................68
Figure 11: Front cover, and index page of a name book .............................................68
Figure 12: The Production of Orthographic Knowledge: the trail of a name book (1824-34) .........................................................................................................70
Figure 13: A completed name book page ....................................................................72
Figure 14: A Letter written to a land owner asking their preferred spellings ...............72
Figure 15: Extract from the Register of Correspondence ...........................................77
Figure 16: A List of place-names written by Larcom and sent to O'Donnovan for correction ..............................................................................................................86
Figure 17: A completed name book page ....................................................................87
Figure 18: The production of Orthographical Knowledge: the trail of a name book (1835) ..............................................................................................................88
Figure 19: Portraits of O'Donnovan and Curry ............................................................94
Figure 20: 16th Century Map with Irish place-names ..................................................95
Figure 21: The production of Orthographical Knowledge: the trail of a name book (1836 - 46) ...............................................................................................................96
Figure 22: An example of O'Donnovan's letters, 1846 ................................................98
Figure 23: 6 Inch map, Donegal (Inishowen) 1837 .......................................................104
Figure 24: 6 Inch map in maturity, Kilkenny 1842 .......................................................105
Figure 25: 6 Inch map, Monaghan 1836 .....................................................................106
Figure 26: The Surveyor's Return ..............................................................................116
Figure 27: How to Make the Irish Stew ......................................................................136
Figure 28: Ireland's Place-names in Irish .................................................................151
Figure 29: Ireland's Place-names in English ............................................................152
Figure 30: Numbers employed in the Survey of Ireland .............................................153
Many people helped me during the researching and writing of this thesis.

THANKYOU

Derek: for your supervision which was a perfect blend of direction and freedom.
Professor Andrews for your enthusiastic support to this project and for sharing your extensive knowledge of the Ordnance Survey archives with me.
Padraig Ó Chaduill, Placenames Division of Ordnance Survey of Ireland, for orientating me with the Ordnance Survey Office and its archives.
The Royal Irish Academy, National Archives of Ireland and Trinity College allowed me full use of their archives and facilities during January and February 1999.

Andrew: for your love, patience, enthusiasm, encouragement and wisdom.
Mum & Dad: for being a constant source of support to me.
Lael: for checking in almost daily, keeping my feet on the ground and a smile on my face.
Amy: for truly sharing the good and bad of the graduate experience!
Long shall I remember our late night departmental ramblings!
Jenny: for reminding me at all the right moments "You can do this!"
The Hamilton family: for giving me a home away from home
& Bowen Island: my beloved refuge!
The sea, O the sea,
a ghrádh-gheal mo chróic
Long may it roll between England and me;
God help the poor Scotsmen, they'll never be free,
but we are surrounded by water.

[Traditional Irish song]

Between a small nation and a great,
between a conquered people and its conqueror,
there can be but a sham union
- the union of a boa constructor with its prey.

[Lord Byron]
Figure 1: Signpost for Ordnance Survey Office in Irish and English.

Source: Photograph taken by myself in Phoenix Park, Dublin, 1999.
CHAPTER ONE:
PUTTING IRELAND ON THE MAP

The most disagreeable of the three kingdoms is Ireland, and therefore Ireland has a splendid map.¹

Britain’s colonial presence in Ireland has a long and eventful history. It dates back to the twelfth century when Henry II invaded Ireland with a bible in one hand and a sword in the other. Both religion and brutality have remained significant cogs in the British colonial machine throughout the subsequent centuries. But that machine has since devised other instruments to further its control of Ireland. In the early-nineteenth century cartography played a particularly important role in furthering colonial ambitions and in Britain, as in many other European states, a new conjuncture formed between cartography and colonialism. In this chapter I begin by examining how this conjuncture came about. Firstly I trace the intellectual tradition from which modern cartography emerged and then I consider the ways in which colonialism engendered systems of spatial understanding and social organisation that necessitated cartography.

It has been argued that both topographic mapping and the scientific exploration surrounding it are products of the late-eighteenth century intellectual tradition known as the ‘Enlightenment’.² The Enlightenment project³ and its sustaining ideology sought the production of knowledge derived from facts that could be seen to be true. It favoured rationally derived and universally applicable solutions. Mathematical procedure became the ritual of thinking: the emphasis was on numbers, measurement, observational instrumentation, accurate representation and the instrumentality of knowledge. These ‘enlightenment values’ corresponded with cartography because modern mapping had a close association with number and measurement. Mapping assigns a position to places which can be expressed numerically. Maps impose an order and a certain rationality on the world by producing a representation that claims there is an underlying geometry

³I use the term "Enlightenment" as a shorthand for all the different "Enlightenments" that existed in different places during this period.
beneath the heterogeneous diversity. The map lends everything earthly a measured, testified, mathematical and rational quality.

Maps and the mapping process also had directly practical applications. Cartography proved an extremely useful tool and technology within the systems of spatial understanding and of social organisation spawned by colonialism. Maps can be read as a manifestation of a desire for control. They aid the effective implementation of colonial policy. The strategies used in the production of the map - the re-inscription, enclosure and hierarchisation of space - provide an analogue for the acquisition, management and reinforcement of colonial power. Thus mapping was inextricably tied to imperial conquest, both in terms of on the ground practices, which helped to shape the questions the mapping sought to resolve, and in terms of its representation of colonised lands.

Maps were the primary instrument of the social, economic, political and physical restructuring of colonies. They could be utilised to re-orientate the colony so that it complemented the economy, society and polity of the colonising country. They could also effect change at all levels of social existence. Maps were such powerful tools in the proposed reform of colonies precisely because they could be used to attack and alter the society on a broad range of scales, from the national to the regional to the intimately personal. The abstracted and standardised representation of terrain in maps challenges direct local experience and removes the terrain from the cognitive ownership of those who inhabit it. A direct link is represented in maps between the national identity of the colony and the coloniser. Also, agriculture, commerce and industry were radically reorganised and restructured through the physical reform of the country. What the colonisers most wanted to control and rationalise in colonies was the agricultural and the land holding (and by extension taxation) system. Cartography, or more particularly cadastral mapping, was employed as a more subtle and clandestine engine of reform. Maps allowed a co-ordination and concentration of intrusion that was relatively covert because of the nature of the cartography of this period and because of the centralised co-ordination that maps permit and perhaps encourage. Cartography was then an

4 GODLEWESKA demonstrates how France utilised mapping to reform Egypt on a number of geographical scales in "Map text and image: The mentality of enlightened conquerors".
extremely effective instrument of imperialism, in powerful consonance with the ideals of the Enlightenment.⁶

During this early-eighteenth century period the decision was made in Britain to undertake a national mapping of Ireland. By 1825, two detachments of Royal Engineers had been dispatched from their English headquarters and sent to Dublin to undertake the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland. This mapping of Ireland was at a scale of six-inches to the English mile and was based securely upon trigonometrical foundations. This Survey aimed to set new standards for topographical mapping. Upon its completion in 1846, this cartographic operation had accomplished more than the production of a "representation of land on paper." The Ordnance Survey of Ireland was formed very much out of this juncture of cartography and colonialism in the early-nineteenth century. Upon completion these maps constructed a particular vision of Ireland through very particular modes of representation. This cartographic construction of Ireland comprised a profoundly pragmatic and politicised discourse. The cartographic impulse had infiltrated not only Britain but also its relation to Ireland and to other colonies.

This intersection of cartography and colonialism has been extensively discussed by scholars. Perhaps the most foundational work to this area of research is that of the cartographic historian J.B. Harley.⁷ In the 1980s Harley laid bare the Archimedian view of knowledge inherent within traditional cartographic histories. As an alternative Harley’s critical historiography urged a full recognition of the textuality of maps. This opened up a number of interpretative possibilities, the most productive for Harley being deconstruction. He urged, "we have to read between the lines" of the maps and "in its margins."⁸ It was there that Harley believed one could discover the imprint of the social order beneath the map's abstract instrumental space - its hierarchies and exclusions. Harley revealed maps to be productions of power, knowledge and space. He argues "the map maker instead of replicating the environment in some abstract sense colours his map with the territorial imperatives of a particular political system. The practical

⁶ GODLEWESKA, "Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors".
application of maps may also fall into the category of acts of surveillance - notably with warfare, boundary making or the preservation of law and order."\(^9\)

Harley's insistence that the modalities of power are embedded in the map and that maps are always complicit with ideology lends itself well to studies of the conjuncture between cartography and colonialism. Indeed, there has been a surge of interest in the ways in which maps create and reinforce colonial power relations. Harley's ideas have been developed by a variety of scholars in the context of various colonial encounters. For example, Anne Godleweska's analyses the *Description de l'Egypte* as a tool of French colonialism.\(^10\) Although Godleweska attributes the misconception that maps are misrepresentations and "complex tissues of lies and persuasion"\(^11\) to Harley's *Deconstructing the Map*\(^12\) Godleweska later employs Harley's ideas to argue that maps, and the *Description de l'Egypte* in particular, reflect as much about the participant's conception of themselves, "the mentality of enlightened conquerors" in her case, as they do about the country they represent.

Godleweska's work, like Harley's, stays within the confines of the map itself. Matthew Edney however also considers the process of mapping. Edney draws upon Harley's ideas to discuss the role of mapping in the geographical construction of British India.\(^13\) Edney argues that map-making was integral to British imperialism in India, not just as a highly effective informational weapon wielded strategically and tactically by directors, governors, military commanders and field officials, but also a significant component of the "structures of feeling" which legitimated, justified and defined that imperialism. Edney's focus is very much upon the processes of surveying and of map compilation. Unlike Harley, he moves beyond the map and considers the "interwoveness of the survey and the map of field observations and the archive".\(^14\)

---

10 GODLEWESKA, "Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors".
11 GODLEWESKA, "Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors" quote from p.5.
12 HARLEY, "Deconstructing the Map."
In *The Cartographic Eye* Simon Ryan explores the colonial enterprise in Australia through the medium of the exploration journal.\(^{15}\) In a chapter entitled "Maps and their cultural constructed-ness", Ryan draws upon Harley's insight that once "maps cease to be understood primarily as inert records of morphological landscapes or passive reflections of the world of things" then they can begin "contributing to dialogue in a socially-constructed world."\(^{16}\) With this in mind he understands the cartographic inscription of Australia to have comprised a process of both erasure and projection. Australia was represented as a blank text which erased its previous histories and prompted the inscription of its *tabula rasa*. The blank text was then inscribed with an imaginative geography that effectively legitimated and evoked the authority of European ways of seeing.

Thus cartography has been understood as a technology of power and a strategy through which colonial constellations of power-knowledge were inscribed in space. However, research has focussed primarily on the geometry of space: the fixing of lines, locations, points and positions in space: the geometry of the paper landscape so to speak.\(^{17}\) But cartography is not a purely technical exercise. It is not simply the disciplining exercise that Appadurai talks about in relation to India.\(^{18}\) Nor is it even the disciplinary exercise that comes through the positioning and demarcation of boundaries. Cartographic inscription and the production of a colonial space did rely upon the fixing of points in space, but equally it relied on putting names in place. The points and positions of the map needed to be referred to by something other than numerical co-ordinates. Words entered onto the map and with words came meaning, the qualitative as well as the quantitative. It is the cartographic inscription of place-names that forms the focus of this thesis.

Toponymy is not a new source of enquiry. Indeed, the interest of place-names for academics has been observed by such notables as Walter Benjamin and Carl

---


\(^{16}\) RYAN, *The Cartographic Eye*, quote from pp.103-4.

\(^{17}\) Godlewska's article does in fact contain one paragraph on place-naming.

Sauer.\textsuperscript{19} The quantity of research has been sufficient to sustain five journals devoted solely to publishing name-based research since the 1950s. Place-names have been conceived as containers, vehicles, artefacts, signs, clues and indicators of information about people's history, kinship, ideology, topography, politics, climate and language structures. However, place-names are not mere passive reflections of cultural, political and economic landscapes. They are also involved in the instigation and the production of both the symbolic and the material order. They represent the intersection of ideological structures with the spatial practices of everyday life.

It is in the process of naming that place-names become intertwined with the politics of language, national and cultural identity, nation-building and state-formation. During the naming process there is an interplay of interests competing for the symbolic control of public domain. A number of researchers focus upon the process of naming in their research. Azaryahu explores the procedures of naming and renaming and the utilisation of street names for commemorative purposes as a feature of modern political culture.\textsuperscript{20} In an earlier paper, he traces the emergence of naming as a prerogative of the state, and hence as a manifestation of authority.\textsuperscript{21} Berg & Kearns discuss how the process of naming places is intricately involved with the contested identity politics of people and place.\textsuperscript{22} Cohen and Kliot illustrate the way that the Israeli nation-state selects place-names for the administered territories of the Golan, Gaza and West Bank in order to reinforce Zionist ideologies.\textsuperscript{23} They explore the process of naming as a mechanism for landscape transformation in the territories. And Pred links the process of naming to the rise of the modern state and examines the stratagems in Stockholm to bring order, discipline and control to the city's streets. He also considers resistance to


such disciplinary and population control tactics through the use of an alternative toponymy.24

Post-colonial interpretations of European practices of naming, most famously Paul Carter's account of place-naming in Australia, have explored the act of naming as a device to control, order, familiarise and appropriate the land. Naming practices construct the meaning of the colony through the cultural codes of the 'homeland'. Carter shows how naming practices brought the landscape of Australia within a European frame of reference so that colonisation and dispossession could commence. European colonial attempts to lay claim to land did so first by writing space: inscribing the land with place-names and mapping landscapes. Language became a precursor to physical colonisation. Place-names constituted a form of linguistic settlement that established authorised versions of reality in advance of that reality. Thus the act of naming asserted the power of representation and attempts to name claimed the power to establish a relationship to place. However, the naming of a place is never a linear fixed process - nor is it uncontested. Place-names are produced through complex and changing constellations of power and resistance.

Carter suggests naming was not always a coherent and systematic process and the power to name was differentiated by class and gender amongst the colonisers. In settler colonies naming practices were also a process of fashioning a sense of self. Place names such as Ambition Mountain, Enterprise Past and Decision Bay speak of a highly individual sense of self which is made through the act of exploration, discovery and settlement in unfamiliar and at times hostile conditions. The names given to places with settler colonies often commemorate the "specificity of the historical experience"25 rather than a totalising colonial experience. They speak not of the simple authority but of the fragility and power of colonial relations.

Place-names represent neither an outcome nor an end result, but rather are a beginning. As Carter explains, the task remains "to dismantle names as definitive statements of arrival, and let them function again as points of departure, as rhetorical

lighthouses for getting on." It is exactly here, at the intersection of cartography and colonialism and in the realm of place-names that this thesis begins. My research grew out of two personal concerns: my interest in the workings of colonialism and my fascination with the rhetorical power of place-names. By focusing on naming practices in a colonial context, I explore how naming processes and colonial practices coincide, connect and combine. However, this is by no means a purely theoretical project. It is firmly grounded in nineteenth century Ireland and committed to illuminating English-Irish relations.

My focus is upon the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland in the early-nineteenth century. I have mentioned that the Survey aimed to set new standards for topographical mapping. However, there was also an anxiety to make the maps a standard of orthography. Place names were to be examined and 'rectified' with the same ardour for precision as other aspects of the Survey. This thesis examines the Irish Survey's orthographic policies and practices. I argue that, contrary to specified policy, the Ordnance Survey systematically modified Ireland's names. I situate the changes made to the Irish namescape within the political context of English-Irish relations. The Ordnance Survey, and its orthographic practices in particular, are understood throughout this thesis to be intrinsic components within England's apparatus for extending political, cultural and economic control over Ireland.

It is my insistence on situating the Survey within Anglo-Irish political relations that distinguishes my research from that of Professor J.H. Andrews, the principle scholar of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. His book *A Paper Landscape* continues to be the most complete history of the Irish Survey published to date. His study discusses many aspects of the Ordnance Survey in minute detail. However, in other ways, his is a profoundly narrow account of the Irish Survey. I believe that *A Paper Landscape* fits squarely within the realms of "imperial history." What do I mean by "imperial history"? Or more precisely, 'what does Paul Carter mean by it?' for it is from him that I take the term. Carter explains that "which reduces space to a stage, that pays attention to events, unfolding in time alone, might be called imperial history". There is no room for active, spatial choices in imperial histories because both space and land are presumed

---

27 The term "namescape" refers to the place-names upon a landscape.
28 CARTER, *The Road to Botany Bay*
simply to exist. This type of history is considered imperial because it legitimates rather than critically interprets the past.

*A Paper Landscape* is an imperial history because it begins with Ireland as a stage passively awaiting the arrival of the Ordnance Survey. As the narrative progresses Andrews reduces the profoundly spatial operation of mapping to a series of cause and effect historical stages. Throughout the book Ireland's space is presented as an entity that simply exists. There is no reflection on the changes this mapping had upon the space of Ireland or upon its subsequent history. *A Paper Landscape* settles the past as effectively as the Ordnance maps settled the country. Andrews fails to contextualise the Survey. His preference is for 'fixed and detachable facts', for these, unlike the intentions that brought them into existence and unlike the uncertainties of lived time and space, can be "orphaned" from their spatial and temporal context and fitted out with a new ancestry. One implication of Andrews's "imperialistic" historical narrative is that it is founded upon, and it re-enacts, fundamental erasures. By de-contextualising the Irish Survey, Andrews fails to consider any of the ramifications that this mapping operation had. *A Paper Landscape* denies the implicit power politics of the mapping endeavour and fails to recognise the complicity of the mapping with a construction of space that allowed Britain's political intentions to come to fruition in Ireland. *A Paper Landscape* is a history that legitimates rather than critiques the survey of Ireland. Against Andrews's imperial history, my work focuses on the political intent and ramifications of the Ordnance Survey's mapping. As such it implicitly critiques both the Ordnance Survey and Andrews's 'imperial history' of it.

This thesis is built upon my detailed readings of unpublished documents of the Ordnance Survey. I reconstruct the policies and the practices of selecting place-names for the Ordnance Survey's six-inch series of Irish maps. By examining, interpreting and contextualising various archival sources I carry out an archival analysis that isolates the procedures of place-name selection and the creative production of legitimate authorities for these names. In attempting to grasp the process of selecting place-names I inadvertently embarked upon an archival paper trail littered with obstacles such as the scattered, incomplete and at times contradictory nature of the archives.

---

29 CARTER, *The Road to Botany Bay*, p.xvi
There is no substantial work that takes the Ordnance Survey’s treatment of place-names in Ireland as its primary subject. I work to bridge this gap in the literature whilst also trying not to repeat weaknesses in the approach and focus of existing place-naming research. Instead of concentrating on the place-names already fixed on the maps, I examine the process of selecting and fixing of those names. I emphasise the practice of naming in order to illustrate that names appear on maps only after a series of power struggles that neither begin nor end in the establishment of the namescape.

Chapter two provides a background to Irish-English political relations, the mapping and place-naming activities in Ireland prior to 1824, the institution of the Ordnance Survey and the Irish Survey in particular. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the circumstances that led to the commissioning of this national survey and to explore the factors that caused it to take the particular form it did.

In chapter three I reconstruct from original records the principles and methods by which the Ordnance surveyors collected and edited their place-names. I pay particular attention to the moments when practice strayed from policy. I employ these moments to illustrate the distance between the Ireland that the Ordnance Survey encountered and the Ireland the Ordnance Survey wanted to represent. These moments also highlight points when language and people, unlike the numbers and soil, would not co-operate with the Ordnance Survey’s systems and logic. Oscillations in policy and practice result from the incommensurable nature of the principles for quantifying space with the endeavours to transcribe place. A central concern in this chapter is to understand how knowledges were produced, manipulated and negotiated within the analytical spaces of the Ordnance Survey documentation.

After having examined the textual processes by which the Ordnance Survey’s journey through Ireland resulted in its place-names becoming fixed in print, I take a step back from such details. Chapter four examines what overall effect these various policies

---

30 CARTER, The Road to Botany Bay, p.xvi
31 The most central works are: ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape, which includes a brief yet informative section on place-name practices; and Ó MAOLFABHAIL, A. (1989) ‘An tSuirbhéireacht Ordnáis agus Logainmneacha na hÉireann 1824-34’ Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Section C Vol. 89c, pp.37-66, which takes a light hearted yet equally informative look at the practices of place-naming and the relationships and politics between the Ordnance Survey employees involved in the orthographic work.
and practices had on the Irish namescape. I argue that the fixing of Ireland’s place-names on the Ordnance Survey maps systematically modified these names. This begs the question of how best to conceptualise and indeed categorise this process of modification? More specifically I ask whether the Ordnance Survey’s systematic modification of the Irish namescape comprised a process of anglicisation? After having understood the overall effects of the Ordnance Survey’s orthographic activities upon Ireland’s namescape, I situate these practices within the broader political context of the period. My overall plan is to register the aims of the Ordnance Survey’s project as formulated and pursued and the consequences of decisions taken to meet practical problems encountered on the way. In so doing I reveal that appeals to efficiency served the interests of existing power relations.

Finally in chapter five, I examine the narrative of the Irish Survey for what it can reveal about the practice of place-naming and about the linkages between naming and colonialism more generally.
CHAPTER TWO:
COLONIAL VISIONS OF (DIS)ORDER:
THE IRISH SURVEY AND ITS ANTECEDENTS

Early-nineteenth century Ireland represented one thing to the English state: chaos. Land divisions were ancient and out-dated, the taxation system resting upon these boundaries was iniquitous and resistance by those subject to this tax was causing sporadic yet persistent civil disturbance. This chapter begins by revealing the concept of "Ireland-as-chaos" to be both a material and, more importantly, a rhetorical construct of England's making. By tracing the history of Anglo-Irish relations, I demonstrate the chaos of nineteenth century Ireland to be a product of seven hundred years of English physical invasions, political intrusions and cultural misrepresentations.

However, Ireland was chaotic in English eyes for a more fundamental reason: it was not directly "useful" to the English economy. This construct of a disorderly Ireland presented Ireland as in need of governance and thus legitimised further intervention by the English state. Having established that Ireland was in need of reform, the English state worked to re-orientate Ireland towards servicing the English economy. Firstly Ireland needed to be rendered knowable. The first tool utilised to render Ireland knowable was scientific knowledge. The existing maps of Ireland were deemed inadequate on the grounds that they had not been conducted on a sufficiently scientific footing. Thus an outside agency was turned to. The Ordnance Survey and its accompanying Boundary Survey had the scientific instruments and the expertise to conduct precise mapping and lay it upon a trigonometrical foundation. Thus the Ordnance Survey - an English, military institution whose raison d'etre was to impose order and make places knowable - was chosen to rationalise Ireland, its land divisions and by extension its taxation system. After tracing the history of Anglo-Irish relations I briefly examine the pre-existing mappings of Ireland and why they were considered inadequate. I then explore the institutional history of the Ordnance Survey and reflect upon the scientific methods it used to represent the world within the controlled, measured and rational spaces of its maps. Lastly I focus upon the Irish Survey itself: I demonstrate how the institutional principles, methods and concepts of the Ordnance

\[32\] The taxation system, known as the 'county cess', and the reasons for its inequity are described in detail later in this chapter.
Survey manifested themselves once grounded in an Irish context. This chapter is primarily concerned with providing an historical background to the various elements of my research as a means for better understanding their encounter during the Irish Survey. However whilst providing that background I also bring to light the dichotomous tension between "chaos" and "order" produced through English-Irish relations and embodied in the encounter between the Ordnance Survey and the Irish landscape during the Irish Survey.

THE POLITICS OF ENGLISH - IRISH RELATIONS

What follows is a brief survey of the relationship between England and Ireland. Whilst providing a historical and political context within which to situate the Irish Survey, it also unearths the roots of the "Irish disorder" noted by the English and traces its developments into the late eighteenth-century. By so doing England's direct implication in causing much of the chaos to which it later pointed is made explicit. English-Irish history has been characterised by England's persistent efforts to impose its rule upon Ireland. Due to the success of England's intrusions and Ireland's ever present resistance to England's advances, this relationship fits the theoretical mould of internal colonialism.

What is "internal colonialism"?

In 1975, Micheal Hechter advanced the model of "internal colonialism" in his book entitled Internal Colonialism: The Celtic fringe in British national development 1536 - 1966. Hechter argued that simultaneous to the overseas expansion of western European states in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were similar thrusts into what such states considered 'their' peripheral hinterlands. Internal campaigns were not incidental to overseas colonisation but were the result of the same political and economic forces. 'Internal colonialism' describes colonial relationships being acted out by the coloniser within neighbouring countries and regions. In the British context, England represented the core and the Celtic fringe of the Scottish Highlands, Ireland, and Wales represented the peripheral hinterland into which England was trying to expand. Internal colonialism exists when a core attempts to dominate 'its' periphery politically and exploit it materially. Spawned by the search for foodstuffs, commerce and

33 HECHTER, Internal Colonialism.
trade among the periphery, the population and the economy of the periphery become monopolised by the political and economic demands of the core country. Over time, the periphery develops an economic dependence upon external markets which is later reinforced by juridical, political and military measures, lower standards of living, national discrimination on basis of language, religion or other cultural forms. Although colonial policies are typically bathed in a rhetoric of altruism, in practice the core subordinates the periphery to its own ends. In the British Isles, each of England's territorial expansions occurred at critical junctures in English history. They served England's territorial integrity and prevented invasion by its continental neighbours.

The concept of the internal colony can be employed to understand Ireland's relationship to England. Ireland, unlike most other colonies, was positioned so close to England that its relations were prolonged and intimate. As far as the Irish were concerned, colonialism took various forms: political rule from London; economic expropriation by planters who came in various waves of settlement; and an accompanying psychology of self-doubt and dependency among the Irish, linked to the loss of economic and political power but also to a decline in the native language and culture. Not only did Ireland provide England with food, land and cannon fodder for its overseas wars, but it gave England practical experience by which to evaluate its colonial policy. At various times, Wales, Scotland and Ireland had all surrendered their sovereignty in return for political representation in Westminster. However, these Westminster seats were a token gesture that did not deliver any real power. Thus the political unions with England simply denied Celtic territories the right to govern themselves. After six hundred years of involvement in Ireland, England has failed to establish state-wide legitimacy for the government in London. It is this lack of legitimacy that characterises Ireland's relation to England as colonial.

I now trace the history of English-Irish relations. I have organised my discussion of the relationship into five key historical periods. It may seem excessive to begin as I do in the twelfth century, however as I hope to show Ireland-as-disorder has a genealogy which goes back seven hundred years and which continues to inform Irish politics and Irish nationalism.

---

In 1171, Henry II of England landed in Waterford with papal approval (*Bull Laudabiliter*), an army of four thousand men, and the intention to secure control of Irish land.\(^{35}\) The papal document supported Henry's invasion of Ireland on the grounds that it was to: enlarge the boundaries of the Church, proclaim the truth of the Christian religion to "a rude and ignorant people"\(^{36}\), subject the people to law and root out from them the weeds of vice.\(^{37}\)

Papal support for military ventures of warring kings and princes and the promulgation of laws binding on conquered people was evident all over Europe between 1100 - 1400. The warrants provided by the papacy are masterpieces of political propaganda. For example the *Bull Laudabiliter* described Henry II as a God-fearing son in Christ, illustrious king of England stirred by divine inspiration. From a different perspective he could have been viewed as an ambitious Norman conqueror, determined to subjugate the new territory of Ireland by force of arms. He was also a ruthless destroyer of those who opposed him. Conversely, the documents describe the Irish as "uncivilised and undisciplined".\(^{38}\) It describes the Irish as steeped in vice - "in the habit of marrying their step-mothers, and not ashamed to have children by them, living with one another's wives and living in concubinage with two sisters."\(^{39}\) However inaccurate the descriptions, the papal letters gave full moral sanction to Henry's invasion and by weakening the opposition they greatly facilitated the physical occupation of the country.

Henry's invasion marked the beginning of the subjugation of the Irish people. Within a few generations of Henry's arrival the English colony had become firmly established over the greater part of Ireland. The limits of age-old Gaelic kingdom had everywhere been pushed back to make room for the new settlers.\(^{40}\) The English


\(^{39}\) CURTIS & McDOWELL *Irish Historical Documents*, quote from p.22.

\(^{40}\) It is estimated that the first people from middle Europe arrived on the island now known as Ireland ten thousand years ago. By 2500 BC there were settlements. Succeeding invasions and settlements of Celtic tribes continued. The last to come were the Goidels, who imposed their Gaelic culture over the island, produced a rich oral literature, developed a complex legal system but was yet to develop a written culture.
invasion had already brought about social and economic change in Ireland. The increasing demand for timber and agricultural produce from royal purveyors purchasing supplies for military campaigns abroad and from merchants engaged in the export trade led to the progressive reclamation of wooded and marginal land. The most important and lasting changes were legal and political. Prior to the invasion people owed allegiance to the elected kings of their area and the elected chiefs of the clan to which they belonged and land was held collective ownership. With the invasion came the feudal system. Ownership of land was removed from the people and vested in the king of England. All land and titles depended ultimately on the king. He made grants of land to various Norman magnates, they in turn sub-infeudated by making grants to subtenants. All grants and lettings were subject to tight feudal contracts, which meant forfeiture of land and titles if not kept. It was thus that the tillers of the soil, the common people got stitched into involuntary loyalty to the usurpers of the land and were subjected to English law.

The role of the commoner was that of hewer of wood and drawer of water, and an entire armoury of controls was invented by the kings and popes alike to tie subjugated commoners to their masters. It was a system that produced an involuntary obedience to authority, based on the arbitrary power of the few, and because of the corrupting effect of such power on those who exercised it, it led inevitably and inexorably to the exploitation of the majority by the minority, a system which could only result in violent efforts to break it.

Plantations: 16th and 17th centuries

During the following centuries the general objective of the English Crown was "to root out the Irish from the soil." Since the days of supreme papal power had passed new methods of control were needed. The new project involved driving out the native Celtic population from an area, confiscating the land and re-populating it with loyal "English" settlers. The English system of local organisation and law enforcement was also to be established. Two-thirds of the land was to be planted with Englishmen born

41 LYDON, The Making of Ireland.
42 In 1494 "Poying's law" saw Irish Parliament bound into submitting all its pending bills to the English King and privy council for prior approval before returning the legislation for Irish consideration. See O'BRIEN's British Brutality in Ireland for more details.
either in England or Ireland. Driven by hunger for land and the prospect of easy pickings, armies of English adventurers swarmed into Ireland from the start of Elizabeth I's reign in 1558 to the close of the reign of William and Mary's in 1694. However in the late-sixteenth century, Irish owners who felt that their estates had been marked out for confiscation were in open rebellion. This war between land-owners and the Crown would continue until the end of the next century.

The plantations were successful in transferring the majority of property into the possession of English Protestants. The common people were deprived of collective rights and reduced to the level of serfs and slaves. The English embarked on a series of military campaigns to remove the remaining land-owners without compensation and to resettle confiscated lands with new owners. Savage methods were employed by the British Crown. The Annals of the Four Masters records an incident in 1580 when the bands of Pelham and Ormond killed ill and feeble men, women, boys and girls, idiots and old people. Even after all the resistance ceased soldiers forced men and women into old barns which were set on fire. Long before the war ended Elizabeth was assured that she had little left to reign over but ashes and carcasses. In Ulster alone, no less than six counties - Donegal, Derry, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan and Armagh - were confiscated by the Crown. Some 500,000 acres of profitable land were planted by English and Scottish colonists under the initial Ulster plantation scheme.

It is clear that at this point religious zeal did not play any part in the struggle. Past efforts of the Crown were directed simply towards securing control over Irish land and their potential revenues. It was not until Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragan, and consequently from the papacy, that religion became an additional weapon in the fight to secure that control. Loyalty to the King as superior feudal land-owner was no longer sufficient to secure a man's title. Under the Act of Supremacy in 1534 Henry VIII assumed a new title - The Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of England. Two years later, Irish parliament declared him The only Supreme Head on Earth of the Church of Ireland on the grounds that this land of Ireland was depending and belonging justly and rightfully to the imperial crown of England. In Ireland some land-owners and

---

46 O'BRIEN, *British Brutality in Ireland*.
47 LYDON, *The Making of Ireland*. 
the majority of common people did not subscribe to Henry's reformation. To the common people the new religion meant nothing: it was in English and the Book if Common Prayer had not been translated into Irish.

*Oliver Cromwell and the Act of Settlement*

In August 1649 Oliver Cromwell, Lord Lieutenant and General for the Parliament of England, arrived in Dublin to deliver the *coup de grâce* to the savagery that had now been in operation in Ireland for almost a full century. Commanding an army of about 20,000 men, Cromwell intended to confiscate much Irish soil. The military effort to exterminate the Irish people had certainly gone a long way towards achieving full success.\(^{48}\) It was now to be followed by a huge plantation scheme "to root out" the residue of the population. Under the Cromwellian Act of Settlement in 1652 all former land owners whose lands had been confiscated were ordered out of their homes and holdings. The dispossessed in the words of Cromwell could "go to hell or to Connaught".\(^{49}\) The common people were too valuable as labourers and as cultivators to be expelled - the fate of transplantation beyond the Shannon was reserved for the upper classes alone.

The level of property transfer during this time was enormous. In his Down Survey, William Petty estimated that some 11,000,000 English acres of Ireland's total 20,000,000 acres were confiscated and planted. Nearly 8,000,000 of the confiscated acres were profitable.\(^{50}\) The final decades of the seventeenth century witnessed the consolidation of the new position created by the Cromwellian Settlement. Under the Act of Settlement of 1652 virtually the entire Old Irish population would have their land confiscated and be forced into the infertile, rock-strewn province of Connaught and present-day County Clare. Ireland was a colony of England to be exploited for the English interest. William of Orange ceased the last spasm of resistance and the period of unbroken Protestant ascendancy began.\(^{51}\)

The earliest documented discussions of Ireland's place-names date from this era. In 1665 the act of the Irish parliament known as the Act of Explanation was enacted.

\(^{48}\) LYDON, *The Making of Ireland.*  
\(^{49}\) LYDON, *The Making of Ireland*, quote from p.194.  
\(^{51}\) HACHLEY, HERNON & McCAFFERY, *The Irish Experience.*
Among other provisions, it authorised landowners to find names "more suitable to the English tongue" than the allegedly "barbarous and uncouth" names in general use. The phrase barbarous and uncouth being glossed by a knowledgeable commentator of the time, Dr. William Petty:

"CCXXXIV His Majestie, taking notice of the barbarous and uncouth names by which most of the towns and places in his kingdom of Ireland are called, which hath occasioned much damage to diverse of his good, and are very troublesome in the use thereof, is pleased that it be enacted, and be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that the Lord Lieutenant and Council shall and may advise of, settle, and direct in the passing of all letters patent in that kingdom for the future, how new and proper names, may be inserted with an alias for all towns, and places in that kingdom that shall be granted by letters patents, which new names shall thenceforth by the only to be used any law, statute, custom or usage to the contrary notwithstanding."

The Dublin parliament of Charles II was essentially a mouthpiece of English opinion and this particular statute can be regarded as an unusually frank statement of English contempt for what was then Ireland’s most widely spoken language. Contempt which a puppet government apparently hoped to express by robbing a downtrodden majority of its toponymic inheritance. The Act was not repealed before, during or after the Irish Survey. However, some speculate that after 1665, Irish people continued using the same names they had used prior to changes.54

Penal Acts - 18th Century

The ultimate effect of the confiscation policies of Elizabeth I, James I, and Cromwell was to place the ownership of almost all profitable land in Ireland in the hands of a small conquering class, who comprised less than twenty per cent of the population. This class, positioned as they were in Ireland, were able, in conjunction with their English masters, to enact legislation which gave them absolute control over the lives of the other eighty per cent of the island’s people. These laws, known collectively as

52 The Act of Settlement was the beginning of the anglicisation of place-names. Appendix 1 contains two maps of Ireland, one with English place names, and the other with Irish place-names. This can be used to appreciate the overall difference that separate acts and place-naming practices collectively made to Ireland's namescape.
53 DILLON, Thomas A. (1864) Observations on the value of the Ordnance name of Irish townlands for purposes of registration and as a means of preserving the old names of Ireland. Paper read before the statistical society of Ireland, (Dublin, Alexander Thom).
Penal Laws were introduced in 1695 and remained securely in place until the late
1700s. Enacted by Cromwell, these laws were intended to crush the Irish people to
the dust.

The "penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression were manifestly the
effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people whom the victors
delighted to trample upon and were not at all afraid to provoke."56 The broad objective of
the penal code was to secure the fruits of the various confiscations by depriving
Catholics, who constituted the vast majority of the total population, of four basic human
rights: any place in the civil life of their country; education; ownership even on an
extended leasehold of any property, particularly land; and finally the right to practise their
religion. All these objectives were closely integrated and were obviously meant to
provide the final solution to the 'Irish problem' by wiping out the majority of the Irish
people and making the residue useful to Britain.

The first objective of denying Catholics of any place in civil life meant they were
excluded from participation in the parliament of their country. They were deprived of the
right to vote and were excluded from the corporations, magistracy, bar, bench, grand
juries and vestries. The second objective - denial of the right to education - ensured that
the people were kept in ignorance of the injury being done to them. The provisions in
relation to property and land - the central and overriding objective of the penal code -
was simply a continuation of Elizabethan policy of two centuries before and was
designed to place the Protestant minority in total control over all tangible material wealth
and "to root out the Irish from the soil."57 The fourth objective of the penal code was to
suppress the Catholic religion. The whole object of the ascendency was not so much to
convert Catholics to Protestantism as to convert the goods of Catholics to Protestant
use. Apostasy was encouraged because it meant the automatic transfer of property
from Catholic to Protestant ownership.

In summary, the penal code instituted the following preventative measures for
Roman Catholics.58

56 LECKY, A History of Ireland, Vol. 1, quote from p.144.
57 HACHLEY, HERNON & McCAFFERY, The Irish Experience.
58 O'BRIEN, British Brutality in Ireland, quote from pp.39-40.
* No Catholic was allowed to buy land, to inherit it or to receive it as a gift from a Protestant. Any lease which yielded profits from the land that exceeded one-third of the rent was forbidden.
* If a Catholic leaseholder so increased his profits that they exceeded this proportion and if he did not immediately make a corresponding increase in his rent, his property passed to the first Protestant who made the discovery.
* If a Catholic secretly purchased either his own forfeited estate or any other land owned by a Protestant, the first Protestant who informed against him became the proprietor.
* When a Catholic land-owner died, his estate was divided equally among his sons unless the eldest became a Protestant in which case he became the sole heir.
* A wife who became a Protestant was immediately freed from her husband's control and the Chancellor was empowered to assign to her a certain proportion of her husband's property.
* If any child professed to be a Protestant, he/she was at once taken away from the father. The Chancellor could then compel the father to produce the title deeds of his estate and such proportion as was deemed correct by the chancellor was given to the child.
* Any Protestant woman who was a land-owner and who married a Catholic was at once deprived of her inheritance which passed instead to the nearest Protestant heir.
* No Roman Catholic were allowed in Parliament or to vote.
* No Roman Catholic was allowed to own arms.
* No Roman Catholic was allowed to be educated abroad or at public school, or to receive a degrees from Trinity College, to practice law.

At the outbreak of the French revolution in 1789 the population of Ireland formed a number of reform movements to revoke the Penal Code and regain rights for Catholics. A huge army of some 137,590 troops was now put in position to hold Ireland down. This left Prime Minister Pitt and Ireland's Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon free to get on with their political plans. Fitzgibbon recognised that the Irish situation was outrageous; in a speech he gave in 1785 as Attorney General he stated "the lower order of the people of Munster are in a state of oppression, abject poverty, sloth, dirt, and misery not to be equalled in any other part of the world." There was a fear that the Irish people might in their justifiable wrath at the wrongs inflicted upon them, rise up and wreak a bloody revenge - as they had in France. There was a growing conviction that the existing bond between the two countries was utterly precarious, and could not possibly be maintained as it was. The full admission of the Catholics to political power in the independent Parliament of a country in which they are the great majority must lead in time to their ascendancy, to the ruin of the Protestants and to the ruin of the British Empire. The only way of averting this political pressure was the speedy enactment of a legislative union of these two countries. Under such a union the Catholics would only

---

59 LECKY, A History of Ireland, Vol.2, quote from pp.4-5.
become a partial majority of a part of the Empire and their claims must give way to the superior ones of the majority of the whole.\textsuperscript{60}

To Pitt a full union between Britain and Ireland was an imperial necessity. The rebellious elements in Ireland had sought aid from France and could do so again. In an imperial parliament of Great Britain and Ireland however England would no longer be menaced by Irish nationalism and would be free to use the whole force of Great Britain and Ireland against France. The union of Ireland and Britain was necessary for another reason - the protection of the garrison. Fitzgibbon's advice to the landed gentry of Ireland was in effect to close ranks, become part of the British Empire, join the British army and the British army would then protect their property against any future Jacquerie which surviving republicans might call forth. Thus the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was brought into existence, without the slightest referral to the five million Irish people.\textsuperscript{61}

\textit{Union Rule - 19th Century.}

The Act of Union in 1801 which yoked the two countries together under the parliament in London represented further integration of England into Irish political life. It was the official response to the rebellion of 1798, a bloody uprising supported by radical Presbyterians, disgruntled Catholics and secular republicans all of them inspired by recent developments in France. It required the dissolution of the Irish Parliament in Dublin, a loss of sovereignty and the loss of any possibility for the protection of its developing industries. The state had an influence on economic welfare, it was subject to the English state's decisions which routinely put England's interests ahead of Ireland's. Ireland also had no weapon to erect protective barriers or to fight against its economic dependency.\textsuperscript{62} In its century of enforced union with Britain, Ireland was a slave colony in all but name. Ireland experienced military and police domination, a corrupt legal system, protectionist barriers for itself. Ireland supplied England with cattle, wool, tallow and butter until the late 18th century. It was vulnerable to English colonial and naval markets. Protectionist policies enacted against Ireland include prohibitions against the importation of Irish woollens (1699) coloured linens (1699) glass (1746) and therefore these industries withered. Even Irish brewing industry was set back because they were forbidden from buying hops from outside Great Britain (1710). Irish Cattle bills (1681) prohibited the importation of Irish cattle to English market because it was too cheap. This remained in force until 1758 much to the detriment of the Irish economy. By 1776 it was in place again. See Hechter's \textit{Internal Colonialism} for more details.

\textsuperscript{60} O'BRIEN, \textit{British Brutality in Ireland}.  
\textsuperscript{62} England however erected protectionist barriers for itself. Ireland supplied England with cattle, wool, tallow and butter until the late 18th century. It was vulnerable to English colonial and naval markets. Protectionist policies enacted against Ireland include prohibitions against the importation of Irish woollens (1699) coloured linens (1699) glass (1746) and therefore these industries withered. Even Irish brewing industry was set back because they were forbidden from buying hops from outside Great Britain (1710). Irish Cattle bills (1681) prohibited the importation of Irish cattle to English market because it was too cheap. This remained in force until 1758 much to the detriment of the Irish economy. By 1776 it was in place again. See Hechter's \textit{Internal Colonialism} for more details.
coercion and class oppression; economic exploitation, famine, emigration, and loss of the national language. The union between Great Britain and Ireland was not a voluntary union of peoples or states, but rather a full annexation of Irish territory by Britain dictated in the opinion of Prime Minister Pitt, by imperial necessity. Figures 2 and 3 are both cartoons drawn by political satirist of the time. They illustrate the unequal and undemocratic nature of the Act of Union. The whole thrust of British administration in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century would be directed towards maintaining the interest rock-solid. The interests of the landlords meant only one thing - profit. When at various times during the century it became more profitable to let the land for grazing due the falling prices for tillage crops, large areas of cultivated land were cleared of tenants by the landlords and converted into pasture for letting to grazers. Under the conqueror's law clearances were perfectly legal.\textsuperscript{63}

Throughout the nineteenth century, Ireland functioned as a sort of political and social laboratory in which the English could test new ideas - ideas about the proper relation between religion and the state, about the changing role of the aristocracy, above all about the holding and use of land. Indeed experiments of this kind can be traced back as far as the 1830s, when Ireland was given a streamlined system of national education and a country-wide postal network years ahead of England, which only adopted the models after they were seen to thrive and prosper.

Britain not only tested ideas for possible use back home but also for likely implementation in other colonies. The national school system was tested in Ireland before England. The anxiety of the promoters of the National System was to encourage the cultivation of the English language and to make English the language of the schools. It was essentially a socio-linguistic mechanism by which the Irish language would lose ground. In the climate of cultural imperialism, the national schools also taught Irish children their place in the British Empire. Children's local knowledge was diminished and instead they were taught the geography of imperial outposts. Textbooks were so devoid of local and national content that the same text books used in Ireland were later used in Canada, New Zealand, Australia.

\textsuperscript{63} O'BRIEN, \textit{Irish Brutality in Ireland}. 
FIGURE 2: THE HORRORS OF IRISH UNION

FIGURE 3: THE MODERN GULLIVER REMOVING THE PARLIAMENT OF LILLIPUT

When the Ordnance Survey arrived in Ireland, therefore, its officers encountered a country whose own systems of organisation had been abruptly and savagely ripped out, where the people had been subjugated or expelled by the people newly in possession of the land. These systems had been replaced by a series of measures whose only constancy was that they all operated to acquire undisputed control of land for the purpose of expropriating its wealth. There was no singular over-arching organisation for Ireland and its land and as this brief history indicates, much of the chaos England was so quick to publicise was actually a result of England’s involvement in Ireland over the previous centuries. But by constructing Ireland as disorderly both in material fact and as a rhetorical device, England strategically created a countervailing need for order that could be supplied by England.

To secure protection from external threat, for the interest of its own economy and the governance of its overseas colonies, England continued to exert its strength over Ireland and maintain its colonial relations into the nineteenth-century. The order it provided for Ireland was self-serving. This thesis is in part an examination of the connection between the Ordnance Survey’s mapping of Ireland, the provision of order and the maintenance of England’s colonial relationship to Ireland. However, what I now wish to address is why and how it came to be that the national mapping of Ireland was conducted by an overseas mapping agency. Before the Ordnance Survey, or any other external agency could be selected for the survey of Ireland, Irish cartographers needed to be eliminated from consideration.

IRELAND’S CARTOGRAPHIC CAPABILITY

In the early-nineteenth century, Irish cartography was not as advanced as that across the channel. Between 1776 and 1796 General Charles Vallencey, the Director of Military Engineers, had made a series of maps which were less a true survey than a military sketch. The use of trigonometrical controls in British mapping at this time made the Irish military Survey an anachronism before it was even half-finished. Vallancey retired with only the south of Ireland mapped in detail. Despite attempts to revive the survey in 1805, Vallancey was transferred to the task of surveying mail-coach roads for the Irish post office.\(^{64}\) By 1805, the corps of Irish engineers had been dissolved under the union and the burden of military cartography had passed to the quartermaster-

\(^{64}\) ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
general's office in Dublin. This department built up a good collection of published maps, but had no success with its plans for revising the surveys of Vallancey's day. It did not have the necessary authority for extracting information about new roads and other improvements from the local authorities and it was too small to carry out extensive field operations of its own. The only other early-nineteenth century Irish survey that can be attributed to army cartographers are maps depicting small districts of particular strategic importance. The military contribution to cartography conducted in Ireland since Vallancey's day had been minor.

It was civilian surveyors working on an ad hoc basis in the intervals between their private practice who provided most of the maps needed for public service. For example the principal draftsman of the quartermaster-general's office, William Duncan, made a county map of Dublin which was supplied to the grand juries under the legislation of 1774 - 1796. After fifty years of this regime, almost all counties had been mapped yet many of these mappings remained unpublished. In scale, content and general appearance these maps were similar: they were all drawn at one or two inches to the Irish mile and contained customary nineteenth century conventions to give a clear and attractive picture of relief, water, roads and principal buildings. Beneath the superficial similarities, these maps varied dramatically in their planimetric accuracy. The Irish surveying profession was stratified. The best of the grand jury maps came from a small group of well staffed practices run by civil engineers who were respected for their education, experience and integrity. To gain this respect, residence outside of Ireland had long been necessary.

In 1809 a government commission, chaired in its early sessions by Vallancey, was appointed to examine the principal bogs of Ireland as a prelude to drainage and reclamation. The idea of a single national survey was alive and the commission set itself the enlightened ambition of a series of four inch maps tied into a single trigonometrical framework. The framework proved impracticable, but the bogs survey did more than anything else to change the face of cartography in early-nineteenth century Ireland.

---

65 ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
67 49 Geo. Ill, c. 102. Reports of the commissioners appointed to enquire into the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland: second report pp.28-9 (instructions to surveyors) H.C. 1810-11 (96), vi.
The bogs survey was carried and completed by William Edgeworth, the son of the inventor and engineer Richard Edgeworth. He had a more scientific and specialised approach to cartography than his father, who despite aspirations to map his home county of Longford with latitude and longitude and the measurement of a base line, had failed to complete the project. William in fact completed the local section of the bogs survey and the Longford county map began by his father. Dissatisfied with the theodolite he was using, he travelled to Munich to buy a repeating theodolite by the famous instrument maker Reichenbach. William Edgeworth attained a new standard for Irish cartography. The bogs commission also employed a trio of newcomers, Richard Griffith (a name that re-emerges later in the context of the Boundary Survey), William Bald and Alexander Nimmo all of whom came to be prevalent figures in Irish cartography.

In some quarters, less exacting standards prevailed. The early grand juries maps were pieced together from road traverses that used the dated and imprecise methods of a perambulating wheel and circumferentor to measure distances rather than the more accurate equipment of chains and a theodolite. William Larkin of the post office team also used the circumferentor. He produced more grand jury surveys than any other cartographer. Larkin was accused of having his surveys done by "young lads" without proper supervision. Road surveyors of his standard merged into a thicker stratum of part time practitioners drawn from the ranks of farmers, builders and odd-job men.

A more interesting and larger class was the component of the land surveyors. Here too, old and new ways co-existed. Estate cartography was dominated by the French school founded in 1750 by Huguenot cartographer John Rocquo and his associate Bernard Scale. An unbroken chain of apprenticeships and partnerships can be followed through the leading Dublin valuers and land surveyors of the 1820s. Twenty perches to an inch was the most common scale. These maps had aesthetic merits and achieved a more complete representation of the landscape than had previously been attempted in Ireland. However, they were presented in atlas form with separate pages

68 ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
69 ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
for subdivisions of a few hundred acres each. Even the finest of estate maps had no connecting trigonometrical base.

Estate mapping of a more Irish, or Anglo-Irish, tradition also existed. It had its origins in the plantation maps which were used as a basis for the redistribution of forfeited properties under the reigns of Elizabeth I and William III. Surveying Ireland was always closely connected with the outrageous land situation and the incidence of confiscation, forfeiture and reapportionment. The first scientific mapping of Ireland for example was Sir William Petty's Down Survey - necessitated by Cromwellian settlement. These estate maps figured prominently in land dealings partly because they were familiar to proprietors, tenants and surveyors but also because copies of them were available for purchase from the Irish surveyor-general. The general characteristics of this map were a scale of forty perches to an inch and the method of traversing around the property or tenement with a chain and circumferentor and the inclusion of only a few interior details such as roads, houses and fields.

Two broad categories of surveying were thus recognisable in early-nineteenth century Ireland: topographical surveys on small scales, sometimes of roads alone, sometimes of whole tracts up to the size of one or more counties; and estate surveys of small areas plotted on larger scales. These specialisms had not produced a uniform coverage of the country, nor could such a result have been conjured up from what had been produced already. The less advanced level of cartography in Ireland relative to England explains in part why it was an English cartographic operation that composed the Irish Survey. However, it does not explain the vehemence with which the Irish were prevented from joining the staff of the Survey. Political factors were at work it seems. This mapping of Ireland aimed to achieve more than an accurate representation of Ireland on paper. It aimed to rationalise Ireland, reform the remnants of its ancient organisation and represent the country in a manner that illustrated the fairness of its newly formed Union with England and in a way that facilitated England's further involvement in Ireland's governance. This could only be achieved by an English mapping organisation. The organisation that was chosen was, of course, the Ordnance Survey. I will now provide a history of this institution and its particular conception of order. I discuss its beginnings, its scientific tradition and its treatments of place-names.
AN INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OF BRITAIN

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the quality and quantity of official mapping in Britain had fallen behind that conducted in other European countries and that conducted by Britain in its own overseas colonies. Sir Joseph Banks's presidential speech to the Royal Society addressed just this issue:

"Would I could say for England proud as she is of being esteemed by surrounding nations the Queen of Scientific Improvement, could boast of a general Map as well executed as the Major's delineation of Bengal and Baher;...the accuracy of his particular survey stands unrivalled by the most laboured County Maps this nation has hitherto been able to produce."\(^{70}\)

Bank's insight is indicative of a widespread concern amongst professional observers of scientific progress over the state of regional mapping in Britain during this time.

In this same year the Board of Ordnance decided to continue the trigonometrical survey in southern England. Given Bank's intimate association with that enterprise it is possible his presidential address contains a hint of political exhortation. The lateness of governmental intervention in British map-making was not because of official apathy. Users of maps, official and private, were satisfied with the range and quality of the Survey's available to them. The age into which the national survey was born was already one of considerable cartographic sophistication; improved maps of counties, town, estates, enclosures, park lands, rivers, canals and turnpike roads as well as marine charts were becoming available in increasing numbers. The land surveyor had acquired an enhanced professional status in the eighteenth century and London had emerged as a world centre of map engraving and publication. Perhaps the Ordnance Survey was conceived on the crest of a wave of improvement rather than out of despair with the existing provision of maps.\(^{71}\)

The reality lies somewhere between these two interpretations. There were periodical complaints about the topographical maps of the British regions, but this public opinion at a local and national level, was to spark off imaginative proposals for their

---


improvement. The existing ways of providing maps - by a haphazard blend of private surveys, military mapping when invasion scares arose and scientific observations - must have been perceived as an adequate system.

When a national survey was finally founded in Britain, it was not so much a new beginning as a fusion of pre-existing trends. Three sets of influences, often overlapping, were of particular importance in establishing the Survey and in shaping the characteristics it assumed in the early nineteenth century. These were military surveying particularly under the Board of Ordnance, the developments in civilian cartography as represented in the work of county surveyors in the second half of the eighteenth century, and surveying done with scientific objectives, supported either directly or implicitly by the Royal Society.\(^{72}\) I will consider each in turn and then discuss in detail the methods and procedures for the treatment of place-names by the Ordnance Survey.

The Board of Ordnance and the development of military cartography in Britain

The Board of Ordnance, to which the national survey of Great Britain owes its name, was one of the more ancient institutions of the country. Its roots have been traced to the Middle Ages and its beginnings were connected with the establishment of the Royal Arsenal at the Tower of London. In Elizabethan times it was made a department of State. The Board had a permanent organisation long before a standing army was created in Britain, and was headed by a powerful office-holder, the Master General of the Ordnance, sometimes a distinguished soldier and usually a person with cabinet rank.\(^{73}\)

The Board of Ordnance was a complex organisation but it is important to understand its basic structure and functions in order to appreciate how the Ordnance Survey was contained within it. Most importantly, throughout the period of the Board's control of the national Survey, cartography represented only a small and insignificant sector of its total responsibilities. Even with respect to map-making, home surveys were only part of much wider duties, especially in the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century. The primary responsibilities of the Board of Ordnance was to act as a custodian of lands, depots and forts required for the defence of the realm and its

\(^{72}\) HARLEY "The Origins of the Ordnance Survey."

\(^{73}\) ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
overseas possessions, and as the suppliers of munitions and equipment to both the Army and the Navy. At the same time the Board was a civil organisation. The confusing aspect is that by the mid-eighteenth century this civil body had started to pay, maintain, educate and organise military forces of its own. These were the so-called Ordnance Corps (of which the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers are the best known) who were to provide the officers for the Ordnance Survey. These corps were quite independent from the regular Army and its administrators.

The Board of Ordnance also maintained a series of ancillary establishments. Abroad there was a chain of Ordnance depots and stations to match the spread of empire and its staging posts. In Britain there were also Engineer stations for a territorial organisation based on districts and specialist buildings such as powder-mills and laboratories at Faversham and Waltham Abbey as well as the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. The Tower of London was used for a variety of activities ranging from the manufacture of arms to the copying of maps and plans, and at Woolwich a Royal Military Academy existed to train officers for the Artillery and Engineers. Only small parts of this vast structure were of direct relevance to the Ordnance Survey.

The most consistently important aspects of the Board's cartographic responsibilities were those connected with military engineering. From the reign of Henry VIII onwards the principal energies of the military surveyors and engineers were directed to fortification and harbour improvement. Here was an aspect of cartography which owed its existence to the Crown, because the principal opportunities for practising military architecture and engineering lay in royal service. From the mid-sixteenth century onwards, the office of "Surveyor of the King's (or Queen's) works" played a central role in the work of fortification. It was not until the Board of Ordnance was reorganised in 1683 that a major step forward was taken in rationalising the engineering service. In a warrant of that year a codification of the engineer establishment was set out in terms both of personnel and of the distributions of Ordnance depots such as those at the Tower of London, Chatham, Portsmouth, Tilbury, Sheerness, Woolwich, Plymouth and Hull. These regulations determined the geographical pattern as well as the character of military surveying in eighteenth century Britain. The locations of the main Ordnance

---

depots emerged as nuclei of mapping operations and they have retained their significance since.

From such foundations a "scientific corps" was built under the Board of Ordnance during the course of the eighteenth century. Its two principal branches were the Artillery and the Corps of Engineers. From 1720 there were the beginnings of a systematic technical education for officers entering these Corps. The first proposal to set up an academy dates from 1720 but it was not until 1741 that the Royal Military Academy was founded at Woolwich by a Royal Warrant. For the future of the Ordnance Survey, the Academy was to train a nucleus of scientifically-minded officers sufficiently versed in mathematics to be able to direct the Trigonometrical Survey. As a result of their education and training, the officers of the Ordnance Survey were often closely associated with the scientific life of the nation, sometimes appearing to have stronger links to the Royal Society than with the Army.\(^75\)

The offices of the Survey, the drawing room, and its stores were all located in the Tower of London.\(^76\) Apart from its notable contribution to the training of British military surveyors and draughtsmen in the eighteenth century, the Tower was an integral part of the pre-history of the national survey. The availability of skilled personnel educated through the Tower helped underpin a second tradition of British military map-making, that of the survey of topographical maps. In some respects this is more relevant than the mapping of fortifications and arsenals to the genesis of the Ordnance Survey because the purpose of such surveys was to furnish smaller-scale maps of the countryside through which armies might have to move. Among these new military surveys one of the most remarkable and perhaps the most formative for the Ordnance Survey was that of Scotland undertaken between 1747 and 1755. At a scale of one inch to 1000 yards, and covering the whole of mainland Scotland it was the most extensive survey of its kind to be made in eighteenth century Britain.\(^77\)

There was an expansion of the geographical area of activity of British military surveyors in the second half of the eighteenth century. After 1756 they were transferred from Scotland to regions where, owing to military and colonial aspirations, British interest was concentrated. These military surveyors took with them the concepts underlying the

\(^{75}\) HARLEY, "The Origins of the Ordnance Survey".
\(^{76}\) In 1841 the offices were moved to Southampton.
survey of Scotland. Similarly, William Roy who executed the Highland Survey, took the opportunity of canvassing the need for national surveys and the principle for surveying practised in Scotland during his professional military career as a staff officer at Army Headquarters and in the Corps of Engineers.\textsuperscript{78} In the work of both the Board of Ordnance directed from the Tower of London and of the Quartermaster-General’s department (at the Horse Guards) maps were accepted as part of the most advanced thinking of the day. Roy began to formulate a plan for the triangulation of the whole country into which his maps of Scotland would be integrated. The maps arising from this compilation were to be at a scale of one inch to one mile and based on accurate triangulation: Roy had already conceived the basic design for the early Ordnance Survey. The next instance of Roy’s advocacy of a national survey was in 1766 when he re-submitted his earlier scheme in a modified and less expensive form - this must be regarded as one of the basic documents in the establishment of the Ordnance Survey.

Roy’s proposition made use of new printed private county surveys:

“these County Maps are sufficiently exact, in what regards their geometrical measurement, for common purposes, but are extremely defective with respect to the topographical representation of the ground, giving scarcely any idea, or at least but a very imperfect one, of what is remarkable strong or weak in the nature of the Country.”\textsuperscript{79}

The criticism of the inadequate relief portrayal on the county maps was a fair one. This criticism together with the absence of overall geodetic control owing to the piecemeal nature of the private surveys, led Roy to recommend that the maps ought to be strengthened and supplemented. Roy, foreshadowing the Ordnance Survey, saw the need for the proper scientific triangulation of the whole country.\textsuperscript{80} This would begin with the measurement of a great Base for the first Triangle. From this foundation the principal and secondary triangulations could be extended. In addition topographic information would be used to fill the interior parts of each triangle. Roy’s comprehensive plan, emanating as it did from a highly positioned officer within the Ordnance department, naturally put the direction of the survey in the hands of the Engineers.

It was not until 1783 that Roy was given an opportunity to pursue his aim of creating a national survey, but meanwhile the trends in military cartography were helping

\textsuperscript{78} ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
\textsuperscript{79} FORTESCUE, J. (1927) The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783 Vol. 1 cited in HARLEY, "The Origins of the Ordnance Survey" quote from p.7.
\textsuperscript{80} ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
to build a suitable environment for its foundation. The Board of Ordnance was an organisation with adequate financial resources to undertake a national survey and it was also capable of offering the required technical services. By the closing decade of the eighteenth century, the military engineers and draughtsmen had accumulated a considerable knowledge of both the trigonometrical and topographical survey through their experience in Scotland, on foreign stations and in parts of Southern England. This knowledge could easily be adapted for application in a national context.

The civilian contribution to the foundation of the Ordnance Survey

Although the Ordnance Survey originated under a military department of State, other aspects of the mapping of Britain also exerted a significant influence on its foundation and early character. British military surveys in the eighteenth century were seldom closed to civilian influences and the instructors at Woolwich were drawn from civilian backgrounds. This was true of its leading mathematicians who were the intellectual mainspring of the geodetic activities of the Trigonometrical Survey - and their influence was important in both the training and selection of Ordnance Survey officers.

Far more influential was published county cartography. From Tudor times to the late-eighteenth century it was mainly a handful of county cartographers who kept alive the prospect of producing a national set of topographical maps suitable for private use and for the needs of national defence. The county cartographers contributed to the development of the idea of a national survey and to its implementation by making county maps which were surveyed and engraved largely at private expense, and then sold through the normal commercial channels of the map trade. Such maps are an integral part of the pre-history of the Ordnance Survey, particularly because some members of the Government as well as many private map-users believed that the commercial sector was capable of producing the very maps which in the course of the nineteenth century became largely the province of the Ordnance Survey.

The model of such county surveys was undoubtedly that of Saxton. His thirty-four county maps and one general map were engraved from 1574 to 1579 for publication in atlas form - the first national atlas in this country. Saxton's maps inaugurated English regional cartography from field observations. In the 1570s Elizabeth's ministers were faced with the need to organise national defence. This required reliable geographical intelligence including that which could be obtained by maps. Saxton's atlas, when it first
appeared and later in the plagiarised copies of Speed and others, served to introduce and consolidate the habit of using maps in national and local administration as well as for a variety of private purposes. The Atlas was already anticipating the role of the Ordnance Survey.

The later history of Saxton's maps and their successors up until the mid-nineteenth century reveal that the energetic attitude of some of Elizabeth's ministers towards the nation's maps was not sustained. There is a sporadic record of Crown support for county mapping ventures but the main responsibility for financing surveys always rested with the map trade and the narrowly based map buying public. Between 1750 and 1800 there was remarkable progress in the private mapping of Britain so that by the time the Ordnance Survey was established in 1801 much of Britain had been surveyed in unprecedented accuracy and detail. So successful were these maps that they retarded rather than advanced the emergence of the Ordnance Survey as a map-publishing organisation.

When the national survey finally emerged it brought together a wide range of cartographic traditions. This was possible partly because surveying had not yet been subdivided into a number of specialist branches. There was a strong element of common practice and the able practitioner could easily move between different types of assignment. Civilian and military topographical surveying were not always as far apart as independent studies of either one might suggest.

The scientific tradition and the establishment of the Ordnance Survey

At the time of its establishment and for many years afterwards the Ordnance Survey was officially known as the Trigonometrical Survey, a fact which reflected not only its beginnings in an international geodetic operation, but also much of the emphasis of its early work. The Trigonometrical Survey was borne along by the broad stream of European scientific culture in which geodesy and cartography had a recognised place. The Royal Society for example was composed of the most learned persons available in geometry, astronomy, chronology, land surveying and navigation. The debates

---

82 ANDREWS, *A Paper Landscape*. 

36
surrounding such topics as the observations made in the course of their study and the improved instruments on which they depended were all constituents of the scientific environment into which the Trigonometrical Survey was born. In particular it was heir to a long succession of enquiries into the method of determining longitude. This, apart from any intellectual interest, was a matter of practical importance for establishing longitude at sea and for improving maps and charts used by European powers who were competing to extend their empires. The urgency with which longitude was viewed was a major stimulus to astronomy and related sciences in general and the establishment of the Royal Observatory in particular. Another strand to these enquiries essential to the construction of maps and charts was the attempt to establish the correct circumference and shape of the earth. By the late-eighteenth century London was the leading European centre for the design and making of scientific instruments. By 1780 the skill, the methods and the instruments necessary for a national geodetic project were in existence. All that was required was a catalyst to bring them into a working relationship.

Roy was certainly one of the more important components of this catalyst. Roy made his home in London which enabled him to build up a network of scientific contacts within the capital. He was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society and the opportunities of this intellectual world were not missed by Roy. He was placed firmly within the horizon of a group of men who made most of the critical decisions about matters of scientific importance. In 1783 an historic opportunity arose. Peace was re-established between France and Britain. The relative positions of the Royal Observatories in Paris and Greenwich could begin to be established. Anglo-French triangulation could provide the opportunity to establish a national survey. In reinforcing the arguments in favour of the Anglo-French triangulation, Roy continued:

"This is nevertheless of but small moment when compared with other advantages that will in all probability arise from the commencement of these operations in Britain. For the base of Hounslow Heath is well situated for extending different serieses of Triangles from thence in all directions to the remotest parts of the Island; and even connecting them with others that may be carried over our sister kingdom. By these are the best foundations that will be laid for an accurate Survey of the British Dominions."

When General William Roy died in July 1790 the immediate result was a suspension of trigonometrical activities in south east England, which he had been engaged with. The work was resumed eleven months later due to an initiative of the Duke of Richmond - the Master General of the Ordnance. His interest in cartography and military engineering and his position as both a landowner and a public administrator allowed him to use the weight of his office to help promote the national survey. He purchased a three foot theodolite which had been constructed to the order of the East India Company for triangulation in India and employed Mr. Dalby for his mathematical expertise. The Duke of Richmond, although employing civilians as well as military personnel, firmly placed the executive direction of the Survey in military hands by appointing Lieutenant Mudge of the Royal Artillery to carry on the Trigonometrical Survey. As the first effective director of the Ordnance Survey, William Mudge held the office from 1798-1820.

After 1793 when hostilities with France formally commenced the national role of the Survey underwent a sharp change. Previous to this the trigonometrical activities were largely a scientific operation undertaken for the progress of geography and sponsored by the Royal Society, but by the date Mudge took office the Survey's priorities were mostly bound up with the defence of the country. Even the progress of the primary triangulation came to be partly fashioned by military expediency, which became an important consideration in the spread of the triangulation during the 1790s in Kent and Essex and in the west country in particular. Rather than continuing the early triangulation northwards, it was policy to fix points along the whole length of the invasion coasts because of their potential value in constructing military maps at short notice.

The trigonometrical activities were regarded in 1811 as of paramount importance. Early nineteenth century scientists stressed a need for accurate locational data. Geographical co-ordinates for familiar regional and national landmarks were unreliable and this situation needed to be remedied for military, maritime and scientific purposes. In 1815 support for the trigonometrical survey was still high. John Playfair, a geologist and mathematician reflected on this:

"the British Army - in General Roy, .. and the officers who have succeeded him in the conduct of the English Survey will have the glory of doing more for the
advancement of general science than has ever been performed by any other body of military men.\textsuperscript{85}

It was partly such concerns that prompted the Ordnance Survey to begin its mapping in Great Britain and Ireland.

The strategic purposes of these maps took precedence over their scientific purposes. Bank's speech, quoted earlier in this chapter, indicates there was a connection between mapping empires and mapping homelands. The formation of the Ordnance Survey was a practical and a political response to foreign and domestic military concerns. The mapping responsibilities of the Ordnance Survey were initiated and developed as a necessary defence against a Napoleonic invasion. However, the scientific merits of the Ordnance Survey maps were employed successfully to divert attention away from their political and military significance. During the Irish Survey a number of strategic decisions were introduced in the name of science. Indeed, these appeals to efficacy and order most often served the English crown.

The Ordnance Survey of 1800-1820 then was small in size; its outdoor staff numbered about twenty men and although certain areas were drawn as six inches to the mile, its only published products were the one-inch map sheets and the scientific details of the triangulation. Roy had referred at one point to the "British Islands" but when the Survey was founded in 1791 Ireland was still a separate kingdom with its own parliament, its own administration and its own military engineers producing their own maps. The integration of the two governments after their political union in 1801 was a leisurely process and at first nobody in official circles or elsewhere was in a hurry to bring the trigonometrical surveyors across the Irish Sea from their headquarters in the Tower of London. In 1820 the national survey of Britain still had two thirds of England and Wales and all of Scotland to map. Despite this large and daunting task, in 1824 Mudge's successor, Superintendent Captain Colby, decided to extend the project and opened an office in Dublin so that the Ordnance could extend its work to encompass Ireland also.

\textsuperscript{85} PORTLOCK, J.E. (1869) \textit{A Memoir of the life of Major-General Colby} (London) quote from p.46.
Ordinance Survey orthography in Britain (1801-1824)

Before the Irish Survey even began, patterns were being laid down that would influence its treatment of place-names in Ireland. The most notable precedent was the treatment of place-names by Ordnance Survey elsewhere in Britain and its empire. The Ordnance Survey, through a process of trial and error was developing methods for obtaining the correct forms of place-names for their maps.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Britain had no official body that was entrusted with the task of regularising place-name forms. There was a considerable degree of dissatisfaction with forms disseminated by regional map-makers. In 1775 Cary wrote of English orthography as "a circumstance so frequently complained of" and local scholars often criticised cartographers for their unquestioning empiricism. The treatment of place-names outside of England had generated more forceful criticism. In 1757 Lewis Morris, scholar and cartographer, condemned the process by which Welsh place-names were being "murdered by English map-makers." His son William wanted to produce a new map of Anglesey wherein "[t]he British or Celtic Names of Places, capes &c will in this map, be retained in their purity which no geographer hath ever done because none of them were Masters of that ancient language." Although this ambition was never realised, Morris had raised an issue that was to face the Ordnance Surveyors in the nineteenth century in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. On the eve of the Ordnance Survey it was clear the responsibility for establishing an acceptable orthography for each locality was to fall to the national map agency. From its inception until the commencement of the Irish Survey in 1824, many developments would occur that would lay the foundations for Captain Colby's approach to Irish place-names. Although geographically-separate and developing independently, the various national surveys undertaken by the Ordnance Survey can be seen to be advancing along parallel lines. Being part of one organisation and subject to common decisions of policy, there was

---

87 CARY cited in HARLEY "Place Names on the Early Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales." quote on p.93.
88 MORRIS cited in HARLEY & WALTERS "Welsh orthography and Ordnance Survey Mapping." quote on p.100.
89 MORRIS cited in HARLEY "Place Names on the Early Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales." quote on p.93.
every opportunity for a movement of ideas in all directions. Throughout this thesis I will make reference to these strategic moments where national and regional surveys meet and policy permeates to and from the Irish Survey. However, now I will trace the developments in the Ordnance Survey's place-name treatment prior to 1824.

In the first twenty years after the Ordnance Survey was formed little was done to refine the system of place-name verification practised by eighteenth century cartographers. William Mudge, Superintendent of the Ordnance Survey, had issued a memorandum in 1816 about improving the standards of field surveying. Although this memo contained instructions for recording field antiquities, there was no mention of orthography. The existing system consisted of principal parish and town names being checked against official sources such as the census and minor names were newly introduced on maps in local written and spoken forms. Drafts of these maps were then circulated to members of the clergy or to landowners for amendment to spelling forms.

In 1810, the Ordnance Survey advanced to Wales. It was not long before discussions were underway with regard to the special treatment of Welsh spelling and etymology. Colby was in correspondence with a number of local experts, naturalists, antiquarians, and Reverends. In 1821, Colby writes, "will you excuse my troubling you with a question which arises in definitely settling the orthography of the Glamorganshire Plate of the Ordnance Map - Pneleyne Castle near Cowbridge: can you obtain correct information if any one of these is right?" Colby's listing of variant spellings may suggest that the Survey was feeling its way towards a rule of thumb whereby the majority form among the spellings collected for a name was accepted. In October 1823, a subsequent letter to Colby provides commentary on the problem of reconciling English and Welsh spellings, especially in an area where English was widely being spoken:

You have called it Ceardiff but both by the corporation itself and everybody else as well as in all legal proceedings it is now universally Cardiff, and in this case I should certainly alter it to the latter for in fact yours is only a hybrid sort of word half Welsh and half English and the real old Welsh name is Caertaff.

---

90 COLBY cited in HARLEY “Place Names on the Early Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales,” quote on p.94.
This illustrates two factors in the Ordnance Survey's treatment of names. Firstly, an effort was being made to recognise the existence of the Welsh language. This provides an indication of how Colby would treat Irish names during the Survey of that country. Secondly, where anglicised versions were accepted and generally understood there was resistance from the local population to changing these forms, even if the modified form was closer to the Celtic form.

The Survey encountered problems because its system of regularising place-name orthography was wholly dependent upon the wisdom of outsiders. This posed difficulties because even the best informed people differed in opinion and inaccuracies escaped the most careful of surveyors. To compensate for the variable knowledge during the collection of names by surveyors, General Mudge decided to circulate completed proof sheets to those outside the Survey for corrections thus further relying upon advice from outside the Survey. This was a major weakness in the treatment of place-names on the Ordnance Survey maps published before 1820.

Between 1820 and 1824, the Ordnance Survey mapped Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire Survey was a turning point in the development of the Ordnance Survey. In many respects Lincolnshire served as a "field laboratory" for the Survey. Through a process of trial and error, the Ordnance Survey developed techniques that improved and standardised surveying. These developments were then used in much of the remainder of England and Wales, and in Ireland. Indictments to the existing system of place-name collection, dependent as it was on the sometimes casual co-operation of amateurs had increased so that Colby reallocated much of the task of place-name verification to the field surveyors. In Lincolnshire, the surveyors were expected to make systematic local enquiries themselves. Colby also extended the scope of enquiries asking the surveyors to ascertain the meaning of names. Mudge wrote accordingly to field surveyor Charles Budgen in 1821.

In the neighbourhood of Wainfleet you have written a name frequently that we do not understand the meaning of, and as it recurs so often it is desirable to know that we are quite right, Wainfleets Tofts, Wrangle Tofts &c are they rightly spelled and what is the meaning of the word toft?

---

92 HARLEY & WALTERS, "Welsh Orthography and Ordnance Survey Mapping".
93 See Earl Brownlow's remarks for example, documented in HARLEY, "Place names and the Early Ordnance Survey Maps of England and Wales".
His treatment of place-names may have influenced Colby in sending out questionnaires asking "in what manner is the Name of your Parish most usually spelled; And if the Name is derived from the Welsh language, what is the Meaning of it in English?" Colby wanted a record of "authorities" that could be cited in support of particular spellings. Lists of place-names had a column "authorities" added to them. Here, in embryonic form, were the name books that were to become so central to the Irish Survey.

THE IRISH SURVEY

The formation of the Ordnance Survey and The Act of Union were practical and political responses to foreign and domestic military concerns. The mapping responsibilities of the Ordnance Survey were initiated and developed as a necessary defence against a Napoleonic invasion. The political union of Great Britain and Ireland through the Act of Union in 1801, also prompted by the French threat to the British empire, was in addition a response to domestic instability. The union provided an entrance for the English to enter Ireland and affect changes that would quell the increasing civil unrest in Ireland. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland was one method of affecting change and rendering Ireland knowable so that further changes could be planned. I will now outline what prompted the formation of the Irish Survey, how it developed, its particular organisational structure and lastly I will profile its leading actors.

Throughout the nineteenth century there was an increase in parliamentary business and official literature devoted to Ireland. There was a new sense of English responsibility towards the Irish and Ireland's reform. It was now felt that Ireland's affairs should be conducted more methodically, economically and expeditiously. Indeed, political assimilation made Ireland look more colonial that when it had been essentially a colony. Whereas sentiments for the survey of Ireland were ostensibly concerned with how best to govern Ireland for the benefit of the Irish, trigonometrical surveys had been promoted much earlier for their benefit to British rule. They constituted the only technology that could combine all surveyed materials into a unified and uniform archive. The trigonometrical survey would not only supply an accurate base for topographical

95 COLBY cited in HARLEY "Place Names on the Early Ordnance Survey maps of England and Wales." quote on p.96.
maps but also it would ensure a uniformity of information. British measurements, mapping styles and trigonometrical bases were extended to Ireland, thus bringing it under a distinctly British grid. The mapping operation was complicit in the practical annexation of Ireland and the maps were politically complicit in naturalising the new status quo of an annexed Ireland. Here were the beginnings of British practical and political reform in Ireland.

The first area that was targeted by the English government for reform was the iniquitous taxation system. It was focused upon because it was source of Irish civil unrest. Thus it was this primarily civil need that brought the Ordnance Survey to Dublin in the autumn of 1824. The archaic and inequitable structure of local taxation in Ireland was a long standing scandal that was now becoming intolerable as the country's population multiplied and its agriculture grew more commercialised. The tax in question, known as the county cess, provided money for gaols and court-houses, for the salaries of various local officials, and for the making and repairing of the country's roads and bridges. In theory it was to be apportioned between occupiers in accordance with their capacity to pay and divided among small territorial units, known most commonly as "townlands", averaging about three hundred statute acres in size. An important process of the distribution was to assign a rateable value to each townland. In some counties the origins of the assessment were lost in antiquity; in others it was based on out-dated admeasurements of which the Stafford Survey (1636-40) was the oldest and William Petty's Down Survey (1654-9) the most well known. Even if these surveys had been wholly accurate in the first place, they were now obsolete because of subsequent changes in townland boundaries a which altered the acreage and because of agricultural improvements which altered the relative values. By the 1800s Irish estate surveyors were mapping individual properties at new standards of accuracy and were exposing gross inequalities in the burden of the cess. Tax assessments were not considered equitable. English ratepayers too could complain of ancient and irrational valuation systems, but in Ireland efficiency seemed to demand a closer participation by the central government in the affairs of the counties. Parliament sought to rectify this inequality in the cess in 1809 by making it lawful for grand juries to compile tables of the names and

96 Townlands were also referred to as "ploughlands" "tates" or "ballibos" in different parts of the country.
contents of all denominations of land within their jurisdiction. However, it was trying to use words alone for what could only be done effectively with maps.\textsuperscript{97}

\textit{The Beginnings}

It was soon realised that a geographical and a statistical survey was required to revise the taxation system of Ireland. In 1816, Mason wrote a passage in the \textit{Irish Parochial Papers} that earned him the unofficial title 'Godfather of the Survey of Ireland', "the period has at length now arrived, when another survey, not unseating the mass of the country's population, but at once fixing and giving them new character, will, at no great distance of time, be made."\textsuperscript{98} Something of Mason's conception was carried into the parliamentary debate of 1819 by the Admiralty's secretary J.W. Crocker when he proposed that the Ordnance should direct the Irish Survey, and that it should be statistical in character as well as geographical. In February, the Duke of Wellington, as Master General of the Ordnance, agreed to conduct the Survey of Ireland, and prepared for it by selecting twenty cadets from the Royal Military Academy for detailed instruction. One month later the government gave the cess payer a belated voice by appointing a select committee to "consider the best mode of apportioning more equally the local burthens collected in Ireland and to provide for a more general survey and valuation".\textsuperscript{99} This committee chaired by Thomas Spring Rice became known as the Spring Rice Committee and represented Irish landed interests.

In the reforming atmosphere of 1822, the committee recommended that the measurement of "the whole acreable contents of the country" should be "entrusted to proper officers".\textsuperscript{100} It accepted the proposition of an all-Ordnance operation. The committee were impressed by the confidence with which Mudge's successor, Captain Colby undertook to survey the townlands in a matter of seven or eight years, provided that the boundaries were pointed out to him by the Irish Government. The Ordnance Survey was selected since it was sufficiently large and detached to survey the thirty-two counties at a large scale, and it was considered to be a centralised, non profit-making

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{98} MASON, W.S. (1816) A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland, ii, pp.1xxxv - i.
\textsuperscript{99} Report from the Select Committee appointed to consider the best mode of apportioning more equally the local burthens collected in Ireland, and to provide for a general survey and valuation of that part of the United Kingdom. PP 1824 (445) VIII.
\textsuperscript{100} The Spring Rice Report (1824) published in full in ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape, Appendix A, pp.301-308.
\end{footnotesize}
cartographic authority. This brought the two main branches of cartography, loosely distinguishable as triangulation and the topographic, into alignment. The accurate trigonometrical survey would supply the points from which the county surveyors could take up detail. The Ordnance Survey that hitherto had been associated with geodesy and military map-making was now responsible for a cadastral survey.101

On 22 June 1824, the day after the Spring Rice report was signed, the Board's secretary gave Colby the following order:

"The report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the survey of Ireland having been made to the House, and the Master General having consented that such survey shall be made by this department I am directed to acquaint you, that the Board think it right to make the earliest communication to you and to desire that you will immediately take the necessary steps by providing instruments and making the proper additions to the persons employed under your direction so that the work may proceed without a moment's delay. And I am to add that the Master General and Board are prepared to receive from you any proposition you may be desirous of submitting to them for proceeding upon the survey."102

Unlike the survey in Britain, operations in Ireland were governed by specific Acts of Parliament, but these acts did little to restrict the freedom of the superintendent, Captain Colby. It had generally been agreed throughout that the measurement and valuation were two distinct processes and that the latter, like the demarcation of the townlands, should be directed by the authorities in Dublin. Accordingly there was one Act (6 Geo IV, c.99) providing that the boundaries of counties, baronies, parishes and townlands should be delimited separately but in association with the Ordnance Survey; and another (7 Geo IV, c.62) directing that the Lord Lieutenant's valuators should be supplied with the necessary Ordnance maps. The Act of 1825 transferred the power to determine boundaries from the local administration (where it had been placed under the Grand Jury system) to the Lord Lieutenant who organised this task within a national framework. The Boundary Survey and Valuation were both entrusted to Richard Griffith, a civil engineer and geologist who had made his name in the bog survey's of 1810-14. Local residents with a good knowledge of the boundaries were recruited as meresmen to assist the boundary surveyors. Richard Griffith's Boundary department ruthlessly changed the pattern of Ireland's territorial divisions. Sometimes local obscurantism

101 ANDREWS, "The Survey of Ireland to 1847".
102 First Report from the select committee appointed to consider what provisions it may be expedient to establish for regulating the grand jury presentments of Ireland, p.4, H.C. 1822 (353) vil.
forced Griffith into arbitrary courses but he also broke up divisions that were too large to be easily valued and amalgamated neighbouring townlands if he considered them too small. Once the boundaries were settled they were officially handed over to the Ordnance Survey. These exact boundaries were then surveyed by the Ordnance Survey and appear on the six-inch maps.\textsuperscript{103}

The last remaining decision was the scale upon which the map should be made. Colby was asked whether the six-inch scale would be sufficient to show divisions from fifty to three or four hundred acres. Colby not only agreed but produced a six-inch map of part of Kent that he had on his person. It appears that this was the scale Colby had already adopted for the training of his cadets. Whatever its origins, by 1824 the six-inch scale had established a place for itself in Ordnance Survey thinking. There is nothing in Colby's evidence to the Spring Rice Committee to suggest that this decision was dictated by any close knowledge of peculiarly Irish circumstances. It was rather a cartographic expression of the union of the two kingdoms comparable with the act for extending the statute measure to Ireland.\textsuperscript{104}

**Internal organisation of the Irish Survey**

Colby's first needs were men and materials. He knew he would be too busy with other duties to direct the new survey from Dublin. Over the first three years of the survey, Colby spent most of his time in London or on top of Irish mountains. Wellington had left him free to appoint and dismiss his own subordinates and so he appointed a second-in-command to be a resident deputy in Dublin. Major William Reid was one of he most distinguished officers of the corps of Royal Engineers. Recently adjutant to the Royal Sappers and Miners, Reid was a seasoned administrator, popular with his fellow officers and well respected for achievements in battle. He was without Ordnance Survey experience yet this did not worry Colby for the main task of the Irish deputy was to handle the Survey's local correspondence, guard its documents and to a limited extent co-ordinate the work of detail parties in the field. Mountjoy House, situated amongst the trees and lawns of Phoenix Park in Dublin, was chosen as Reid's headquarters. Colby, already concerned for the safety of the Survey's future documentation, ordered the construction of fireproof stores adjacent to the main house.

\textsuperscript{103} ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
\textsuperscript{104} 5 Geo. IV, c.74, sec.2.
During the summer of 1824, Colby had placed twenty cadets into training. In the course of 1825 and 1826, fresh drafts were added to this initial force by successive intakes from the Royal Engineers together with a few officers from the Royal Artillery. Several of them had worked on the British Survey, notably Lieutenants T.Drummond, R.K. Dawson and J.E. Portlock. The majority however were freshly commissioned and despite the course in surveying they had undergone as part of their military education, they were either incompetent or ill-trained. It was recognised that the early proceedings in Ireland would be to some degree instructional and probationary, but never was there any question of replacing military personnel with civilians.

Colby proposed that each officer should be supported by a subordinate staff. Figure 5 illustrates the hierarchical organisation of the Irish Survey employees. Draughtsmen and engravers, when the time came to employ them, would have to be recruited from the commercial map and print trades. For fieldwork Colby proposed that military officers should be assisted by the rank and file of their own army. Colby made the controversial decision to use the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners for this purpose. The working-class men of the Royal Sappers and Miners had not been used as regular surveyors. They had however helped with operations of the Board of Longitude. He hoped that soldiers would prove not only cheaper than civilian surveyors but also more amenable to the discipline that would be necessary to enforce new and uniform methods among a number of widely scattered parties. Their lack of experience was almost seen as an advantage by Colby for they would be unencumbered with preconceived ideas that might interfere with the learning of Colby's new system. The Sappers were given some preliminary training at Chatham, the School for Military Engineering, and the first detachments were sent to Ireland in the course of 1825. Figure 4 depicts the Royal Sappers and Miners at work in Ireland in their full uniform.

---

105 Colby's Annual Reports 1825, 1826. By the end of the first three years only ten of the original twenty cadets remained on staff.
106 The companies sent over were the 13th and 14th Companies of Royal Sappers and Miners. They were followed by the 16th Company in 1826.
BOARD of ORDNANCE
Tower of London
London, England
Director: Capt. Colby

IRISH SURVEY
Mountjoy House
Dublin, Ireland
Deputy: Major Reid (1824-28)
Lieutenant Larcom (1828-46)

DISTRICTS A – E
Field, Ireland
District Officers: Captains
Henderson, Lancey, Waters, Wright, Yule

DIVISIONS
Within Districts A – E
Controllers of divisions

DETAIL PARTIES
Based in divisions
Sappers & Miners
Irish Civilians

FIGURE 4: THE TERRITORIAL AND HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE OF THE IRISH SURVEY.
FIGURE 5: THE ROYAL SAPPERS AND MINERS SURVEYING IN 1837

The first group responded well to the instruction and thus subsequent companies were put through the course. Once across the channel the sappers were cared for by the fatherly zeal of Colby’s orders: they were to send their children to school; they were to be supplied with Bibles and; they were not to appear ridiculous by wearing beards or moustaches. To secure the goodwill of the local population it was agreed with the Irish Government that the sappers would not be used as a police force in cases of civil disturbance. Given English portrayals of the Irish of this time, they might have believed that such policing duties would leave them with little time for actual surveying.\textsuperscript{107}

With the third company of sappers diminishing returns were observable. Inferior men, often illiterate, others drunken, were found to have been accepted\textsuperscript{108}. In a Progress report, one district officer has listed the names, ranks, duties and abilities of sixteen Sappers and Miners under his command. Of these men, he lists two as “not very intelligent”, two as “not very useful” and a further three as “addicted to drinking”.\textsuperscript{109} Colby needed a new source of low-paid but moderately well educated manpower. Continuing pointedly to ignore civilian surveyors he turned first to the Royal Artillery which had been for a time a source of his officers. This choice was vetoed by the military authorities. Colby also toyed with the idea of approaching the East India Company for employees on the grounds that their recruits, enticed by the reputed riches of India, would be more highly educated that the ordinary enlisted man. However the only significant augmentation available to the survey in its first two years was country labourers. It was a conciliatory move and coupled with the low wage level prevailing in Ireland it allowed the Survey to build itself up in a matter of months (see Appendix 1 for a table of numbers employed in the Survey of Ireland).

After amassing men and materials, Colby’s next task was to get these resources to work and to keep the trigonometrical operations and the detail survey in step with one another. Colby had to divide his attention between the mathematical groundwork of the survey and the detail work. However, the trigonometrical operations called for such close supervision that for the first three years the management of the detail parties was left to Major Reid. While the base party was at work, the main force of the survey had

\textsuperscript{107} ANDREWS, "The Survey of Ireland to 1847".
\textsuperscript{108} Ordnance Survey Progress Report, D District, 1st February 1827. Captain Wright R.E. has included a “nominal list and qualifications of the Superior Assistants and of the Sappers and Miners attached to D District.
been dispersed across the north of Ireland in five districts which were scheduled to advance southwards in line abreast until the whole country had been mapped. These districts named from A to E were each controlled by a captain and surveyed independently (see Figure 6). The first of Colby’s annual reports describes how each district captain was supplied with the results of the great triangulation which they were to incorporate into a secondary network averaging two or three points in every parish. Each district was shared among a number of detail parties, commanded by a subaltern who made his own parish observations to fix points at a density of one or two per townland.¹¹¹

To guide his officers through the novelties of the detail survey, Colby worked out a special code of instructions that came to be known as the Colonel’s Blue Book. These were intended not as a comprehensive survey manual, but as a guide to the differences between the new Irish operation and the routine military surveys in which his readers had already been instructed. One area that was emphasised in the instructions was documentation. The field books of content surveying and theodolite "levelling", together with the content registers in which the results were calculated, and the content plot, formed the central components of an elaborate document-complex through which any section the survey work could be traced back to pin-point the man and the instrument responsible. This provided an important check on accuracy. All documentation was to be listed and preserved in the fireproof stores. The military system that Colby had established meant just that: forms to be filled, signatures appended, responsibilities assigned and accepted, instruments and men disposed of by the hundred, the professionalism of a well-drilled multitude.

¹¹⁰ The number of districts was reduced to four in 1829, and then three in 1832. The Survey began its work in the North was that Ireland’s trigonometrical preparation required that a link be made with Scotland. This was possible because the two high peaks of Ireland and Scotland are visible to one another. The Survey thus worked southwards from this northern peak.
¹¹¹ There were a total of 67,000 townlands in Ireland. Irish territorial organisation was organised around townlands. Townlands amalgamated to form parishes and parishes amalgamated to form baronies.
FIGURE 6: DISTRICTS, DISTRICT OFFICES & DISTRICT OFFICERS OF THE SIX INCH DETAIL SURVEY.

Having begun as an advocate of Colby's military system, by 1826 Major Reid was wishing for a more speedy and efficient system. By October of that year, the area of Ireland laid down on paper stood at a mere 56,000 acres - about 1/400th part of the country in one year's work. Figures 7 and 8 both depict the surveyors at work in the field. This same month Colby had visited Ireland and pointed out that some plans were far enough advanced for a start to be made with the recruitment of civilian draftsmen.\textsuperscript{112}

As soon as the need for draftsmen had been mentioned, Reid seized the opportunity as a pretext for advertising for surveyors too. By the end of 1826 Colby was surprised to see forty-three civilian assistants on his books. The measure was contrary to Colby's intentions and was taken without his knowledge. Worried that these newcomers would introduce less demanding standards he showed his displeasure by insisting that they should be kept off the content survey as far as possible and that their work be closely supervised. Colby could have arrested this development by preventing any further recruitment but instead he allowed it to continue. His armour had been dented and Reid's impulsive act of defiance established a pattern of mixed military and civil organisation that was to characterise the Ordnance Survey's staff structure. By the late 1830s civilian assistants were to outnumber the sappers by as much as four to one.

Reid's defiance of Colby's orders on a number of other issues led Colby to decide that the system of a deputy in Dublin was not working. He arranged for Reid to be returned to general duties of the Corps and prepared to manage the Irish headquarters himself. Reid's successor at Mountjoy was not a major but a Lieutenant. Thomas Larcom's lesser rank was matched with lesser responsibilities. Instead of acting as Colby's deputy, he was initially confined to supervising the engravers.

\textsuperscript{112} COLBY's report to the Master General, 1828.
FIGURE 7: PENCIL SKETCH OF A SURVEYOR AT WORK

Source: Ordnance Survey Archives, OS 96/2/110. Stored at the National Archives of Ireland.
Larcom's powers slowly increased until in 1838 he found himself acting as master of Mountjoy. Through the years Larcom put in place a series of efforts to draw the Survey out of the framework laid down for it in 1824. Although Colby and Larcom both saw the Irish Survey as a work that went far beyond its military beginnings, in the direction of science, scholarship and general utility - Colby took the larger view because he faced the task of restoring Britain to its proper place in the cartography of the United Kingdom while Larcom remained prone to interpret "justice for Ireland" in the manner of his adopted countrymen. Within these limits however, Larcom's approach was the broader - it was more creative and outward-looking if also less economical of government funds. Both Colby and Larcom were essential to the formulation and direction of the Irish Survey and its place-naming procedures in particular because orthography of names originating in a language other than English was still in embryonic stages. I will now provide a portrait of Colby and of Larcom as a context into which their actions with Ireland's place-names can be understood. Figure 9 depicts both Captain Colby and Lieutenant Larcom.

A profile of Colby

Thomas Fredrick Colby (1784-1852) was the eldest son of a military family with an estate near Newcastle Emlyn in South Wales. He was connected to the Survey through birth: his mother was the sister of Major-General John Hadden, sometime secretary to the Duke of Richmond, who was to become Surveyor General of the Ordnance between 1804 and 1810 - a critical juncture in the Napoleonic war. Colby was an able pupil, mathematically and in other respects, and before reaching his seventeenth birthday had passed out of the Royal Military Academy and was commissioned as Second-Lieutenant of Royal Engineers on 21 December 1801. Colby was attached immediately to the Ordnance Survey and remained in its service until his retirement in 1846. Colby was the first officer of the Royal Engineers to be appointed to the survey and from then until 1977 all directors of the Ordnance Survey were to be taken from this Corps.113

113 ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape.
FIGURE 8: MEASURING LOUGH FOYLE BASE, 1827.

FIGURE 9: PORTRAITS OF COLBY AND LARCOM.

It was in this position that Colby received a good grounding in all aspects of a national survey. Colby was progressively drawn into the Ordnance map office in the Tower of London to help organise computation, drawing, engraving and printing. By 1820, at the age of thirty-six, his experience included all aspects of map making and he often had to assume executive responsibility for the over-all quality of the work. He had established a reputation as an expert in trigonometrical surveying, field astronomy and base measurement and a vigorous hard-working officer who in spite of a the loss of his right hand in an early accident devoted many seasons to field work.

Once Colby joined the Irish Survey in 1824, it prospered. He gave new character to its scientific branch by the invention or application of new instruments. Colby's keen interest in advancing geodetic science led him to belong to a number of scientific institutions in London. He was a fellow of the Royal Society and of the Astronomical, Geological, Geographical and Statistical Societies. He was therefore in touch with scientific thought. He took the highest view of the objects of the Survey, looking upon it as the basis for national improvement and consequently as the groundwork for historical, antiquarian, geological, statistical and natural history surveys. Colby saw his task in Ireland as a whole, at once a work of science and scholarship, an aid to commerce and industry, and an instrument of government that could take its issuers far beyond the needs of local taxation.

Perhaps the most concise and accurate description of Colby's work ethos is Larcom's note, "the colonel hates half measures."\footnote{LARCOM, 5th March 1839.} What makes Colby interesting is not just his combination of the pure scientific outlook with an urge for achievement, but his craving for accuracy that may be described as obsessive. The idea of tolerable error was foreign to Colby's nature: hungering after perfect accuracy, he found it hard to admit that the most faultless of systems has to be applied by imperfect men working with imperfect materials. He was a perfectionist with strong views on the way the survey should be executed and controlled. Colby was to pay a great deal of attention to the technical and organisational weaknesses he inherited when he became Survey's Superintendent; from him the Survey was to derive much of the organisation and most of the methods which were to be used throughout the next century. This system was a military one: forms filled in, signatures appended, responsibilities assigned and
accepted, instruments disposed of by the hundred, men by the thousand; the corporate professionalism of the well-drilled multitude.

In 1828, as if to underline his commitment to Ireland, Colby married an Irish woman - Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Boyd of Londonderry. They lived together near Phoenix Park Dublin until Colby was transferred to London in 1838 to direct the work in England and Scotland.

A profile of Larcom

Larcom began his career at Mountjoy 1828 as a departmental afterthought, head of an office for engraving maps which some of his more influential superiors did not consider to be worth engraving. From this peripheral position he came to influence the whole business of six-inch map-making. He formed a department for the examination and comparison of all the plans and documents which it was resolved to publish. He had to ensure the careful compilation of all the separate plans into county maps and for their engraving and publishing. This meant meeting the increasing rapidity with which they were completed as the force in the field became larger and more competent. He brought Colby's division of labour from the field into the office. He made it possible for maps to be manufactured in large numbers rather than made as individual constructions. In the spirit of industrial revolution Larcom introduced a number of mechanical aids and divided his engraving staff, which at its height numbered nearly sixty artists, into separate branches for outline, writing and ornament. He also employed different workers for inking and cleaning of the plates, the dampening of paper, and the working of the press. He was responsible for the training of each staff member in their designated speciality.\textsuperscript{115}

This is only part of the story though. In the thirties and forties, British history had reached a juncture at which the Royal Engineers officer's blend of technical expertise and orderly business habits was in growing demand. A wide range of public affairs outside the Royal Engineers' own professional sphere called for their versatility. One observer suggested that if the present trends continued, Britain would soon have an Engineer government with the inspector-general as prime-minister. Even in this

company Larcom stood out. He had an essentially geographical approach - whatever the problem, Larcom was ready with a map. When Colby returned to England in 1838 many thought he would carry the Survey's centre of gravity with him. For Larcom however, Colby's departure brought home the importance of his own position - he became, for all intents and purposes, superintendent of the Irish Survey. The remaining work in Ireland was entrusted to Larcom.

Larcom did not have any hereditary connections to Ireland, but he had an immense interest in all things Irish. He set about establishing other connections and hastily learnt Irish. The language, history, literature and people all fascinated him and he gradually acquired a deep knowledge that would serve him well. What made him unique from his contemporaries was that his energies were solely focused on Ireland, not England. He had much feeling for his adopted country and he was quick to see the value of the six-inch series maps as an aid to national improvement. He made sure that the first edition of the maps was widely distributed among Ireland's libraries and government offices. Perhaps this fed his sympathy to etymological place-name work: he is largely credited with establishing a specialised sub-department for toponymic research and he placed much energy into making the Memoir scheme a success. The Memoir scheme - essentially a comprehensive statistical survey - began in 1830 when the district officers were asked to send in their name books for county Londonderry together with "the statistical and other information necessary to form a comprehensive gazetteer preparatory to publication." Reports started to flow in by July 1830. Larcom attempted to improve the quality and extend the scope of these reports by circulating among the officers a thirty-seven page printed pamphlet specifying particular items of interest.

Larcom's attachment to Ireland can also be seen through his fight for the Survey office in Ireland to remain an equal but separate from London and Southampton after the six-inch series was completed. This continued existence would allow a whole range of local and regional cartographic needs in Ireland to be met. In contrast Colby wanted to dissolve the Irish office at the soonest possible date. He wanted what was left of the Irish Survey to be distributed among different individuals who would all be answerable to

116 OWEN & PILBEAM Ordnance Survey: Map makers to Britain, quote from p.35.
117 Ordnance Survey Letter Register (Outbound) #2527, 13 January 1830, Mountjoy to C, D and E districts. From hereon referred to as OSLR (I) or (O).
118 LARCOM (1832) Head of Inquiry, LP 7550.
Southampton, instead of uniting them in Dublin under Larcom's supervision. From a London standpoint there were good reasons to close down the Dublin office: the six-inch maps were nearly finished and if future work in Ireland could be controlled from Southampton there would be a saving in wages and office expenses. Larcom managed to make a good case, pointing out the needs for revision, and that the valuable daily communication between Dublin Castle and Mountjoy would be lost. The engravers at Mountjoy made the final persuasive point when they asked where they would complete the six-inch series with no office to publish from. Mountjoy was saved, but Larcom became the sacrificial lamb. However he was quickly scooped up by the Irish Board of Works where he continued his distinguished career firstly as a commissioner engaged in the planning of famine relief works and finally as deputy chairman. In 1853 Larcom became Under Secretary for Ireland. In all of his public offices, Larcom sought to apply the use of Ordnance Survey maps wherever appropriate to the task.

The final product

The Irish Survey maps which had started out as a valuation exercise had evolved into what Larcom called "a full face portrait of the land". Once complete the maps would be suitable for planning railways, roads, drainage, as a base for geology on a national scale, to aid social and economic planning and even for individual owners of private estates to hang on their walls. The maps would comprise a source for the effective governing and reformation of Ireland by the British government. They were intended for an English audience and played a role in further anglicising Ireland. As such the Ordnance Survey occupied a central place in the power relations between England and Ireland.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has depicted Ireland as a disorderly place: a country that has suffered seven hundred years of English physical invasions, political intrusions and cultural misrepresentations. The nineteenth century legacy of English intervention was its material and rhetorical construction of Ireland as chaos. I have examined the manifestations of this construct in Ireland's taxation system, its relatively undeveloped cartography and in its cacophony of variously corrupted place-names. I have also shown that this construct provided the justification needed for an English military body to enter and investigate Ireland. I have suggested that the Ordnance Survey was the first
step in a larger plan to orientate Ireland's development and organisation around English demands. In the next chapter I focus on one aspect of the production of the Survey maps, place-naming, and illustrate just how this supposed act of record began to make interventions in Ireland. I attempt to illustrate how the English state utilised the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and more particular its treatment of Irish place-names, to impose an foreign order upon Ireland. Throughout this chapter the tension between "chaos" and "order" has surfaced. The material and rhetorical production of Ireland-as-chaos was explored through my history of English-Irish relations. This same tension of order versus chaos surfaces again in the next chapter and in its discussion of the encounter between the Ordnance Survey's orthographic system and the complexities of the Irish namescape.
CHAPTER THREE:
SURVEYING THE NAMENSCAPE:
PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE ORDNANCE SURVEY OF IRELAND

The Survey, considered as a great national work subservient to the future improvements of the country, ought to be carried in an uniform system and to embrace as far as may be all the objects of public utility which a survey can effect.\textsuperscript{119}

In 1825 Colonel Colby issued a series of \textit{Instructions for the Interior Survey of Ireland}.\textsuperscript{120} These comprised seventy-four directions as to how the Survey was to be organised and performed. Combined they provide a framework for the 'uniform system' to which the Ordnance Survey aspired. The \textit{Instructions} are largely concerned with instituting measures to secure the accuracy of the Survey: they require that chains and theolodites be checked frequently, that surveyors date and sign their work and that the formidable range of documents produced during the Survey be listed and archived properly.\textsuperscript{121} Four of these seventy-four directions relate to toponymy. From these instructions it is clear that names were to be examined and rectified with the same ardour for precision as every other aspect of the Survey. Indeed, Larcom, the second in command of the Irish Survey, was anxious "to make the maps a standard of orthography as well as of topography".\textsuperscript{122} It was believed that if the Ordnance Survey treated place-names systematically, it could identify accurate and standardised forms for its maps.

This chapter examines how place-names became fixed on the Ordnance Survey six-inch maps. In so doing, it traces the Ordnance Survey's attempts to apply a \textit{uniform system} to the toponymy of Ireland. I follow the archival paper trail to ascertain the evolution of the principles, policies and practices of selecting place-names. Place-names are among the most well documented features of the Irish Survey.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} COLBY, T. (1825) \textit{Instructions for the Interior Survey of Ireland}. The arrival of the instructions is recorded in various places in the letter registers between OSLR(I) #113, 19th May 1825 and OSLR #524 (October 1825). The latter were afterwards lithographed under 74 headings to form a single document popularly known as "The Colonel's Blue Book".
\textsuperscript{121} COLBY, T. (1825) \textit{Instructions for the Interior Survey of Ireland} (unpublished, Royal Archives of Ireland) see in particular articles 8, 9, 10, 19, 20, 22, 30, 51, and 52.
\textsuperscript{122} COLBY to Larcom, May 1842, citing Larcom's address to the Master General of the Ordnance, April 1830.
\textsuperscript{123} This is primarily due to the fact that the Field Name Books for all but two parishes are still in existence.
The four instructions for toponymy are the first and only formal set of guidelines issued for the collection and selection of place-names. Thereafter, place-name policy exists solely "between the lines" and "in the margins" of Ordnance Survey documentation\(^{124}\) - especially in the letters and memoranda sent between headquarters and the surveyors and scholars responsible for the collection of names. Indeed, the majority of policy directions were formulated as direct responses to questions from surveyors about how they were to overcome the unforeseen difficulties of implementing policy. An additional complication in understanding the process of place-naming is that many supporting documents have been lost or misplaced, and it appears that some cartographic decisions were conveyed by word of mouth and thus were never committed to writing. Given the inconspicuous, indeterminate nature of place-name policy and the scattered, incomplete state of the archive, this chapter comprises a reconstruction and a deconstruction of Ordnance Survey activity. Having reconstructed the routine by which place-names were supposed to be collected, selected and fixed, I then recover the multiple departures from this standard procedure and explore some of the reasons for them.

My analysis reveals a tension in the treatment of place-names during the Ordnance Survey of Ireland between two geographically-separated and ideologically-opposed groups. On the one hand, the central authorities wished to apply the same principles for quantifying space to Irish toponymy. On the other, the scholars and surveyors in the field attempted to modify official policy by incorporating the seasoned, grounded knowledge they had gained from localised, practical experience in the field. I trace the oscillations of policy that result from the incomensurability of principles for quantifying space and endeavours to transcribe place.

**Collecting Authorities & Surveying the Facts**

During the process of constructing maps, the Ordnance Survey was to decide the most suitable English language spellings for Ireland's place-names. It was not the first time the Ordnance Survey had needed to transliterate place-names composed in a language other than English. Indeed similar predicaments had arisen when the Ordnance Survey recorded the place-names of British India, the Scottish Highlands and

\(^{124}\) HARLEY, "Deconstructing the Map" quote from p.233.
Wales. However, the importance placed on precision during the quantification of space for this map series\textsuperscript{125} was impacting the omnastic domain. The study of place-names was being approached along scientific and quantitative lines. The concern for precision resulted in its unprecedented interest in the orthographic problem.

\textit{Colby's Instructions}

The Boundary Survey and the Ordnance Survey were simultaneously working in the field when the question of place-names arose. It was not foreseen that the Boundary Survey and the Ordnance Survey would enter disputes and although the Ordnance Survey did not question the alterations Griffith was making to the boundaries, they did begin to question the spellings of the townland names they received from the boundary sketches. In most cases the Survey adopted the townland names supplied by the Irish Government's Boundary Survey but Colby was not content to leave responsibility for the spelling of townland names to the Boundary department. Colby established a system to deal directly with the problem of place-name spelling in the same way that he dealt with any technical problem.

Orthography was first addressed in Colby's \textit{Instructions for the Interior Survey of Ireland}. These were sent to the Irish headquarters in twenty-one separate sections. The majority of these arrived throughout May and June 1825.\textsuperscript{126} The instructions concerning the treatment of place-names arrived together. They read as follows:

\begin{itemize}
\item #33 The persons employed on the survey are to endeavour to obtain the correct orthography of the names of places, diligently consulting the best authorities within their reach.
\item #34 The name of each place is to be inserted as it is commonly spelt, in the first column of the name book; and the various modes of spelling it used in books, writings &c., are to be inserted in the second column, with the authority placed in the third column opposite to each.
\item #35 The situation of the place is to be recorded in a popular manner in the fourth column of the name book.
\item #36 A short description of the place and any other remarkable circumstances relating to it are to be inserted in the fifth column of the name book.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{125} Portlock, a contemporary of Colby's, noted nothing "could shake his determination not to publish until its [the map] accuracy had been fully established". PORTLOCK, \textit{Memoir of the life of Major General Colby}, quote from p.96.
\textsuperscript{126} Six of these entries in the Register of Correspondence are from June until the end of 1825.
In this way Colby transplanted the system which was developing in the use of name sheets in Lincolnshire directly to Ireland. The treatment of place-names by the Ordnance Survey was evidently evolving across the various national surveys rather than separately. Colby's Instructions are not explicit, perhaps because the basic method was already in existence elsewhere. However brief, these instructions do mark the birth, if not the conception, of the parish name books. On the 30th May 1825 a circular was sent to the district officials responsible for directing the work around the country asking them “to communicate their ideas as to the best mode of ascertaining [the names of places]”. Within a few weeks replies arrived and the layout for the name books was being discussed. In the interim period, work was being carried out according to Colby's instructions but on name sheets.

Before the end of 1825 the layout had been finalised and the name books were being distributed to the district officers responsible for directing the survey parties in the field. Each page of the name book contained five columns: received name, orthography, authority, situation and descriptive remarks (see Figures 10 and 11). Officers were to keep records of every name, first as it was commonly spelt, then in all of its various spellings, giving the authority for each version. Colby's system had provided a means for the orthography chosen by the Boundary Department to be demoted to simply one among several spellings that the engineer officers were enjoined to collect. Colby had realised his desire to appropriate toponymic responsibility from the Boundary Survey. Following the specification of the location, the Descriptive Remarks column required surveyors to make notes on soils, farming practices, leases and rents, prominent buildings, the social condition of the people and the most common surnames in the town.

---

127 OSLR(O) #150, 30 May 1825.
128 OSLR(I) #176, 4 June 1825; OSLR #189, 6 June 1825.
FIGURE 10: A BLANK PAGE OF A NAME BOOK.
Source: Ordnance Survey Field Name Book. Stored at the Fireproof stores, Ordnance Survey Offices.

FIGURE 11: FRONT COVER, AND INDEX PAGE OF A NAME BOOK.
Note: Inside the cover there is a note "Speed to Capt. Lancey RE 13 July 1840".
Each officer was also asked to keep a journal of the scientific, economic and historical facts that came to his attention: here was the kernel of the Survey's memoir project. Colby was moving towards the concept of a fully rounded national survey.\textsuperscript{129} Alongside the townland names, the books served as a record for the Survey's own choice of 'small' or 'object' names denoting features such as houses, bridges, streams and hills. This was often the first time that such names had been documented in Ireland and thus no pre-existing written authorities could be found. Once the name-books were completed, they were returned to Phoenix Park where the form of the name to be engraved was finalised, most often by Lieutenant Larcom. An apparatus had thus been established which allowed place-name information to be collected locally but scrutinised centrally. Figure 12 depicts this trail of a name book diagrammatically.

\textit{First principles}

The importance of selecting of place-names and the desire to standardise their form was thus prevalent from the very beginning of the Survey. Colby's system proposed to confine the Survey's name selection to existing, written forms of place-names. The \textit{Instructions} demand an empirical mode of working; a 'survey of facts' rather than an expression of opinion. By adopting the version recommended by the majority of sources, it was believed a quantitative measure of orthographical correctness would be achieved. The discovery of the correct orthography in some objective sense however, relied on the presumption that only the best authorities would be consulted. The Survey was grappling to find a way of balancing the burden of proof with the weight of the evidence. The reasoning was deductive and the aspirations were to find the truth the only way it could be found, scientifically. The Survey believed its task would be straightforward so long as the principles of truth, correctness and logic were applied to the ascription of place-names. The scientific, political and administrative necessity of establishing a standard spelling for Irish place-names within the conventions of the standard English language, whatever its faults, had been provided for.

\textsuperscript{129} ANDREWS, \textit{A Paper Landscape}, quote on p.56.
1. Blank name books at Mountjoy, the Ordnance Survey headquarters.

2. Name books distributed to the five District Officers.

3. Name books handed to surveyors in each district division.

4. Surveyors enter authorities and spellings for each townland until parish is completed.

5. Name books returned to District Officers.

6. First phase of name book is completed. Name books returned to Mountjoy.

7. Officers at Mountjoy select from the authorities in the name book the most common spelling of each name which is to be engraved on the map.

8. The Name book is then archived in the Fireproof store at Mountjoy.

9. Selected name passed on to the engravers.

**FIGURE 12: THE PRODUCTION OF ORTHOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE: THE TRAIL OF A NAME BOOK (1824-34).**

*Note:* This is the first of a set of three diagrams that depict the trail of the name books. As orthographic policies changed, the journey of the books became more elaborate.
Despite the extent of the measures taken to ensure precision, the concept of objectivity on which the system relied could not dispel the partiality of the authorities consulted. Before discussing the practical manifestations of Colby's initial policy, I want to discuss this notion of authorities - a concept that was never brought into question during the course of the Survey. 'Authority' as used in the guidelines means both an 'author' and a trustworthy 'authorised' source of knowledge.\(^{130}\) It was Ordnance Survey orthographic policy to allow landowners to be the sole source of authority for the name of their demesnes. The Register of Correspondence contains instances of landowners such as a Mr. John Betty "requesting that the name of his residence in Derrybrusk parish may be engraved on the sheet."\(^{131}\) Similarly a Mr. Matthew O'Reilly is recorded in the register as "stating that he has changed the name of his place from Thornastown Castle to Castlelagan requesting that alteration may be made on the copper."\(^{132}\) For the remainder of place-names, the Survey worked upon the assumption that the opinions of particular people were more valid than others and therefore more trust could be placed in them. Although there were no guidelines to establish whom the Survey deemed to be authoritative, there was a consistency in the orthographic authorities most commonly cited in the name books. Beside material supplied by the Boundary Department, these authorities comprised mainly local government records, county records such as grand jury presentments, lists of freeholders and estate papers and word-of-mouth evidence from land agents, clergymen, schoolmasters and local landowners.\(^{133}\) Considerable use was also made of pre-Ordnance Survey maps. Figure 13 is an example of a completed name book which contains the rather unusual authority of song lyrics. Below, Figure 14 shows a letter of the type that were written to a land owners asking what their preferred spelling of their property was.

\(^{130}\) Ó MAOLFABHAIL, "An tSuirbhéireacht Ordanáis", quote from p.41.  
\(^{131}\) OSLR(I) #6276, 4 August, 1835.  
\(^{132}\) OSLR(I) #6982, 9 September, 1836.  
\(^{133}\) Once the system was underway there were usually about half a dozen authorities for each name.
Figure 13: A completed name book page.

Note: The authority for the spelling of the name Garnavilla is taken from the printed lyrics of the song "Kate of Garnavilla"

Source: Ordnance Survey Field Name Book, Cahir # 1, Co. Tipperary, p.25. Stored at the Fireproof stores, Ordnance Survey Offices.

Figure 14: A letter written to a land owner asking their preferred spellings

Note: The columns are entitled County, Name of owner, Proposed name and Spelling recommended by the proprietor. The latter column has been completed and returned.

The system of authorities worked to privilege men with education and of high social status, owning their own land or possessing good connections to the proprietor. Far from providing the means for an objective survey of facts, the notion of 'authorities' actively excluded women and those without a higher education. By implication the power of naming is restricted by the Ordnance Survey to those with authority over the land or to those with a special responsibility for transmitting values enshrined in written language. The class interests represented were those of the most powerful class in a country where political power and wealth derived almost exclusively from land. These specific, 'nameable' and private voices speaking on behalf of particular private interests and estates were privileged by the Survey over both more collective, anonymous and in some senses 'public' sources (such as advertisements, newspapers and directories) and over other specific, nameable and private voices such as the Gaelic, landless, Roman Catholic population. The result was the names recognised by the Ordnance Survey, contrary to its stated intention were not the most commonly used.

Even amongst those people considered authorities a variety of levels of influence existed. The version of a name that enjoyed a majority within the authorities collected by the Survey was often not selected. Other factors came into play that overrode the majority principle. In particular, the scale of authority was far more influential than the democratic principle. We can begin to see that the name books comprised not only the material manifestation of Colby's Instructions but an analytical space in which knowledge was negotiated, filtered, and then collected, manipulated and legitimated. Authorities provided points of legitimation for the Ordnance Survey and its choice of place-names. They support, justify and provide objectivity to the Ordnance Survey's selected versions of place-names. Those considered authoritative in turn became authorial. They wielded significant, albeit indirect and joint, influence over which names and orthographies were chosen for the final maps.

Protestant ascendancy in Ireland had rested in the possession of land, control of parliament and the instruments of government. It is no coincidence that the decline in Catholic political and economic power was matched with an equal loss in the land they owned. In 1641 59% of Ireland's land was owned by Catholics, by the last quarter of the 18th century only 5% remained under Catholic control.
In the early years of the Survey, Colby's instructions were put to the test in the everyday running of the Irish Survey. Revisions were required as a result. In fairness to Colby, some of the vagueness of the Instructions was intentional: at one point in the Instructions he breaks off to explain that "mere local operations...must be left to the skill and arrangement of the district commanding officers and those employed under their orders and it is expected that nothing which may conduce to the perfection of the work will be neglected". However, Colby's mixture of precision and imprecision was received in the field with some bewilderment. Officers sought more positive guidance on points that had been indefinite, and when sometimes they did not get it they necessarily resorted to their own judgement. It is primarily at these points that errors and inconsistencies entered into the workings of Colby's system.

Many surveyors clearly did not exercise the same precision in spelling as they did in ground measurements. Captain Waters, a District official wrote to Phoenix Park isolating the spelling of place-names as a particular difficulty.\textsuperscript{135} He subsequently had difficulty ensuring even the safekeeping of his name books and on 31st July 1829 wrote to headquarters reporting the loss of the Balteagh name book.\textsuperscript{136} More often headquarters issued unsolicited direction. On 2nd October 1826, Captain Lancey alerted headquarters to a lack of orthographic consistency in "that the same names are spelt differently in the plans and plots of A district."\textsuperscript{137} Inevitably certain officers proved to be more adept at toponymy than others. The lack of consistency in the quantity and relevance of information contained in the name books for parishes was noted and it prompted cautions. Captain Henderson, a District Officer was informed that the name books "of his district appear very deficient in comparison with those of [district] D."\textsuperscript{138} A more general orthographical caution was issued to "enforce strict attention to the mode of keeping the name and Boundary remark books."\textsuperscript{139}

In practice, Colby's system did not always give satisfaction at Mountjoy. In one instance Larcom chastised an officer:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{135} OSLR(I) \#224, 18 June 1825.
\item \textsuperscript{136} OSLR(I) \#8156, 31 July 1829.
\item \textsuperscript{137} OSLR(I) \#992, 2 October, 1826.
\item \textsuperscript{138} OSLR(O) \#2266, 22 May, 1829. The Irish Survey subdivided Ireland into 5 districts and labelled them A - E. Each district was independently surveyed by separate parties who worked from north to south.
\item \textsuperscript{139} OSLR(O) \#2422, 24 October, 1829.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Strange admission that you can give "no positive information" as to the name of a place surveyed by you! Who is to be looked to but you? You might with as much propriety say you can give no positive information as to its area. You are responsible for all that appears on your plan and for making it as perfect as "the scale admits."\textsuperscript{140}

The last phrase is certainly a reference to Colby's \textit{Instructions} of 1825.\textsuperscript{141} However Larcom's analogy was perhaps a little unfair. The surveyors had not been trained for place-name research. It was all the more unfortunate then that Colby issued no orders as to what features, other than townlands and demesnes should be individually named on the plans. Ireland is well provided with truly topographical names for small areas - portions of townlands for instance, slopes and folds of land in tracts of mountain pasture - for which the average surveyor unprompted would probably not think of asking the name.\textsuperscript{142}

As frequently as obstacles and complications were encountered in the field, methods were modified and expanded to overcome them. However, dedication to the production of systematised knowledge purged of contradictions ran up against a formidable set of barriers with place-name encounters as the difficulties reached far beyond those experienced in the field. Once applied to language the rationalising procedures of the Ordnance Survey did not produce the predictable results expected. The official policy was to adopt whichever version was recommended by the majority of authorities.\textsuperscript{143} Given that equal representation was possible, it was logical to presume this policy could define some quantitative measure of orthographical correctness. Setting aside the issue that the bias in whom was deemed an authority prevented an equal representation of place-name versions, this policy could still not be applied to the Irish namescape to produce consistently correct results. Irish place-names had been too variously distorted by generations of English-speaking settlers for the majority principle assumption to be valid. A majority verdict might turn out to be unobtainable. At one village in County Cork, for example, the name book records the five different authorities for the spelling 'Ballincorra' and another five authorities for the alternative spelling of 'Ballincurra'. And, where a majority verdict was obtainable, it often resulted in the selection of what was clearly a corrupted form of the place-name. This corrupted form,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{140} OS Memorandums [sic], Cavan, 4 October 1836, Larcom to Boteler, p.120.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} \textit{COLBY, Instructions}, article 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape}, p.120.
  \item \textsuperscript{143} \textit{COLBY, Add. MS 14380}, f.79.
\end{itemize}
although an accurate reflection of the impact of English-speaking settlers in Ireland over several hundreds of years, made it difficult for the Survey to claim their name form was the correct form.

However, the most serious flaw in the procedure in the Survey's eyes was that this method of selecting the place-name spelling was producing unstandardised results. Common components of place-names such as ridge (Druim) or town (Baile) were pronounced and spelt differently in each regional dialect. By applying a majority principle locally, the Survey was selecting a different spelling for each place-name component in each area. The advantages of standardising such place-name components such as such as Drim, Drum and Drom were obvious to an institution so preoccupied with order and uniformity.

Once such considerations were admitted, etymology crept back into Colby's apparently straightforward system. Colby himself had raised the question of Irish etymology at an early stage in a "circular to captain of districts requesting them to communicate their ideas as to the best mode of ascertaining the etymology of place-names."144 (See Figure 15) Even though Colby had not issued any positive directions on the matter, the field officers kept the question alive. In 1827, C district was already collecting the meanings of names with the help of one of its civil assistants who happened to be an Irish scholar.145 Two years later C district's commander Captain Waters went back to first principles in his query to headquarters requesting "information as to whether the original and descriptive Irish names or the one generally received and spelt should be put on the plans."146 This question at once defines the ancient language as the site of meaning and distinguishes it from the modern written form of everyday usage. The effect is to both privilege and to alienate the past. An answer came one month later when "Lt. Col. Colby observe[d] the printed are generally to be preferred as authorities, but that every authority should be consulted and entered in the Name Book."147 From that answer onwards we can clearly follow the evolution of place-name policy in the Irish Survey.

---

144 OSLR(O) #150, 30 May 1825.
145 Ordnance Survey Progress Report, C District, 1 April 1827.
146 OSLR(I) #8383, 11 December 1829.
147 OSLR(O) # 8383, 13 January 1830.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>May 23&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>149</td>
<td>May 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>May 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>June 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>June 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>June 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>June 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>Letter to the Surveyor General requiring him to make a survey of the 2nd Division of districts requiring the addition of lines in Ireland...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 15: EXTRACT FROM THE REGISTER OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Note: See #150 in particular.

Source: Register of Correspondence OS 2/3, p.15. Stored at the National Archives.
A new policy

In 1830, responsibility for orthography was transferred from the regional districts to Dublin headquarters. Given that serious disadvantages had resulted from the initial policy of adopting the most common spelling, Larcom seized this opportunity to adapt the policy for place-name regularisation. Larcom's instinct was to polish Irish place-names. For example, in County Wexford, "Paddy Haye's quay", the name appearing on the manuscript plan of Hook parish was engraved on the copper printing press as "Haye's quay" while "Big Juggy" near Powerscourt House in county Wicklow did not appear at all. However, in matters of orthography Larcom was not only sympathetic to etymological demands but also proactive in setting up policies to foreground the meanings of place-names. Larcom decided to retain the field name books with their documentation of variant spellings. However, he changed the principle upon which the adopted name was chosen. Rather than adopting the most common spelling of a place-name, Larcom decided to choose the version that came closest to the original Irish form of the name.

A new principle

Larcom's new policy represented a compromise between a scientific and quantitative approach and an antiquarian and qualitative approach. It was rational, scholarly and practical. It showed not only a well intentioned deference to the 'Irishness' of place-names but also an interest in their meanings and origins. One exception to this policy was demesne and house names which remained, in theory at least, the authority of the owner even when their choice differed from all the Survey's other authorities as to the spelling of a name. For townland names, it remained official policy from 1830 onwards.

The direction in which the policy moved was most likely influenced by a visitor of Larcom's. George Everest visited the Irish Survey offices in 1829, just one year before

---

149 LARCOM to Colby, 12 May 1842 Larcom's Papers 7553, Report on Ordnance Memoir, 1843.
150 OS Memorandums, Donegal, 23 November 1836, LARCOM to Thomas Stewart, p.698.
he was made director of the Indian Survey.\textsuperscript{151} He was a contemporary of Larcom and his influence upon the Irish Survey was already apparent in a number of technical issues. Colby's compensation bars for example were based upon a similar apparatus used by Everest in the triangulation of India. It was Everest's suggestion to arrange the sheetlines of the Irish plans into a system of squares, a suggestion that took effect in the latter part of 1828. On a less technical note, the Indian Survey set an important precedent for the Irish Survey in combining maps and memoirs in a state-operated survey, the legacy of which will be discussed latterly. Everest's most relevant influence however derived from his knowledge of the problems that accompany the rewriting of names from languages and scripts strange to English. It is probable he discussed these issues and how they could be resolved with Larcom with reference to his experiences with Sanskrit and other languages in India.

\textit{Practical measures}

In order for the Survey to practice its new orthographic principle, the original forms of Irish place-names had to be recovered or reconstructed. This required the existing system to be extended in two directions. Firstly the authorities entered in the name-books had to be supplemented with obsolete, but etymologically relevant, spellings collected from historical sources. All the available information concerning the topography of the country was collected beginning with any references that could be extracted from the ancient Irish manuscripts. These extracts "form in themselves a valuable topographic library such perhaps as no country in Europe possesses in the same condensed form."\textsuperscript{152} Every inch of Irish soil was being scrutinised, recorded and archived. Indeed in an annual report Colby states "in addition to the maps and plans themselves, a great variety of materials towards the formation of statistical and other reports will be collected".\textsuperscript{153} Secondly, the Irish forms were determined where possible on the basis of field study. The pronunciation of names and "clues" in the landscape which might indicate the meaning and referents of place-names were being collected. These included prominent topographical and archaeological indications of their meanings and distinguished family names of the area.

\textsuperscript{151} \textsc{Andreas}, \textit{A Paper Landscape}, p.122
\textsuperscript{152} \textsc{Carbury}, E. (1931) "The Irish Ordnance Survey." \textit{An Leabharlann} Vol. 2(1) pp.67-9, quote from p.69.
\textsuperscript{153} Colby cited in \textsc{Seymour}, W.A. (Ed.) \textit{A History of the Ordnance Survey}, p.91.
In an effort to meet these new needs, Larcom applied to the Irish Society for a qualified Irish teacher. He was referred to Mr. John O'Donnovan who duly appeared at Larcom's residence. Larcom employed this young man from County Kilkenny to teach him the Irish language. After a few months it became apparent that the need for an Irish speaker was pressing and that Larcom's academic progress was too slow to meet it. So Mr. O'Donnovan's services were no longer required. It would not be long however before he reappeared on the Survey's staff. Not only was Larcom's linguistic progress insufficient but also the records taken by British Army officers conducting the survey proved unsatisfactory in determining the origins of place-names. These military surveyors had little interest and no formal training in the Irish language, history or antiquities. Thus there was a new twist in the place-name division of the Irish Survey - an Irish scholar was sought to serve on the Survey's staff at headquarters and Irish civilians were employed by the survey to assist field surveyors in the collection and examination of place-names in the field. By April 1830, there is a request to obtain "the Honourable Board [of Ordnance]'s sanction for [Mr. O'Reilly] being engaged in the revision of [orthography] having proffered his aid at 6d per page."  

Edward O'Reilly was sixty-five at the time of his appointment to the Survey. He was the most famous Irish scholar of his time. He was considered well qualified for the work the Survey offered him not least because of the English-Irish dictionary that he published in 1817. The general support for O'Reilly's position is clear from the fact he began work for the Survey prior to his formal invitation of employment. The Survey employed O'Reilly to review the English spelling of the place-names and to settle them. It was intended that he would identify the original Irish form of each name, provide a translation of its meaning and an explanation of its derivation. He was then to suggest which existing English spellings was most appropriate. From this information Larcom would then make the final choice.

---

154 OSLR(O) #2592, 6 April 1830.
155 Ó MAOLFABHAIL, "An tSuirbhéireacht Ordanáis".
156 There are two entries in the register of correspondence (OSLR(O) #2624, 26 April 1830; OSLR(O) #8617, 28 April 1830) which reveal O'Reilly to be at work prior to O'Reilly being informed that he has been accepted for employment by the Board of Ordnance (OSLR(O) #2635, 30 April 1830).
157 OSLR #2593, 6 April 1830, Orthography, revision of; OSLR #8617, 28 April 1830, Orthography, settling it.
158 Ó MAOLFABHAIL, "An tSuirbhéireacht Ordanáis".
The earliest official document associated with this procedure still exists.\footnote{159} It is a page divided into two columns; the left column is entitled "Questions and Remarks" and written in pencil above, most likely in Larcom's hand, is "To be put by Mr. O'Reilly", and the right column is headed by "Lt. Lancey will afford the information required by such questions on the other side as refers to the names of denominations within his work."\footnote{160} O'Reilly's first question to Captain Waters asks:

Ballyoan: It would be well to observe attentively the manner in which -oan is pronounced by the natives who speak Irish. If pronounced distinctly as one syllable it is John's Town, but if in two syllables, however obscure and indistinct, it must be Owen's Town. If River's Town it must be pronounced in at least three syllables as Bally-na-hoan or Bally-na-howan.\footnote{161}

In his reply of 8th May 1830, Waters has attached a document listing the townland names in the parish with attempts to translate the meaning into English. Captain Waters has jotted down "Cannot a list of names be had from the Down Survey which would no doubt give the names nearer their original Irish meaning than we have them at present?"\footnote{162} This was an insightful comment. The Down Survey, directed by Sir William Petty, was to serve as a basis for the systematic re-distribution of lands forfeited as a result of the Rising of 1641. Performed in the mid-seventeenth century and it had place-names that were closer to "their original Irish form" than other more contemporary sources. Captain Waters wrote on the same subject later that day:

\begin{quote}
Longford, 29th April 1830
On reading over the remarks of Mr O'Reilly upon the names in Clondermot Parish and in the Liberties of Londonderry I have to observe that the officers in my district are unfortunately not Irish scholars nor are persons to be easily met within the country whose knowledge in the Irish language can be compared with that of Mr. O'Reilly from whom I might have derived such information as Mr O'Reilly is capable of giving. So that unless names within parishes are in the first instance submitted to Mr. O'Reilly for his explanations given by the best authorities I can meet with and if in my anxiety to obtain all the information I can from the District Names Register I should receive from these authorities explanations which a person so skilled and deeply versed in the Irish language as Mr. O'Reilly is should consider absurd or silly I can only regret that my own knowledge of the language is not sufficient to enable me to detect and correct the extravagances before they reach Mr. O'Reilly. As to many of the questions asked by Mr. O'Reilly, I think it probable that if he saw the Fair Plans of the
\end{quote}

\footnote{159} Many of O'Reilly's opinions and forms were recorded, as were the answers of the officials to his questions (called \textit{Explanations}) on the big pages 27cm x 44cm that are bound as books according to parishes now, i.e. the name sheets.
\footnote{160} This is signed by M.A. Waters, Captain, Royal Engineers, 27 April 1830, \textit{Explanation}, 253.
\footnote{161} \textit{Explanation} 253. The town being referred to is Clondermot, Co. Derry.
\footnote{162} \textit{Explanation} 257.
parishes with the names he might often see expressed on them the very objects from which he could derive the names. Though from said want of knowledge in the Irish language the officers have not associated them nor detected their connection with the names.
M.A Waters
R.Engineers

Here lies the first indictment of the new system. It is also the first indication that an Irish scholar might be needed in the field rather than confined to an office directing questions to unqualified surveyors and Irish-speaking civilians in the field. It is likely that the surveyors' work was complicated enough without the responsibility of determining spellings too. The difficulty experienced in reaching a decision on the proper names of places lay in the differing approaches of soldiers and scholars to place-name research. Waters was not alone in criticising O'Reilly. O'Reilly had sent a letter to Captain Wright about the place-names of Meath and Westmeath. The text of this letter survives in a version that includes Wright's hand-written notes in response:

Faghalstown - the town of Faghal: I fear this name is not correctly given. I never heard of a family called Faghal and the words Fachail strife, foghail, getting Faicheall, wages or a light, fochall filth etc will not coalesce with the English word town.

[Note by hand]: Did Mr. O'Reilly take the trouble of reading the Field Name Book wherein no less than 13 authorities are quoted?

Newtown-Farhillagh:- the first member of this compound name is English and of course, easily understood. The second member has the appearance of Irish but so written that the whole name means Newton of the O'Ferralls.

[Note by hand]: Mr O'Reilly has not even gone through the form of consulting the body of the Field Name Book where he would have seen that it is Fartullagh from the Barony in which the Parish is partly situated. It is however evident that he has only looked at the Index of the Book where the word appears to be written as Mr O'Reilly has assumed it.

Captain Wright was sufficiently irritated that he wrote to headquarters complaining about "the superficial way in which [Mr. O'Reilly] made his observations in certain parishes in Meath and Westmeath." Headquarters remained firm in its support of O'Reilly. In reply Captain Waters was "informed that no names must be submitted to Mr. O'Reilly that are not illustrated by local description."

---

163 Explanation 267.
164 It is in the form of pencil notes in a document that O'Reilly wrote called The Names of Parishes in Co. Westmeath explained, Explanation 27-30.
165 OSLR(I) # 8689, 11 June 1830.
166 OSLR(O) # 2694, 22 July 1830.
Disputes such as these might have been the cause of the subsequent decline in queries directed to O'Reilly from the field. Perhaps the Survey team in the field was losing patience with the delays and hindrances that seemed to accompany any correspondence with O'Reilly. Surveyors were consulting alternative sources. In the name book for the parish of Ballymoney in County Antrim, 'Mr Buck' has provided the majority of the townland names. He worked under Richard Griffith as County Antrim's Boundary Surveyor. Prior to O'Reilly's employment with the Ordnance Survey, Griffith, responding to a request from the Ordnance Survey, had instructed Mr. Buck to supply the Ordnance Survey with a list of Boundary Survey place-names. As this guideline was never officially repealed, it seems Mr Buck was continuing to follow it after O'Reilly's appointment. It was not only the surveyors who were appealing to Mr. Buck instead of O'Reilly. In July 1830 Larcom turned to the Boundary Survey team to help him resolve spellings because O'Reilly was ill and was not working effectively. He sent Griffith a sheet of names from Plany in the parish of Ballymoney that were "spelled differently in letters of information and a certificate requesting him to decide." O'Reilly's illness continued and in August 1830 after only four months of work for the Ordnance Survey he died. The first documentation of O'Reilly's replacement can be found one month after his death when Larcom's former Irish teacher, John O'Donnovan, applied for employment.

Born in Kilkenny in 1809, O'Donnovan had moved to Dublin in his teens to gain an education. Soon after, he gained employment at The Irish Records Office. With hopes of becoming a Roman Catholic priest, O'Donnovan had decided to join The Irish Society. It was this affiliation with the society that had led to his employment as Larcom's teacher and his eventual employment with the Survey. Not long after gaining his position with the Ordnance Survey O'Donnovan began to produce work of the quality and scope that would eventually earn him the position of Gaelic scholar of his time. His prodigious literary output included writing on poetry, history, law, topography and genealogy. At the height of his prolific scholarship he produced his own edition and translation of The Annals of the Four Masters. These were published in seven volumes

167 OSLR(I) # 8547 23rd March 1830: Orthography: Captain Henderson suggests the advantage that will arise from having a return furnished by the Boundary Surveyor. The captain's letter was sent to the Chief Director of Borders, Richard Griffith who answered saying he had given a guideline "to Mr. Buck to supply it." OSLR(I) #2703, 25 May 1830.
168 OSLR(O) #2703, 3 August 1830.
169 OSLR(I) # 8617, 28 April 1830, Major Wells to Mountjoy.
170 OSLR(I) # 8843, 27 September 1830.
between 1848-1851. This achievement resulted in the nickname 'The Fifth Master'. Alongside his work for the Survey and his published writings, O'Donnovan frequently wrote to Larcom providing colourful, humorous and perceptive accounts of his journeying all over Ireland. Between 1834-1842, O'Donnovan wrote enough letters to fill 103 typed volumes which are now housed at the Royal Irish Academy. However, this fame and achievement all lay in O'Donnovan's future. In 1830 he was honoured to be an "Orthographer and Etymologist" for the Survey at a rate of 6 shillings and 2 pence per day.171

Initially O'Donnovan checked the work completed by O'Reilly during his brief period of employment. O'Donnovan's comment on this work was expressed with the candour and passion for accuracy which became a distinctive feature of his work, "O'Reilly seems to be as unfixed in his grammatical principles as the orthography of the names he was elucidating".172 Like O'Reilly, he worked from the written reports of English military officers. He had been instructed to give the meanings and correct spellings in English for the names of tens of thousands of places all over the country. After correcting O'Reilly's work he proceeded by examining the names of the northern counties where the ground surveying work was under full steam. His youthful energy, his eagerness to impress his superiors and his hunger for work were welcomed by the Survey.173

The first comprehensive work that O'Donnovan completed for the Ordnance Survey was entitled A glossary in which the disguised forms of Irish words in their English dress are unmasked and their general and local meanings pointed out with observations upon the fluctuating state of the orthography and general and particular rules laid down to fix it drawn from analogy and approved custom.174 This glossary illustrates how compatible John O'Donnovan's academic interests were with the current direction of the Ordnance Survey. During 1831 it is likely he wrote A list of Irish words that enter the composition of many names of places in Ireland (deduced from

171 Ordnance Survey Monthly Reports, 28 October 1830.
172 National Library of Ireland, MS 132. Letter dated 29 December 1847.
He had only joined the Survey eight months prior when he wrote the following words:

Commenced the study of the Annals of Tigernach on Wednesday May 1831. The best method of making use of those annals for the elucidation of the orthography of names of places in Ireland is to read the original text carefully and wherever the name of a place occurs, to write in a common place book or Seward's Topography of Ireland the original spelling and O'Connor's explanation. By pursuing this plan, all the topographical information derivable from those annals can be placed in a regular alphabetical order, to which reference can be easily made.

The momentum, focus and direction O'Donnovan lent to the Survey's orthographic work is immediately apparent. At this time, O'Donnovan was examining place-names and their meaning and compiling lists of questions wherever there was any doubt regarding their English spelling. He then sent the questions to Larcom who would put his signature and authority to the list. Larcom sent these questions to the district officials in charge of surveyors in the countryside. For example O'Donnovan's questions prompted Larcom to direct Captain Wright "to obtain information regarding the pronunciation etc. of certain names in his parishes." Figure 16 illustrates one such a page of questions.

These requests and their replies occurred largely on name sheets. It is likely that the name sheets were envisaged as a prospective archive for the Ordnance Survey Office. It is on these name sheets that O'Donnovan started the habit of placing a signature of J OD beside his opinions. By placing his initials besides his comments, O'Donnovan was distinguishing his authority and separating himself from the multiple authorities listed in the name books. He also adds a layer of authority to the books prior to their arrival at Mountjoy. (see Figure 17) O'Donnovan's position in the Survey was not yet secure and such individualising acts could be how he carved a niche for himself. It is likely that O'Donnovan was also establishing in his own mind appropriate principles and methods for selecting place-names. Within several days of Larcom having sent out the name sheets they would be returned to headquarters with answers. Then the final selection of the English spelling of the name was made. (See Figure 18)

---

175 This hand written document of the Ordnance Survey comprises the third part of the Irish Topographical Dictionary 1830-2. It is dated 20 November 1831 and a letter dated 15th January 1832 is tied to the back of the document.
176 O MAOLFABHAIL, "An tSuirbhéireacht Ordanáis" p.50.
177 OSLR(O) #2776, 2 November 1830.
Figure 16: A List of place-names written by Larcom and sent to O'Donnovan for correction.

Note: On p. 678 Larcom writes "How ought the above names of hills to be engraved". The ticks and corrections and referrals to the name book in red ink are by O'Donnovan.

FIGURE 17: A COMPLETED NAME BOOK PAGE

Note: The name "Keelogues" is corrected by O'Donnovan's to "Keeloge" and initialled in the bottom left hand corner. This corrected version was the one used on the final maps. O'Donnovan has also provided the Irish spelling of the name in the top left hand corner, with an English translation of "narrow stripes of land."


7. Sent to Topographical Department for them to derive the Irish version of the name.

14. Selected name passed on to the engravers.

8. Topographical Department formulate questions to direct to field staff via Mountjoy.


9. The surveyors and District Officials send their answers to the Topographical Department.

12. Mountjoy selects from the collected names that which is closest to the original Irish form of the name as identified by the Topographical Department.

10. The Topographical Department uses the newly gathered information alongside their own research to reconstruct the original Irish form of a name.

11. The reconstructed Irish form of a place-name is added to the name book.

**Figure 18: The production of Orthographical Knowledge: The trail of a name book (1835)**
One year after O'Donnovan joined the Survey, the following letter from Mr Buck arrived for Captain Henderson, a District Officer who was then surveying County Antrim: 178

Sir,
Herewith I send you a list of the names of several townlands in the County of Antrim the orthography of which I have corrected according to the best information I have been able to obtain on the subject.

In correcting these names the method I adopted was to ascertain the meaning of each name, and then to spell it in such a manner as would oblige the English reader to pronounce it as nearly as possible in accordance with the Irish sound or pronunciation of the word.

In the remainder of the names of townlands in the County of Antrim I have not ventured to make any alteration, not having been able to obtain any information with respect to their orthography further than what is stated in the letters of information in which they are written. I beg to observe that when characteristic terms such as North, South, East, West, Upper, Lower etc. are affixed to the names of townlands, I would recommend that such terms be placed after and not before the names of the townlands.

Henry Buck
District Boundary Surveyor

Capt. Henderson added these notes to the letter as soon as he got it:

I forward this letter for the information of the officers of the Boundary District and beg to call their attention to this subject.

It would be highly desirable that the Officers should issue such instructions to their parties that the orthography of the names of townlands etc. might be easily obtained.

Alex Henderson
Capn. Rl. Engrs.
March 4 1832 179

Although Mr. Buck was choosing spellings on a basis that suited O'Donnovan's specialisms, his authority was soon brought into question and Captain Henderson was required to ask Buck "to state the authority from which this corrected orthography is taken". 180 Buck's response was direct:

178 Orthography of the names of townlands in the County of Antrim 1831-2, 49.
179 Orthography 6, 8 October 1832.
180 Orthography 6, 27 September 1832.
"The corrections referred to were made by me for the purpose of having the names pronounced by the reader as they are pronounced by the inhabitants. I can give no other authority than myself."\textsuperscript{181}

Henderson forwarded the answer to Colby. It is not yet clear whether Buck's alterations presented too many changes for the copper plate engravers or whether O'Donnovan was resisting Buck's invasion of his orthographic territory. Either way Colby decided to fire a shot across Buck's bows, "no Authority for altering the map" Colby decided "but useful as giving the sound".\textsuperscript{182} This ended Buck's direct influence over place-name selections, but he had introduced a variable that would become increasingly important in the selection of place-names spellings: pronunciation.

After Colby had curbed Buck's encroachment of O'Donnovan's territory, a new concern arose. O'Donnovan wrote a list of eight questions for Captain Henderson regarding the parish of Culfeightrin in County Antrim.\textsuperscript{183} Henderson forwarded these to Lieutenant Robe of the Royal Artillery. Robe returned the sheet to headquarters on 16th January 1833:\textsuperscript{184}

Bonamargy The names of several villages and townlands situated at the mouths of rivers are made up of bun i.e. foot and the name of the river as, Bundrobhaoise, now Bundroose, Bun na Bnna, Bun na Duibhe now Bundruff, etc. Is this situated at the mouth of a river? JOD

Certainly it is - a reference to the Plan would have rendered this unnecessary
T.C. Robe, Lieut. Royal Art. Jany. 16 1833

In the case of four other questions on this parish list O'Donnovan is asked to look at the plan. O'Donnovan was facing the same criticisms that had plagued O'Reilly. However, draft maps were not easily available to O'Donnovan since he was not based at Phoenix Park. O'Donnovan, famous for being easily irritated, gave up his job two days after receiving Robe's sarcastic and impatient remarks.\textsuperscript{185} The following day the Survey publicised this to the librarians of the Royal Society and the Royal Irish Academy.\textsuperscript{186} There may have been other contributing factors. O'Donnovan may have felt that the work of the Survey was too narrow and too limited once the novelty of his new job had subsided or perhaps he considered his wage was insufficient. His departure has also

\textsuperscript{181} Orthography 6, 8 October 1832.
\textsuperscript{182} Orthography 6, 15 October 1832.
\textsuperscript{183} Larcom to Henderson, 14 January 1833.
\textsuperscript{184} Orthography, 57v, 16 January 1833.
\textsuperscript{185} OSLR(I) #4298, 18 January 1833.
\textsuperscript{186} OSLR(O) # 4312, 19 January 1833.
been attributed to the fact he was prevented from enacting what he considered to be vital fieldwork and because the work he was doing had demands that were too exacting for one person to cope with accurately.\textsuperscript{187} Whatever its cause, O'Donnovan's departure produced considerable confusion about the recording of place-names. Here is Larcom to Lt. Hore for example:

In various names of the parish of Billy you have quoted "Boundary Surveyor" spelling which is not that of the Sketch Map. Clunty townland for instance has been first entered Clunty - which is the spelling on the sketch map - and corrected to Cloonty which is not. Which am I to consider the Boundary Surveyor's authority?
Thos. Larcom Lt. R.E. 27 Feb. '33

The answer:

Most of them were corrected by the Boundary Surveyor’s authority of 1st March 1832 of which I send a rough copy. There are a few - such as Ballynarry and Magherabwee - which had originally been corrected (I believe in Dublin) but for which I have not retained an authority.
Tho: Hore Lt. R. Engrs
4 March 1832
ps. I have just found the authority for correcting those 2 divisions, Lieut. T.H.\textsuperscript{188}

And again:

Ballintoy
You have altered the boundary surveyor’s name of Coulrashaskin to Curryshakin. Have you any reason? It is not one of those in Mr. Buck's lists of corrections. It is very likely that Curry is best - but there ought to be an authority quoted.
Thos A. Larcom Lt. R.E.
14 March 1833

The answer:

I have no authority for altering this name nor do I think I did it. If I recollect rightly this was altered in Dublin and on the old plans some time previous to the revision. Curry seems to me the best as being the mode of pronouncing the word by the people in the country.
Tho.Hore Lt. R. Engr
18th March 1833

I have some recollection of receiving a note for the correction of this name and those of Artymacormack and Arrabwee at the same time but I regret it has been mislaid.
T.H.\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{187} BOYNE, O'Donnovan, p.107
\textsuperscript{188} Orthography 24, 4 March 1832.
\textsuperscript{189} Orthography 36, 20 March 1833.
Such confusion in the Survey headquarters was short lived however as it was not long before O'Donnovan returned. During the period of separation, O'Donnovan had been publishing articles in a weekly magazine called The Dublin Penny Journal, edited by George Petrie - an archaeologist, artist and musician. Petrie clearly respected O'Donnovan's work and described him as "the most able and judicious Irish scholar and topographer which Ireland has produced for the last century". From August 1833, Petrie entered into an agreement with the Ordnance Survey to undertake various antiquarian studies. Petrie worked alongside a number of scholars and scribes at his house on 21 Great Charles Street. It is through Petrie's influence that O'Donnovan found himself back in the employ of the Survey. O'Donnovan himself says, in 1844, that Petrie made Larcom re-employ him and Larcom was not in favour, but yielded to Petrie's request 'with much reluctance'. According to the monthly reports O'Donnovan was back on the rolls on 13 August 1833 on a wage that had risen from 4 to 6 shillings per day and the Monthly Reports indicate that O'Donnovan was re-endowed with his former orthographic responsibility.

The method of identifying the presumed original Irish name and using it as a basis for a recommending a spelling for the published maps was becoming fixed. By 1835, it had formalised into a new Ordnance Survey department. A topographical department was formed and given responsibility for correcting and authenticating the place-names collected by the survey divisions. The department was headed by George Petrie. It brought together on its staff a notable group including John O'Donnovan himself and Eugene Curry, Thomas O'Connor and James Clarence Mangan. Figure 19 pictures both O'Donnovan and Curry. These were people of considerable talent. O'Donnovan in later life became the first Professor of Celtic in Queen's College, Belfast (Queen's University, Belfast). Curry became Professor of Archaeology and Irish History in the Catholic University of Ireland (now UCD). O'Connor worked for the Ordnance Survey in Britain after the work in Ireland ended. The Department was based at Petrie's

---

190 O'Donnovan first wrote to Petrie 10 Nov 1831 seeking permission to look at manuscripts that used to be in the possession of Edward O'Reilly and that Petrie bought at auction after his death. Petrie and O'Reilly knew each other well from 1822. O'Donnovan's first letter to Petrie was very formal but within a couple of months the two had become very friendly.

191 PETRIE, Dublin Penny Journal, 8 June 1833.

192 Although Petrie is not recorded on the payroll, and there is no official notice of the commencement of his employment, there are a number of documents and letters which strongly suggest he was. See evidence cited in STOKES, W. (1868) The life and Labours in art and archaeology of George Petrie (Longmans Green, London) p.86.
residence on Great Charles Street principally because of its proximity to Dublin's libraries. However, the geographical separation of this department from the headquarters\textsuperscript{193} can also be understood as a reflection of their ideological, epistemological and methodological distance.

The topographical department worked at extracting a vast number of place-name spellings from old charters, grants, maps, deeds, inquisitions and other Irish historical documents. These were found in the libraries of the British Museum and those of Oxford University and Cambridge University as well as those in public and private records scattered throughout Ireland. Figure 20 depicts an old map utilised by the topographical department for such purposes. From these they traced the antecedents of each Irish townland name to enter them in the name books. This evidence was collated with current Irish speech, place-name pronunciation and contemporary authorities. The topographical department recognised the necessity of interviewing local inhabitants both to facilitate the discovery of the original meanings of names and to assist in the choice of current orthography based on releasing the correct pronunciation.

Throughout his time at the Ordnance Survey, O'Donnovan had made constant efforts to convince his superiors that the names of Irish places should be examined in situ by an expert and in collaboration with native Irish speakers. Indeed, O'Donnovan's estrangement with Larcom and departure from the Survey from January to August 1833 has even been ascribed to his insistence on the necessity of fieldwork.\textsuperscript{194} Eventually headquarters recognised the need for a qualified linguist to be in the field to hear the names pronounced and interpreted by Irish-speaking residents and to study them in the context of local topography and antiquities. No report has been found to explain this change in policy at Phoenix Park. However, in March 1834, O'Donnovan was sent into the field where he confides, "I have strong expectations of being able to do some good"\textsuperscript{195} and "everyone here is anxious to assist me"\textsuperscript{196} (see Figure 21).

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{193} Headquarters was (and still is) based in Phoenix Park which lies four miles outside of Dublin's city centre.
\textsuperscript{194} BOYNE, O'Donnovan, p.107
\textsuperscript{195} O'DONNOVAN, Belfast, 15 March 1834.
\textsuperscript{196} Ó MAOLFABHAIL, "An tSuirbhéireacht Ordáis" p.58.
\end{flushright}
FIGURE 19: PORTRAITS OF O’DONOVAN AND CURRY.

FIGURE 20: 16TH CENTURY MAP WITH IRISH PLACE-NAMES.

Note: See O'Donnovan's initialled remark.
Source: Ordnance Survey Archives, OS 96/2/36. Stored at the National Archives of Ireland.
6. First phase of the name book is completed. Name books sent to Mountjoy.

7. Name books passed on to O'Donnovan who is conducting research in the field.

11. Name book placed in fireproof stores. Selected name passed to engravers.

10. Mountjoy select names for the final map, most often they select the name suggested by O'Donnovan.

9. O'Donnovan returns to name book with a tick and his initials beside his preferred choice of contemporary versions of place-names.

8. O'Donnovan corrects and supplements information in the name books. He suggests the original Irish form of the name in red ink in the name book.

Questions sent to Topographical Department.

Observations from the field sent in letters to Mountjoy.

**Figure 21: The production of Orthographical Knowledge: the trail of a name book (1836 - 46).**
As O'Donnovan worked his way across Ireland in search of original Irish language place-names and their meanings and derivations he found himself evolving into a kind of one-man local history department - a walking encyclopaedia of local lore, topography and toponymy. He pursued research that he described to Larcom in a series of tri-weekly letters.\textsuperscript{197} Figure 22 features one of O'Donnovan's letters. Sometimes O'Donnovan was led to repine at the weight of this double burden. "All my time is consumed looking for townlands, lochans and bits and noses of townlands to ascertain their correct names" he wrote. "This is what I conceive I am employed to do and nothing else. I don't look upon the letters I write as any part of my business".\textsuperscript{198} But the letters continued almost to the end of the Survey, and the opinions they contained indirectly informed place-name decisions at Phoenix Park. They were also utilised as policy statements: the district officers were often supplied with extracts from these letters and urged to adopt O'Donnovan's suggestions on their plans.

O'Donnovan was dealing directly with people of all sorts and classes on behalf of the Survey. Lacking the class-consciousness that inhibited some of the Engineer officers, O'Donnovan experienced less difficulty in drawing information from all levels of society.\textsuperscript{199} Meanwhile in Dublin, the topographical department was busy checking references for him and collecting references to local history, so that not only features attached to the ground were mapped but also historical sites that might otherwise have passed unnoticed.

Thus, John O'Donnovan went in search of native Irish speakers who could offer him correct pronunciations of obscure names from which he could deduce original meanings and from that contrive a spelling. It was not long before the advantages of an expert hearing pronunciations of place-names was evident. In a letter from Downpatrick, O'Donnovan writes:

\begin{verbatim}
The greater part of these letters are preserved in 103 volumes in the library of the Royal Irish Academy.
\end{verbatim}

O'DONNOVAN, Roscommon, 27 July 1837.

\begin{verbatim}
ANDREWS, A Paper Landscape, p.123.
\end{verbatim}
FIGURE 22: AN EXAMPLE OF O’DONNOVAN’S LETTERS, 1846.
"In the parish of Tyrella, there is a townland called Ballykinler, which Vallencey, Beauford and in all probability O'Reilly would have explained as "the town at the head of the sea" (Baile Cinn Lir) but as soon as I heard it pronounced by an old Irishman I said it must mean the town of the candlestick (horrid name!!) and silly conjecture for any sensible person! Be it so say I - but turn to the fact. Look at Harris's History of the county of Down, 1744 and you will find .. the parish of Ballykinler the tithes of which were appropriated to Christchurch, Dublin for wax lights!"

John O'Donnovan's field work was incorporated into the existing paper trail. So, as before, the surveyors collected different versions of a place-name and the respective authorities and then passed them to their officer who then forwarded them to headquarters. John O'Donnovan requested these parish name books and collected them upon arrival in a town. On one such occasion he wrote "I now move on to Hillsborough, but I have not got the Name Books of Cromlin or Annalhilt Parishes. I wish you would order them to be sent to me if they are finished."

O'Donnovan carried letters of introduction from and to persons of importance. He believed that these were not only useful, but at times necessary. For example:

"Dr. Crolly, Roman Catholic Bishop of Down and Connor, has given me the following letter to the priests of the Diocese:-

'The bearer, Mr. John O'Donnovan, is employed by the Ordnance Surveyors to ascertain accurately the old Irish names of townlands, villages etc., etc., for the purposes of making the general and particular Maps of Ireland, and its different counties, as perfect as possible. In this useful, laudable and patriotic pursuit, I trust that he will obtain from the Catholic Clergy every assistance which they can afford, in order that Mr. O'Donnovan may be enabled to accomplish his interesting and important object.'

William Crolly D.D.

After securing time and assistance from a local, O'Donnovan would record the newly gained information in the relevant name book. He describes one such occasion in a letter:

I was not very many minutes in the house when the Rector of Garvaghy parish came in and fortunately I had the name books of Magheraglin, Annaclean and Garvaghy parishes in my pocket. After they had pronounced the names for me they gave their opinion as to the most correct spelling.

---

200 O'DONNOVAN, Downpatrick, 31 May 1834.
201 O'DONNOVAN, Lisburn, 22 March 1834.
202 O'DONNOVAN, Belfast, 15 March 1834.
203 O'DONNOVAN, Bainbridge, 13 April 1834.
Once the process of gleaning all the available information was complete, O'Donnovan would enter in the name book the Irish version of each name and suggest an English spelling for the published maps. He then returned the books to headquarters. At times he was reluctant to return the name books for fear additional information might arise:

"I do not think it advisable to send down to the Ordnance Survey Office any of the name books, as I do not know what additional authorities I may be able to insert into them from Lord Downshire's maps and papers, and moreover I do not know what parishes are comprised within his Lordships possessions in this County, so that were I to send you any of the Name Books I might, in the course of eight days, be sending for it again. If however you cannot do without them, let me know in your next letter the order in which you intend to get them engraved, and I will send you two or three at a time or as many as you please."

Headquarters either authorised his choice or reverted to the officer's authority. Finally the name books were passed to the engravers. The lengths that O'Donnovan went to ascertain information about place-names is noteworthy especially given the fallacy that the Survey was careless and indifferent in its choice of names:

I fear you will consider that I am delaying too long at Lisburn, which is a very expensive place. I must fall into debt £3 or £6 before I can satisfactorily finish this county but I am very willing to do so because I think this excursion will bring me in contact with the most intelligent countrymen and above all it will remove the possibility of committing any orthographical mistake, and leave it not in the power of any proprietor, lay or ecclesiastical to say (as they have said) that we have not taken sufficient pains to ascertain the correct names of places.

Indeed, he describes taking more than sufficient pains when he is Newry:

I travelled yesterday through the Parish of Donaghmore, and discovered one of the aborigines. ... He is intimately acquainted with every field in the Parish of Donaghmore, where he was employed for half a century as a Bailiff. He was able to give me the ancient name of every townland in the Parish in the most satisfactory manner. I travelled through fields and unfrequented ways until at last I discovered him in a little cabin,... I had to return in the dark and being far off the main road to Newry, it is with difficulty I made my way back. I tore my trousers across with the brambles. I suppose that I shall become wild before I return to Dublin.

When Larcom discussed employing another researcher to aid O'Donnovan in his studies, O'Donnovan describes the character required to undertake the employment:

---

204 O'DONNOVAN, Bainbridge, 2 April, 1834.
205 O'DONNOVAN, Lisburn, 21 March 1834.
206 O'DONNOVAN, Newry, 10 April, 1834.
It is extremely laborious, vexatious and troublesome, especially in the winter time. I should not wish to be so long in the country because I will soon become a regular Don Quixote if I continue in it much longer.... No person shall ever do the business except one who takes an interest in it himself....I am convinced that if Curry would of the situation he would expect to be always stationed in Dublin which could not, I think be readily allowed him unless you intend to keep me always roving about like a wandering Jew.  

In O'Donnovan's name book entries and in a few other fragmentary notes from his hand on Irish orthography one can see the stresses and strains to which Larcom's simple notion was subjected. The primary setting down of the place names in the name books was still done by surveyors. O'Donnovan's fieldwork still depended in part on these reports written by military surveyors. He had many complaints about the errors and deficiencies in the name books and was often critical of the carelessness and indifference surveyors paid to items of Irish interest. On one occasion he found himself investigating the name "Mineledrin". He writes "about the latter we could get no information except that the inhabitants informed us that they had heard from the sappers that the name of it was Mineldrin - where the sappers found the name nobody knows."  

In August 1837 O'Donnovan wrote to Larcom complaining:

I have been plagued with the name books for Roscommon of the district about Elphin, which were very rudely and in my opinion, very carelessly done. With respect to those names which are not known to the people and which are preserved in old leases and maps, let me remark that it is my opinion that they are frequently taken down wrong.

He also complained that the townland of Lismurtagh (Murty's Fort) in the parish of Baslick, County Roscommon, had been officially listed as Lismeentagh, a name quite unknown to the inhabitants of the area. His comment on this and similar careless errors was "these blunders are scandalous"  

O'Donnovan's writing style, whilst playful and humorous was nonetheless opinionated. In this particular instance Larcom retaliated with a sharp rebuke. "you will not disfigure official documents with remarks of this description...by this destruction of documents - by ribaldry" - you really lower yourself in the opinion of everyone.

---

207 O'DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, 16 October 1834.
208 O'DONNOVAN, Buncranagh, August 23 1835.
209 O'DONNOVAN, Athlone, 26 August 1837.
210 O'DONNOVAN, Roscommon Memoranda 1.149 dated 14 August 1837.
211 The accusation of ribaldry may have arisen from some of the translations of place-names given by O'Donnovan in his memorandum of 14 August 1837. He had translated "Tonn Riabhach" in the parish of Baslick as "grey Bottom" quoting as authority the Rev. Fr Dillion P.P. of
Larcom reminded O'Donnovan of his position by informing him "I wish you to write the name in Irish character - with an English translation and any information you possess on the subject." Stung by Larcom's rebuke O'Donnovan replied by return:

"I fully consent to give up this style of writing for the future and to become very serious, cold and un-Irish. That I have laid myself open to censure is too true and I will be sorry for it yet, but what I have censured deserved censure no one will deny."213

In the same letter O'Donnovan reiterated a complaint that one military surveyor had written the County Roscommon place-name "Lissabiltunny" when he should have written "Lissabilarig". O'Donnovan derived the name from "Lisnabloughee" meaning square fort, and claimed that such as error could not have occurred if the surveyor had gone to see the place himself and had listened carefully to the pronunciation of the name. He wrote, "such things should be very carefully transcribed, and the descriptive remarks should have been inserted on the ground and not from the plans."214 A note from Lieutenant W.D. Broughton in the Longford Memoranda reads, "Kill-eo is one of those parishes without a single resident gentleman hence the difficulty of procuring anything in the way of information."215 O'Donnovan's scathing comment on this excuse was:

The curse of St. Patrick, it seems drove all the gentlemen out of Slieve; but if my friend W.D.Broughton had called upon Mr.O'Breslen of Kinel-Connell race and public house keeper at Ballinamuck, or upon Mr. MacLoughlin of the Kinel-Owen tribe, they would have told him all about Kill-eo and the rebellion of '98, as well as if they had Right Honourable prefixed to their names.216

Larcom had urged Lieutenant Fenwick, working in the Roscommon area, to insist that the soldiers under his command to be more watchful for antiquarian remains. Fenwick replied, "I am constantly at my men about these matters, but many of them are Presbyterians from the North who care not for Eremites and Friars, White, Black, Grey with all their trumpery."217

Ballintober and with a written comment alongside "I don't think that Rev. Mr Dillon would tell me a falsehood."

212 LARCOM, Roscommon Memoranda 1.152-4 dated 6 September 1837.
213 O'DONNOVAN, Roscommon Memoranda 1.154 dated 8 September 1837.
214 O'DONNOVAN, Roscommon Memoranda 1.154 dated 8 September 1837.
215 Longford Memoranda 1.34.
216 Longford Memoranda 1.35.
217 Roscommon Memoranda 1.221.
Theoretically, the physical and topographical nomenclature was treated in the same way as townlands, but the gathering speed of the detail survey after 1833 set strict limits to the amount of research that could be devoted to what were deemed 'inessential' names. Thus the Survey teams did not collect names for every hill and rock. The coverage of minor features was selective\(^{218}\) and consequently there are considerable variations in the density of names recorded from one sheet to another. In 1835 O'Donnovan was struggling to compensate by systematically collecting names that were omitted in the name books. For example from Rathfriland, 19th April he sent a list of the names of rivers and mountains omitted from the plans.\(^{219}\) However, O'Donnovan was sceptical about the value and durability of much minor nomenclature. The names of many small coastal features, he thought, were known to so few people as to be hardly worth preserving, while names derived from living individuals could be dismissed as ephemeral.\(^{220}\) O'Donnovan was also having difficulty finding the time for such primary survey work. He explains:

"I cannot possibly ascertain all the names of mountains, streams, loughs, rocks etc. in them without either a map giving all the names that are to be engraved or a perfect list of all such names accompanied by accurate descriptions of their situations and features as to prevent one from mistaking any one name for another like it. I have found from experience that either is absolutely necessary. The latter would be less trouble to me but both would ensure more certainty. You will immediately perceive the necessity of this when you consider how difficult it is for any one or two of four to remember all the streams, rocks, hills etc. in any one parish and how easily some of their names might be omitted without some help. Those who have surveyed the land who have lived in the neighbourhood and who have with their own eyes seen these features should furnish a list of their names spelled as well as they could catch the sound. If this be done I can ascertain the correct name without much trouble by consulting one, two or three intelligent persons in every parish but if I were to traverse every Townland to see every stream and rock in it that bears a name it would take me a life to go through one county."

The result is that maps have been described as disagreeably naked and anonymous like an outline engraver's exercise rather than a real piece of countryside. Figures 23, 24 and 25 feature different sections of he six-inch maps. Smaller names presented the added difficulty of there being few good authorities to consult for spellings. As they lacked the legal importance of townland names they had less often been committed to

---


\(^{219}\) O'DONNOVAN, Rathfriland, 19 April 1835.

\(^{220}\) O'DONNOVAN, Donegal, 5 September 1835; Leitrum 30 June 1836; Mayo 6 August 1838; Galway 10 Oct 1838.
FIGURE 23: 6 INCH MAP, DONEGAL (INISHOWEN) 1837

Figure 24: 6 inch map in maturity, Kilkenny 1842.

Figure 25: 6 Inch Map, Monaghan 1836

writing. It is not surprising then that the name books could offer only one authority for "Taylor's Hill" in county Dublin and that he was Mr. Taylor.  

With the advent of fieldwork came increased incorporation of local knowledge. John O'Donnovan, and to a lesser extent the surveyors, approached inhabitants for information on local place-names. John O'Donnovan's selection of whom to approach was by no means indiscriminate; the notion of "authority" was again deployed in an exclusionary manner. However, the 'authoritative' group had altered in accordance with the shift in information required by the Survey. O'Donnovan's task was to reconstruct the original Irish name rather than that in most common usage. Thus, O'Donnovan sought out Irish speakers. His informants, all outlined colourfully in his letters to Mountjoy, in the main comprised elderly men. He gravitated towards the elderly because that generation comprised the greatest number of Irish speakers. In fact, one gentleman referred back to his grandparent's time to recall the Irish name of a place. O'Donnovan's letter recalling the occasion is one of the few references in the Survey's orthographic documents to a woman as a repository of orthographic knowledge.

He says that gentlemen know nothing about Irish names of townlands - that they wish to harden, shorten and make them look like English names - and as this work is going on since the reign of Oliver Cromwell it is now most difficult to come at the cult name, for even the farmers are now forgetting the names which their grandmothers used to call these lands and adopting the hard and shortened names which they hear with their landlords. The old Druid illustrated these observations by shewing that the townland which his grandmother called Fionn Tulaigh or the White Hill is now refined to Fintlie, though he thinks Fintully would do well enough.

O'Donnovan's conception of whom constitutes an authority is also divided upon religious grounds. His letters contain copious references to the ignorance of Protestants. Useful informants are unfailingly identified as Roman-Catholic.

The inhabitants of the district south of Belfast are principally Presbyterians, and know nothing of the names or antiquities, and I am afraid that I cannot derive much information from them, they are so grossly ignorant and so virulently prejudiced against anything that had belonged to ancient Ireland or the Papists....I got several of the old inhabitants to pronounce the [T]own [L]and names for me. Their pronunciation is so barbarous that I fear that I cannot, as Mr. McSkimin informed me, get much good of the Presbyterians.

---

222 O'DONNOVAN, Ballybay, 11 May 1835.
223 O'DONNOVAN, Belfast, 18 March 1834.
O'Donnovan's preference for Roman Catholics and disdain for Protestants stands in an interesting counter-point to the Survey's distinct preference for land owners, the majority of whom are Protestant. O'Donnovan states in no uncertain terms, "I do not wish to be controlled too much by proprietors, as they in general know very little about the subject and what they do know is generally wrong or pedantic." This highlights the uneasy position John O'Donnovan occupied as an Irish Roman Catholic in a sea of Anglo-militarists - it is a tension that re-surfaces in reference to place-names again before the end of the Survey.

Through discussions with local inhabitants, O'Donnovan finds support for the hypotheses he derives from his historical research. Information is gathered from the local people within a particular site of cultural negotiation which was designed to serve the purposes of the dominant culture. The local knowledge included is not only partial in that it is drawn from only from particular sectors of society but also because it is lifted from its grounded context and re-placed in the controlled (and controllable) space of the name book - confining it to "specific spaces of constructed visibility." The collection procedure comprised a process of passing orthographic knowledge through a cultural filter that intrinsically altered it. Name books comprised not only the material realisation of a national framework, but also constituted an analytical space in which indigenous knowledge could be collected, filtered and manipulated. Consequently the derivation of a name was not a case of simply collecting and representing knowledge. Most importantly, the incorporation of authorities in the name books, however biased and partial a representation, allowed the Survey to draw upon local knowledge legitimise their place-name choices.

A NEW AUTHORITY

Larcom's orthographic principle of selecting the name closest to the original Irish form was now fully entrenched and would remain in place until the end of the Survey. The policy had necessitated a number of methodological and logistical changes; most notably the development the topographical department and the instigation of fieldwork. Now outside pressures began to modify the policy itself, or at least its practical manifestation.

224 O'DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, 6 November 1834.
The slipperiness of language was resisting the schemes and systems devised by the Survey in a way that the soil did not. The Survey's orthographic principle was not being applied rigorously in practice. The place-names selected under the banner of "closest to the original form" were not necessarily close in any perceptible sense. Consider for example the commonly occurring townland name Ballybeg. If we take fifteen random occurrences of this townland name and look up their name books, they yield eighty-five earlier written occurrences, none of which include the original Irish Baile Beag. Sixty-six instances had Ballybeg and even though it differs at five points from the original Irish spelling, the Survey reverted to its initial principle and chose to follow the majority spelling.226

When no contemporary spelling was thought to bring out the original meaning of the place-name, then the Survey would create a new one. This went against the principle of restricting place-name selection to existing forms. However the Survey excused this departure from policy on the basis that the new name would be etymologically-closer to the original Irish form of the name and therefore would advance the Survey's goal of restoring the closest original Irish form of place-names. An example of such intervention is related by O'Donnovan from Monaghan, "I have altered Ballynoe to Bella-node, because the first part of it is not Baile, a town but Bel aith i.e. mouth of the ford."227 Although such an action was defensible on grounds of logic and history this system was failing to win local favour. The Ordnance Survey may have been counting on all Irish governmental departments to accept the orthography published on its official maps as the Valuation Office and the Census Office did. However, where the spellings selected by the Survey differed from common early-nineteenth century usage they were failing to win the favour of government departments and institutions such as the Post Office.228 The result was a growing number of dual names. For example, Ballynacorra, Cahir, Monasterevan and Skull are all official Survey spellings and they still differ from regular Irish usage of Ballinacurra, Caher, Monasterevan and Schull, respectively.

226 ANDREWS, "More suitable to the English Tongue".
227 O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, 4 May 1835, my italicisation. The name that O'Donnovan suggests was adopted for the maps.
228 OWEN & PILBEAM, Ordnance Survey: Map Makers to Britain since 1791.
The reception of place-name changes by the local populace is hard to trace. Some commentators have described locals as being angered by the Survey's orthographic system, yet no supporting evidence is cited.\textsuperscript{229} The reception of the Ordnance Survey in general by the Irish population is better documented but equally difficult to box. Accounts include incidences of active resistance where trigonometric poles were removed, observers attacked and police forces were called out to protect the field parties against cottagers\textsuperscript{230} There are also examples of passive resistance where local obscurantism meant that surveyors were denied information about place-names\textsuperscript{231} and at least one occasion when the Survey benefited from spirited co-operation. A newspaper report of 1828 draws an idyllic picture of how the people of Glenmara, county Clare, had helped the Engineers build a trigonometrical station, climbing their mountain in a great crowd with pipes, flutes and violins.\textsuperscript{232} They had however insisted upon naming the station 'O'Connell's Tower' in honour of the government's leading political antagonist in Ireland. The changing in place-name spellings may not have provoked such direct action because their immediate impact was curbed by the low levels of literacy at the time. Literacy amongst monoglot Irish speakers did not rise until National Schools were fully operational in the late 1830s.\textsuperscript{233} Despite speculative accounts of the instant disorienting effects of the Ordnance Survey's place-naming activities,\textsuperscript{234} the situation in Ireland was more likely akin to the turn of the century Stockholm that Pred describes.\textsuperscript{235} A city where despite, or perhaps in spite, of a newly installed official namescape, the working classes persisted in the use of an unrelated folk geographic lexicon. Pred interprets this scenario as a measure of conscious or sub-conscious resistance to the street name revision of 1885 (and the ideology embedded within it). In Ireland, it would appear to be more a mark of the irrelevance of written form to what was at the time a predominantly oral culture.

\textsuperscript{229} OWEN & PILBEAM, Ordnance Survey: Map Makers to Britain since 1791.
\textsuperscript{230} OSLR(I) #7069, 17 August 1828, Lieutenant Murphy to Mountjoy. OSLR(O) #679, 25 December 1825, Mountjoy to chief secretary. Correspondence on the removal of the trigonometrical pole from Kippure, 29th November 1827: S.P.O. Registered Papers 1448-50; Tucker to Mountjoy, 8th October 1838, OSLR(I) #8178.
\textsuperscript{231} The people in Kilkenny, O'Donnovan's hometown, would not give any information with respect to boundaries or place-names. For more commentary on opposition to the Survey see Longfield in Dublin Statistical Society Journal, (i) 1855, p.155.
\textsuperscript{232} Dublin Evening Post, 23rd September 1828.
\textsuperscript{234} See for example FRIEL, B. (1981) Translations (Faber & Faber, London).
O'Donnovan, perhaps aware that changes in orthography were not being welcomed by either the public or the government spearheaded the challenges to Larcom's drive for authentication:

I have made some slight alterations in the spelling of some townlands; I wish you would glance your eye over them and let me know if you see any objection to my innovations. You will find that I give the correct name in every instance, but the question is is it proper to restore the correct ancient name in defiance to established custom?236

By questioning the propriety of restoring names in particular cases O'Donnovan delivers a blow to the very heart of the Survey's orthographic principle. In asking this question he highlights that pressing considerations lie beyond antiquarian restoration: not least of these being the preferences of the Irish population. There is no evidence of O'Donnovan's criticisms having any impact on Survey policy at large, nor on individual cases. The strict adherence to Survey policy in this instance becomes problematic when one considers that pro-Irish policy was overridden soon after for two considerations that lay closer to the heart of the Ordnance Survey's raison d'être; standardisation and anglicisation. Therefore, modifications entered orthographic policy once again.

The logic of standardising recurrent components of place-names, such as prefixes and suffixes, was becoming increasingly apparent. O'Donnovan was cognisant of the Survey's desire for him to standardise names and was willing to assist in this process. In the Parish of Kilmore, O'Donnovan alters a number of names that he is "convinced suffered great corruptions." He asks for headquarters to review his changes and jokes about the surveillance he feels subject to: "Mr Sharkey will keep his analogical eye upon all my decisions and put me to the crucible by comparison with my decisions in other Counties."237 However, from the detailed direction he applies for, it seems that he is no longer working from his own instincts. In one letter he acknowledges the difficulties he experiences in trying to standardise spellings across counties with such disparate pronunciation and seeks direct instruction from headquarters:

The word taobh i.e. side or brae-face frequently enters into the names here; this we have anglicised tieve in Derry, Down and Antrim. I have used the same spellings of it here, but I am afraid it is too violent as every authority makes it Teer, the more northern pronunciation is tee-ov, the Fermanagh on teer. I wish you would consider this and let me near your opinion for I assure you I am very diffident of my own judgement and proprietors are frequently displeased when

236 O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, 4 May 1835 my abbreviation. The name O'Donnovan suggests was adopted.
237 O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, May 9 1835.
they conceive that a violent innovation is made in the spelling of their Townlands. Posterity will be better qualified to judge than the present generation. The word Toin i.e. bottom frequently forms the first part of names of places here, as Toin Aoil i.e. bottom of limestone in Boho Parish I am doubtful about the English spelling to be adopted. I refer you to this also and request that you will let me know your opinion as soon as convenient.238

At other times he appears most definitive, almost ruthless in his promotion of standardised forms despite the differences in regional pronunciation:

The termination of Naskew in Aghnaskew is almost unimaginable; in some parishes it is pronounced naskea, in others naskia, but in others naskeave. I am satisfied from viewing the surface of these townlands, that the meaning of the names is Achadh na Sceach, i.e. the Land of the White Thorn Trees, ut Sceach is variously pronounced even in Ulster accordingly as that province borders upon Leinster and Connaught, or as adjacent to Scotland. In Farney which is close upon Meath it is pronounced naska but in Derry, Down and in the north of Monaghan it is pronounced naska and by some naskiave. I think we should adopt one general spelling and reject all the barbarities? I would recommend naskea to be adopted.239

The Survey pursued standardisation even in defiance of local usage. Derry consistently replaced the previous equivalence of Derry and Dirry (an oakwood), Drum replaced the alternative forms of Drim and Drom (a ridge) and Bally replaced alternatives Baile, Ballie and Baele (a town). In the Derry maps for instance Ballynock and Drimard of the 1829 engravings had been altered to Ballyknock and Drumard by 1833 because of the standardisation and Anglicisation of the prefixes and suffixes 'baile', 'cnoc' and 'druim'.

Besides standardising place-names elements for the purposes of logic, the Survey served English interests by selecting names more suitable to the English tongue and pleasing to the English eye. O'Donnovan's superiors insisted on the intrusion of letters such as k, q, v, w, and y, which do not exist in Irish lexicography. Hence the Irish word for a town, Baile became Bally and cille, a church, became killy as in Killybegs or Killarney. Thus an air of Gaelic authenticity was maintained in the Irish names, yet in a form acceptable to the predominantly English-speaking purchasers of the map.

From his fieldwork O'Donnovan would contrive a spelling - albeit a compromise - to satisfy both the Irish map user and the British authorities responsible for making the maps. This concession for example informed O'Donnovan's decision to suggest Carrow as the anglicised form of ceathramh even though carrho was actually a better

238 O'DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, November 6 1834, my italicisation.
239 O'DONNOVAN, Cluain Eois, 31 May 1835, my italicisation.
representation of the sound of the original Irish word. Similarly he recommends Tir in preference to Tyr because Tyr was more likely to be mispronounced. The pronunciation being considered is that of English speakers rather than Irish speakers. O'Donnovan initially had expressed concerns that standardisation would not allow adequately for spellings to reflect regional pronunciations. The tensions between the written and the spoken forms of language focused a problem of evaluation that current policy was not equipped to deal with. This concern for regional pronunciation is quickly disregarded as the production of standardised orthographic forms is seen as a more important consideration. Although on one level the Survey could be commended for the care they took to encourage accurate pronunciation, on another level it lays bare the primary concern of the Survey - satisfying its English readership. This conflict between apparent respect for the Irish language and a readiness to remodel it to suit the convenience of non-Irish speakers reflected a tension that was reiterated throughout the work of the Survey. With regard to place-names, the end result was that Ireland was to be changed in order to convenience the English.

O'Donnovan's complicity in this anglicisation of place-names components lends a certain irony to the criticisms he voices below. His work for the Survey is formalising and completing the very process he critiques, yet he does not seem to acknowledge his complicity:

I send you the Name Books of the Parish of Monaghan, in which I have taken the liberty of altering three names with custom has most wonderfully corrupted. These are Cordevlish, Dundaldrum and Dancingnear or Dancingair. You will observe that whenever the original language is lost the people have a wish (or naturally fall into the custom) of changing the ancient names to some words (with which they have a resemblance) in the language which they speak. Thus we find all the Irish names terminating in Lann changed in English to Land, because that syllable sounds, in the name of a place very familiarly to English ears. Now, I want to prove or at least to make it appear likely that these three names in the Parish of Monaghan viz Cor-Devlish, Dun-Daldrum and Dancing-air or Dancing-near have been computed in a similar manner. Cordevlish is never pronounced devlish by those who speak Irish, but pronounced Cor-Devlis, but because that part of the name sounds so cruel, like the English word Devilish they find it more readier and more familiar to call the townland Cur-Devlish or the Devilish Cur than its correct Irish name of Duibh-lios or the Blackfort. Again Dancingnear is doubtlessly a name corrupted in the same vile manner, wherefore I have taken the liberty of giving it a little less appearance of Dancing near (DancingAir wil o the wisp) to in the air b changing the orthography to Dun-sin-

\[240\] O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, May 6 1835.
The tension between O'Donnovan's disregard for the process of anglicisation and his implication in such a process by virtue of his role in the Survey re-surfaces the uneasy position he occupied within the Survey. In the following letter we see John O'Donnovan attempting to reconcile the policy of standardisation imposed upon his work with his scholarly and personal concern for orthography to accurately reflect local pronunciation.

[of Ardragh] The townland is named from a Fort which forms a very conspicuous object for several miles in every direction, and which the inhabitants of the townland call Ard-ráá, or the High Fort. The general spelling is Ardragh but this we cannot adopt as gh is altogether foreign to the word. The word Rath we have anglicised rath, raw, rá, but the pronunciation here is not so distinct as rath, so broad as raw, nor so faint as ra, and I therefore think that rah may be adopted in order to throw a secondary accent on the syllable rah: thus Ard-ráh. Ardra would be pronounced ard-ra. In making the Index care must be taken that every name of the same meaning be spelled alike, and I think there is another Ardrah near Ballybay which I have spelled Ardragh because I was not able to learn the signification of it. Many persons have told me that the name of a townland as well as the name of a man, might be spelled any way, and I made answer that it might in rude age and among a barbarous people, but that we should now try and reduce them to standard as well as the words of a cultivated [people].

In the moves toward anglicisation and the release of original meaning the Ordnance Survey dismissed its previous concern to limit its choice to those names already in existence. The Survey authorised the creation of new forms of place-names. The Survey has moved away from its deference to those it deemed authorities and chose instead its own authority. The Survey began to produce names that fitted into their priorities whether that be a name that is close to the original Irish form or a name that appealed to either the logic of standardisation or the preferences of the English readership. The Survey, quietly and under the auspices of a greater logic, rejected its assembled authorities in preference of its own names - its own author-ity.

PARTING WORDS

Throughout the metamorphosis of the Ordnance Survey's orthographic policies there remained one constant: the endeavour to apply a uniform system to secure a measure of orthographical correctness. Much comparison, historical research and fieldwork was undertaken so that place-names would arrive on the maps in a form for which purity, accuracy or authenticity could be claimed. Although each policy had

241 O'DONNOVAN, Cootehill, May 25 1835, my italicisation.
proposed to confine place-name selection to existing forms this simple notion, and the system that buttressed it, bent under various stresses and strains.

The Survey extracted the same logic utilised for the quantification of space and attempted to apply it to the task of inscribing place. However, words did not respond to the same logic as numbers: applied to language this rationalising, administrative principle became plural and unpredictable. The irregular and messy world proved to be incommensurable with the Survey's grid-like, positivistic, scientific mode of approaching information. Instead of retracting their systematic approach when faced with its unstandardised results, the Survey embellished the system and hoped to extend their methodology to encompass the "deviations" of language also.

It was not only the nature of language itself that resisted the imposition of a simplifying system to Irish toponymy. Surveyors working in the field collecting place-names were acutely aware of the obstacles lying between policy and its practical realisation. With the advent of fieldwork, John O'Donnovan spearheaded critiques of the "universal system." He couched his criticisms in terms of a sensitivity towards spoken forms of names, regional differences in pronunciation and local preferences to retaining generally received and established forms of place-names. Nevertheless O'Donnovan's criticisms, grounded as they were in a sensitivity to localised and particular experiences comprised an opposition to the over-arching, mechanical treatment of names proposed by Survey policy.

The response of the Survey to O'Donnovan's criticisms is interesting. The system Colby had put in place was not consistently producing uniform and logical forms of names. Therefore, additional measures were set up to assist the production of standardised place-names. However, the measures put in place to ensure such standardisation compromised existing principles. For example, the Survey had proposed a system that would confine its choice of place-name form to those already in existence and in use. Despite the elaborate and detailed research and fieldwork undertaken to collect existing forms, the pressures to standardise and anglicise spellings meant the name recommended was frequently found to differ from every other known form of the name. Alterations, although each individually justifiable under the auspices of standardisation, anglicisation or Anglo-pronunciation, had blurred the simple outlines of the Survey's most basic principle almost to the point of unrecognisability.
FIGURE 26: THE SURVEYOR’S RETURN.

Source: Cartoon from Punch, 1845.
CHAPTER FOUR:
RE/FORMING IRELAND'S NAMESCAPE

"To illustrate the tottering fragment's of an expiring language, or to adjust the orthography which time has unsettled, is difficult and dangerous."^{242}

Prior to the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, each place-name in Ireland existed in a number of acceptable versions. Of these varying forms, none was deemed officially 'correct' or 'accepted' and in this sense the namescape appeared unsettled and unfixed to the Survey officers. In a letter from the field O'Donnovan informed Larcom, "many persons have told me that the name of a townland, like the name of a man, might be spelled any way."^{243} Although this co-existence of name versions was considered unproblematic by the local population, the Survey regarded the scenario as both chaotic and cacophonous. O'Donnovan's letter continues by stating such an unsettled namescape might be suitable "in rude age and among a barbarous people but that we should now try and reduce them to a standard as well as the words of a cultivated language."^{244} It appears more than the cartographic requirement of attaching referents to places was being catered to by the Survey. There were ambitions of rationalising reform. The scientific discourse of uniformity, rationality and consistency masked the colonial intent of this reform.

The Ordnance Survey's initial and publicised aim was to restrict its choice of place-names to those already in existence and to give preference to those in contemporary use. However, as the officers of the Survey journeyed through Ireland, collecting and recording place-names for publication on its 6" series maps, their aim of limiting place-names choices to existing forms was encroached upon by political as well as scientific pressures. The very process of recording names and publishing a singular official namescape involved some reduction of that environment. In addition the ideals of unity and attachment to England would influence the selection of names and their

^{243} O'DONNOVAN, Cootehill, May 25 1835.
^{244} O'DONNOVAN, Cootehill, May 25 1835. The selection of the adjective "barbarous" to describe Irish place-names and the adjective "cultivated" for the English language is vital groundwork for establishing the intellectual justification and rationale for the Survey's intervention in Irish orthography.
subsequent modification by the Survey. The Survey was altering the very nature of the namescape it sought, and avowed, only to record.

This chapter considers the ways in which the presence and activity of the Ordnance Survey reformed Ireland's namescape in both its orthographic detail and its general nature. I highlight how the orthographic knowledge was produced, manipulated and negotiated within the specific analytical spaces of Ordnance Survey documentation. More particularly, I demonstrate how these processes were shaped by the ideological values of scientific truth and political union.

**SCIENTIFIC PRESSURES**

The first step the Ordnance Survey took in the orthographic process was the production of the name-books. This was the primary site for the recording various versions place-names and the sources from which they were obtained. The blank spaces of the name book created by the Survey effectively erased pre-existing cultural formations. The name-books created a toponymic carte blanche. Name-books allowed the Survey to simultaneously destroy and re-create geographies. In the process of "creative destruction" the name books paved the way "for the projection and subsequent emplacement of a new order."

The Survey entered select place-names and local knowledge into the pristine pages of these books. Its commitment to scientific authority was underlined in the use of scientific documents such as statistical accounts. Once all the authorities were recorded, the Survey had to select one of these names to engrave on the final map. The scenario presented by the name book legitimised the Survey's intervention in place-name selection. The completed name books did not construct Ireland as a blank text awaiting inscription but rather portrayed it as a tower of Babel desperately in need of a adjudicator to make sense of the chaos. Indeed, a letter by Larcom to Colby shortly before the completion of the first edition of the maps states, "the orthography of names of places is unsettled everywhere, but peculiarly so in Ireland. . .you accordingly

\[\text{References}\]

245 GODLEWESKA, 'Map, text and image. The mentality of enlightened conquerors', quote from p.8.
addressed the Master General [of the Ordnance] on the subject in April 1830 stating your anxiety to make the maps a standard of orthography as well as topography. It was the Ordnance Survey's opinion, and general opinion in England, that "dealings with land in Ireland would be much facilitated by eliminating every plurality of spelling of the same denomination and adopting the one spelling only."

The logic of standardisation did not end once a single version of each name was settled. The intention of bringing the country's namescape within a single standardised system of representation could not be achieved without imposing a new national uniformity upon the variety of regional and local habit. As a result the urge to standardise reached more intimate scales. The recurring prefixes and suffixes of place-names also needed to be standardised. For example the word "druim" (a ridge) frequently forms a part of Ireland's place-names. When the Survey entered Ireland, they encountered place-names spoken and written differently according to a variety of regional pronunciations. Thus in various areas, the place-name element "druim" was recorded as drom, drim and drum. All clearly derive from druim yet none are orthographically, or phonetically correct. Instead of reviving the Irish version with its "uncongenial" pairing of u and i, the Survey adopted one of the regional variations and applied it uniformly across Ireland. Appeals to efficacy regularly served the interests of the existing power relations. By this expedient, words in the "uncouth" limbo between Irish and English could assume an English character if not a true language.

The staff of the Ordnance Survey were willing to go to some length in order to make the selection of place-names seem like a logical and systematic process. There were times when all authorities recorded in the name-book were rejected so that the treatment of recurrent elements would remain the same. In the Derry maps for instance Ballynock and Drimard of the 1829 engravings had been altered to Ballyknock and Drumard by 1833 because of the standardisation and anglicisation of the prefixes and suffixes 'baile', 'cnoc' and 'druim'. All regional variation in geography and naming was flattened once subjected to the Survey's standardising system.

---


248 O'CONNELL, in DILLON, Observations on the value of the Ordnance name of Irish townlands", quote from p.10.
Once the names in a parish were selected, this information was collected and organised in a series of catalogues and indexes. The local knowledge after having been extracted, modified and made uniform was then placed in an order imposed from the outside by a foreign military service. This was the ultimate imposition of rationalising reform on the place-names of Ireland. This process of systematising the orthographic knowledge was so pervasive that the spellings of place-names were altered at times in order to facilitate the compilation and efficient use of alphabetical listings. The tyranny of the index and its alphabetical logic prevailed over the organic and shifting multiplicity of Ireland's pre-Ordnance Survey namescape. The construction of what was in effect the imperial archive at the "centre of calculation" was basic to the imperial project.249

As the Survey travelled through Ireland the multiple versions of each place-name were reduced to a single spelling. The Survey decreased variation, eliminated possibilities and promoted consistency in place-name usage. They were therefore implicated in moving Ireland's namescape from its period of experimentation towards the stage of consolidation whereby the majority of educated opinion agrees as to how a name should be spelt and pronounced. Not only did the Survey produce a uni-dimenisonal namescape, but it added to its selections the authority of the printed word. To publish the names was to give the Survey's subjective choices an anonymous legibility. A moment in the dynamic process of language evolution was made static in time and space because having been written into and thus embedded within the text of the map, the chosen place-names were theoretically able to "gain access to and take hold of public consciousness and achieve thereby a higher degree of stability and permanence"250 but also give them authority and legitimacy as a co-ordinate on a map. A text's association with an institution can further legitimate the truths it produces. In this instance the legitimacy of the selected names were buttressed by their publication, their scientific presentation and the authority of a government agency. The breadth of the map's circulation aided the dissemination of the new names. Larcom was "instrumental in causing the first edition [of the six-inch map] to be widely distributed among libraries and government offices on both sides of the Irish sea".251

251 ANDREWS, 'Thomas Aiskew Larcom 1801-1879', quote from p.72.
Andrews argues that the Ordnance Survey's choice of names cannot be held responsible for altering Ireland's namescape. He questions the influence of the Survey's orthographic selections arguing that the publication of the maps did not prevent people from continuing to call their surroundings whatever they liked. However, the Survey's names were not irrelevant nor unfixed as the Ordnance Survey itself discovered when they attempted to make orthographic revisions only a few years later.\textsuperscript{252} The Ordnance Survey had lent their selections such a level of authority that they became official. The Survey had entered Ireland at a time when the namescape was malleable and had consolidated it into their preferred state. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland, commissioned by the English government, directed and staffed by military personnel of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Corps of Sappers and Miners and organised at a national scale, was stamping an English authority upon the land. Through the consolidation of the namescape, it had made its mark permanent.

However, if the premise of Andrews's argument is that nobody was actually forced to use the Ordnance Survey names, then it is somewhat irrelevant whether or not the Ordnance Survey's written names were accepted as official. Did it matter that the maps themselves were not accessible the Irish-speaking population?\textsuperscript{253} Did this limit their impact? Let me counter these questions with a different question. How does the signifying practice of the Ordnance Survey map correlate with the complex strategic situation within Ireland itself and between England and Ireland? In the area of language the desire for a system which promoted rationality and uniformity was coupled with ambitions of rationalising reform based upon the ideals of political unity and attachment to England. I will proceed to answer these questions.

\section*{Political Pressures}

\textit{Overt policy: the Gaelicisation of place-names}

When confronted with multiple versions of a name, the Ordnance Survey had made clear its intention to select the version that most closely resembled the original

\textsuperscript{252} The Ordnance Survey encountered resistance and obstacles. For example there was a requirement of written permission from the Lord Lieutenant to change any names.

\textsuperscript{253} The inaccessibility of the maps was due to two factors. The high cost of the maps made them a scarce commodity and even if the maps had been available for consultation, the low level of literacy amongst the Irish-speaking population would preclude their reading of the Survey's rendering of place-names.
Irish form. This required the original form of the name to be found or reconstructed. Thus, discussions of modifications of Ireland's namescape instigated by the Survey are most frequently couched in terms of restoration and authenticity. The policy of bringing names closer to their original Irish form seems somewhat incongruous with a English military operation. Upon closer inspection, this policy services two political needs.

By selecting names on the basis of their proximity to the original Irish form the choice of names was removed from the world of practical expediency and placed instead in the world of linguistic scholarship. Place-name selections were de-politicised and discussed in terms of academic polarities such as the empirical versus the theoretical, the corrupt versus the pure and most importantly the modern against the ancient. The Survey proactively encouraged antiquarian studies which many Victorians would have condemned as excessively academic. This pursuit of knowledge extended far beyond studies of place-names, antiquities and archaeological remains. In the early years of the Ordnance Survey it was envisaged that the printed maps would be accompanied by volumes containing detailed information that would be difficult to provide cartographically. The colonialist implications of this subjection to record are inescapable. Larcom instructed field officers to note in exhaustive detail the Irish way of life:

"Habits of people. Note the general style of the cottages, as stone, mud, slated, glass windows, one story or two, number of rooms, comfort and cleanliness. Food; fuel; dress; longevity; usual number in a family; early marriages; any remarkable instances on either of those heads? What are their amusements and recreations? patrons and patrons' days; and traditions respecting them? What local customs prevail, as Bael tinne, or fire on St. John's eve? Driving the cattle through fire, and through water? Peculiar games? Any legendary tales or poems recited around the fireside? Any ancient music, as clan marches or funeral cries? They differ in different districts, collect them if you can. Any peculiarity of costume? Nothing more indicates the state of civilisation and intercourse."

The language and the customs of the people became an object of study in itself for the Survey. Apart from the colonialist implication of this subjection to record, the data collected could be used quite specifically within the discourse of ethnology as a means of classifying inhabitants. In early-nineteenth century Britain ethnology offered a general and scientific framework for the systematic study of the linguistic, physical and cultural characteristics of dark-skinned, non-European, 'uncivilised' peoples. The Irish were

---

254 LARCOM, T. (1832) Heads of Inquiry, copies at the Ordnance Survey Office and in LP 7550.

122
already assimilated to this category for since the time of Elizabeth the Irish had been viewed as hardly less "savage" than the blacks that the English encountered overseas.\textsuperscript{255} Charles Kingsley, a Cambridge University History Professor, upon his return from a visit to Ireland remarked

> I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country. I don't believe they are our fault, I believe there are not only many more of them than of old, but they are happier, better, more comfortably fed and lodged under our rule than they ever were. But to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black one would not feel it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours.\textsuperscript{256}

Apart from the assertion of power involved in the assumption of the authority to interrogate, the information gathered was ordered tendentiously. The tenor of these enquiries is not neutral: evidence of squalor, improvidence (the Irish were renowned for their early marriages), aberration and superstition are specifically invited. The effect as the closing sentence of the instructions reveals is to make evident how the Irish should be ranked in the scale of civilisation.\textsuperscript{257} In consequence, everything about Irish life that was othered by the process of meticulous record was liable to define itself as primitive if not savage: mutely pleading for the imperial helping hand of civilised England.

The first parish memoir to be published was Templemore. Upon its completion it was realised that this parish alone had cost three times more than the memoir budget for the whole of Ireland. The memoir scheme, having collected materials on a number of other parishes, promptly ground to a halt. Even though all the material collected in that vast project could not be published - there was to be no \textit{Description of Ireland} to rival that of the French \textit{Description de l'Egypte} (1809-1828) - that was not the point. The lives of the Irish people had been opened out to view, had been inspected, enumerated, inscribed and assessed.

Thinly veiled as an homage to all things Irish the restoration of Irish place-names and the memoir scheme were political projects. Such studies were a means of appropriating the past to legitimise the colonised present. Battle for ownership of the


\textsuperscript{256} Cited in HECHTER \textit{Internal Colonialism}, p.xvi.

\textsuperscript{257} The Enlightenment supported a belief in "progress" which manifested itself into a conceptualisation of a hierarchy of cultures, of civilisation progressing to a culmination.
Irish past was to be a recurrent feature of attempts to create a national consciousness. History was being employed by the Survey in a purely instrumental sense to soften political passions, and make people more easily governed by substituting real knowledge for tendentious prejudice and myth. This map-maker's concern with field monuments and place-names induced an atomistic view of history, with local factors predominating and national disasters receding so far into the background that they lost most of their inflammatory power. The Survey had found a means to capture, take out of circulation, and archive both ancient and contemporary national knowledge. It was removed alongside the potential for resistance to the new order and converted into an ineffectual past. Irishness was made traditional, irrelevant to contemporary living, contained and confined. All of this was achieved in a manner that presented the Survey as genuinely interested in all things Irish and thus sympathetic and sensitive in its cartographic representation of Ireland.

The changing relation of the Survey to Irish labour was also politically motivated. Initially the Irish were excluded from employment on the Survey - a statement in itself of the English state's belief in the relative underdevelopment of the Irish. Conversely the systematised labour which went into the enterprise was represented as a mark of English superiority. During the first half of the nineteenth century a specific notion about work based on a highly organised factory model was coming to be understood as a mark of civilised life. This was considered beyond the Irish, as the words of Wellesley, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, make plain, "[n]either science, nor skill, nor diligence, nor discipline, nor integrity sufficient for such a work [as the Survey] can be found in Ireland." What is portrayed as being absent in Ireland are the marks of civilised human development: this authorises the intervention of the colonial power.

After the first two years it was realised that the Survey was progressing too slowly and that more manpower was required. The cheapest and most available source of labour was local civilians. Thus, Wellesley's preferences were put aside. The employment of Irish civilians and scholars, just like the incorporation of local knowledges in the name-books, gave an illusion that Irish people in general consented to the mapping. Their co-option as staff, scholars or informants meant that they could be represented as assenting to the order on which their own dispossession was predicated.

259 There are a number of recorded incidents that show that this was clearly not the case.
While the text of the map was being inscribed, the text of cultural landscape was being re-inscribed in ways that ostensibly drew upon local knowledge and the local population, yet actually relied upon terms of reference wholly unfamiliar to many of the indigenous people.

Considerations aside from the scientific ideal qualified the drive for a precise map. Land divisions might be altered and units of measurement anglicised without palpable infringement of the authenticity of the map but the question of language was peculiarly sensitive. It was imperative that the Irish language be represented if the map was to be recognised as an authentic Irish document. Hence the elaborate procedures of recruiting Irish scholars and establishing a topographical department that were taken in order to reconstruct the ancient forms of names. Variant spellings and the anglicisation that had been occurring over the past hundred years complicated this desire, but it was pursued none the less. Retaining a Gaelic air to the place-names on the Ordnance Survey maps was thus motivated by the desire to demonstrate the ease and inevitability of Anglo-Irish political unity. Differences between England and Ireland, whether issuing in variations in place-names or the clash of English and Irish surnames, had to be cancelled. If English troops, funded by the British Exchequer could produce a document or text that could represent itself as authentically Irish then it could guarantee the justice and inevitability of the political union between the two countries. The Survey, whilst overtly espousing the virtues of restoring original names, had actually investigated difference between England and Ireland, collected, contained and therefore controlled this difference and then within its maps reduced disparities by a single universal formula. All of this worked towards demonstrating the ease and naturalness of Anglo-Irish political unity.

**COVERT PRACTICE: THE ANGLICISATION OF PLACE-NAME**

Since this mapping was conducted by the English for an English audience, with the intent to portray an Ireland that was united with England, it is not surprising that the Survey's official policy of restoring Irish names was somewhat superficial. Beneath the publicised principles and the Gaelic gloss that was being lent to place-names, a process of anglicisation was occurring. Anglicisation means to "make English in form or character". Ireland's place-names were anglicised on both counts. The Survey had not only proposed a system for recreating Irish sounds with English letters, but had created new names that contained different stresses, different sounds and even a different
number of words. Once in their final form, the names had both an English look and an English spelling. The process of anglicisation was somewhat inevitable. The sounds of Irish, however genuine the attempt, cannot be represented through the sounds of English. Besides the English spelling system does not represent well the sounds of Irish - not to the minds nor the ears of the Irish.

It would be actually more accurate to say that Survey's treatment of place-names was a *continuation* of the process of anglicisation. The process had been occurring well before the arrival of the Ordnance Survey and is traceable as far back as the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1170. de hOir, a former head of the place-names division of the Ordnance Survey, speculates that the majority of the townland names date from between 1300 and 1500. Although he offers no support for this claim, both periods are well represented with maps that testify to the conquest of Ireland by the English. Andrews believes there was a strong continuity between the Survey's name policies and those of their predecessors. He downplays the Survey's role in anglicisation by stating that the great majority of the Ordnance Survey's Irish names had already appeared in writing, most of them in documents or on maps. Many of the common use spellings and pronunciations of names of towns and of major physical features were already anglicised to some degree by the time of the Ordnance Survey.\(^{260}\) The Ordnance Survey necessarily encountered the legacies of statutes such as the Act of Settlement and the decreasing numbers of Irish speakers. Indeed a Rev. Smyth, Roman Catholic Priest of the district of Lisburn, tells the Survey "I shall be very happy to lend all the assistance in my power to promote your object, but in this part of Ireland, it is very often difficult to ascertain the correct names of places. I am afraid you are one hundred years too late".\(^{261}\)

The Survey was in a compromised position: by recording these names it would be complicit in the fixing of "names more suitable to an English tongue", but introducing alternate versions would be to enact a similar interference with the namescape. Yet, the Survey showed a considerable respect for spellings that looked right to the majority of its readers - who were English-speaking. In addition it continued the long-established policy of standardising recurrent prefixes and suffixes. There was nothing new about


\(^{261}\) O'DONNOVAN, Lisburn, 21 March1834.
any of this. It was exactly what most other cartographers in Ireland had been doing for centuries. Does the fact that the seeds of anglicisation were sown prior to the Ordnance Survey absolve them of responsibility for their part in the process?

The acknowledgement of a history of anglicisation of place-names that predates the Ordnance Survey is sufficient to reveal that it is dangerously inaccurate to describe what the Survey did as "naming". The Ordnance Survey treated place-names in a way that maintained continuity with its cartographic predecessors. Take for example the Irish word doire - an oak wood. In sixty-eight random occurrences of a place-name element originating in the Irish word doire collected from pre-Ordnance Survey maps from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, in not one instance is it spelt "doire". "Derry" occurs forty times, no other version (of which there most have been twenty-seven samples) more than four times. The full extent of the Ordnance Survey's translation in this case was to adopt an already well established form "Derry" for all such names. Derry is not an English word. Thus it is quite wrong to suggest that new Ordnance names were created by substituting English for Irish.

In acknowledging that the anglicisation of the Irish namescape was not a process that began with the Ordnance Survey, I am not claiming that the Survey had no choice but to anglicise. In its capacity of inscribing a national series of authoritative maps with boundaries, features and names, it had agency that it could exercise. Anglicisation and translation were not alternative strategies that presented themselves on some level of consciousness to the leaders of the Survey but, they were in a position that allowed them to decide whether to continue with the process of anglicisation or to reverse the situation. Whatever actions they decided to take played an active role in altering the namescape. At the time of the Ordnance Survey, there were three possibilities for the Survey to chose from; the Irish forms, the English forms and the forms most commonly used. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irish forms</th>
<th>English forms</th>
<th>Forms most commonly used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Druim-dubh</td>
<td>Black Ridge</td>
<td>Drumduff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muigh-iscal</td>
<td>Low Plain</td>
<td>Myshall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Survey claimed to select from the most commonly used names the one that came closest to the Irish form. However, the most commonly used form was actually selected
and was then lent an English patina. This is demonstrated in the following excerpts from one of O'Donnovan's letters to Larcom:

The termination realgh I was obliged to make revagh in some instances and garve I had to make garrow. The word taobh (side or brae-face) frequently enters into the names here; this we have anglicised tieve in Derry, Down and Antrim. I have used the same spellings of it here, but I am afraid it is too violent as every authority makes it Teer.

Rather than demonstrating a concern for the chosen orthography to be closest to the original Irish form, it shows the Survey making allowances for the standardisation of recurrent place-name elements. Another concern that overrode the official policy was the desire to ensure that the spelling of place-names would allow an English speaker to pronounce the names in a manner that is vaguely consistent with the Irish pronunciation. For example in the Templemore Memoir there is the following note:

Culmore } Recefsus magnus
Coolmore)

Coolmore is more consistent with Irish pronunciation, cúl is always long, the ú being sounded like oo in the English word fool.

There is much evidence of this practice in the letters O'Donnovan sent to Larcom. O'Donnovan would authoritatively provide the correct orthography in Irish and then give the anglicised spelling. For example, one letter provides a list furnished to him by a John McLindon, "a kind and intelligent farmer who is more interested in the subject than myself and who is as much obliged to me, as I am to him for the trouble we have taken with them." He writes:-

.....6. Crotley, in Irish, Croit-shliabh, Hump-Mountain, such being its shape. The name is compounded similar to Corr Shliabh, now Curlieu in Connaught. We must anglicise it either Crotlieu or certainly Crotlie - Crotlieve would be the analogous spelling.

...8. Carquillan. This is by no means settled in the Country, as I find by the various tomb-stones. And you will not be surprised that the Revd. Mr. White, P.M. of Rathfriland would wish to have it Kirk-Ullen (nothing like leather) but the Irish name is Carr an Chuillin i.e. the Rugged Place of Holly. This is well known to the Irish inhabitants who always keep the English spelling as near to it as they can. Some holly bushes still appear among the rocks. Without hesitation or fear of criticism I will make this Carcullion, which sounds a beautiful name and preserves its meaning. The Presbyterians will pronounce it kirk-Ullen, and the
Roman Catholic, Carr Cuilling, nor will they ever agree until our memoir appears (if ever). 262

This alludes not only to the active role the Survey took in altering and indeed anglicising names but also acknowledges that the name forms they selected in some way finalised and settled the namescape. O'Donnovan cares more about making the correct decision than pleasing the present inhabitants "as they in general know very little about the subject and what they do know is generally wrong or pedantic". He concludes that "posterity will be better qualified to judge than the present generation".

There is a systematic anglicisation occurring throughout. The correct anglicisations are to be found for each name and each place-name component:

The word Toin i.e. bottom frequently forms the first part of names of places here, as Toin Aoil ie bottom of limestone in Boho Parish I am doubtful about the English spelling to be adopted. I refer you to this also and request that you will let me know your opinion as soon as convenient. 263

O'Donnovan was directly implicated in the establishing of Anglo-Irish name forms. O'Donnovan's feeling for the English language is an aspect of him that has not been greatly stressed. He served English interests by selecting names more suitable to the English tongue and pleasing to the English eye. He catered to the Survey's English-speaking customers being careful to seek forms that would not offend their orthographic instincts. From his field work O'Donnovan would contrive a spelling which would satisfy the British authorities and English-speaking map users yet would retain a Gaelic air. This concession is evident in O'Donnovan's decision to suggest Carrow as the anglicised form of ceathramh even though carrho was actually a better representation of the sound of the original Irish word. A degree of transliteration being encouraged. O'Donnovan's superiors insisted upon the intrusion of letters such as k, q, v, w, and y which do not exist in Irish lexicography. Irish letters were being represented by more or less corresponding characters of the English alphabet. Hence the Irish word for a town, Baile became Bally and cille, a church, became killy as in Killybegs or Killarney. Thus an air of Gaelic authenticity was maintained in the Irish names, yet in a form acceptable to the predominantly English-speaking purchasers of the map. Ireland's place-names were being altered to convenience the English.

262 O'DONNOVAN, Rathfriland, 19 April 1834.
263 O'DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, 6 November 1834.
The Survey was active in its continuation of the anglicisation of place-names. That the Survey should pursue a process of anglicisation was not an inevitability. However, there were factors that did limit, or at least complicate the other options open to them. The department chose from written rather than from spoken forms where possible. Theoretically many of these place-names could be as old as the Gaelic presence in Ireland which is estimated to be some two millennia. However the majority of Ireland's townland names were first recorded in plantation and settlement documents which were prepared as a basis for the transfer of land from Irish to British ownership. So, in practice the written forms were still necessarily drawn from these English-language documents. Also the few Irish documents that contained orthographic "clues" were unavailable for consultation.

Andrews argues that because none of these place-name treatments were novel, the Survey is somehow absolved from any connection with the anglicisation of place-names. But does anglicisation prior to the Ordnance Survey's arrival negate its own active role in anglicisation? The Ordnance Survey played a vital part in the anglicisation of Ireland's place-names: it not only made concrete and fixed the anglicisations that had already occurred, but it furthered the process. It furthered the existing process by replacing letters and letter sequences with ones more customary to English, by shortening names comprised of three short words to one abbreviated word and by changing spellings so that an English-speaker could hazard an fairly accurate attempt at pronouncing the name correctly. Other "English" touches and gloss were added to what remain essentially Irish names.

Discussions of the modifying influence of the Survey are not new. One notable commentator argues that rather than considering the Ordnance Survey to be a bad descendant of the Act of Settlement, we should rather consider it to be what Fen-ditch or the Holland Dyke is to the sea:

"a mighty barrier raised against the wave-wash and encroachments of time and change. That it may require the trowel here and there is possible, but take it for all and all history names no grander superstructure none which testifies with such confidence to the erudition and patriotism of the great masons who built it."

284 DILLON, Observations on the value of the Ordnance name of Irish townlands, quote from p.16.
On the other hand, the Survey did nothing to reverse the effects of the Act of Settlement and the deference the Survey showed to landowners' authority over their property's name carried the Act of Explanation into the nineteenth century. And, the flip side of the Survey fixing the names and thereby preventing further anglicisation was that they concretised and made permanent the "barbaric" state of anglicised names.

Criticism of the treatment of names came in 1892 by Douglas Hyde in the address "The Necessity of De-anglicising the Irish Nation". He writes:

On the whole our place-names have been treated with about the same respect as if they were the names of a savage tribe which had never before been reduced to writing and with about the same intelligence and contempt as vulgar English squatters treat the topographical nomenclature of the Red Indians.265

Whatever one's opinion, the fact remains that the current place-names of Ireland are anglicised and all those who worked to put those names in print are somehow implicated in the present state.

MOVING FROM THE TRANSPARENT TO THE OPAQUE

The place-names I am describing as 'anglicised' in most cases would not be recognised as English by an Anglophone. The names contain little or no meaning in English. So if the linguistic alterations made to the place-names are insufficient to make them identifiably English then why do I consider them to be significant? The issue is not only about how close the names are to English, but also how distanced have they become from Irish. In Ireland the original uncorrupted forms of place-names typically convey some description of the physical character, history or ownership of the place they name. Celtic place-names are generally transparent: a transparent name refers to a "names whose meanings an unsophisticated contemporary speaker can understand if he should choose to reflect on the etymological meaning".266 In Ireland, transparent names are thus those that Gaelic speakers would be capable of interpreting immediately and correctly. As the Survey altered spellings and added new letters to Irish names it corrupted them.

The subtle alterations in orthography enacted by the Survey - changes which did not seem to drastic to an English-speaking soldier - moved, or at least were complicit in moving Irish names from transparency to opacity. The gestures towards moving names closer to their original Irish forms were all superficial. They produced nothing more than pseudo-Celtic forms of the names. The standardisation of recurrent place-name elements served the Survey's desire for an orderly and systematic look only. The anglicised form was then further modified and fixed by the Ordnance Survey so that the resultant names belonged to no language and were meaningless. The end result of this was that the meaning of the place-names of Ireland were not apparent to the average Irish speaker. They represent names that once were transparent and through a series of modification have become opaque. In *The Nation* Thomas Davies reviewed the work of the Ordnance Survey. In reference to place-names he wrote, "whenever those maps are re-engraved, the Irish words, will, we trust, be spelled in an Irish and civilised orthography and not barbarously as at present". By using the word 'barbarous' Davies referred to names that did not convey their meaning. It is clear that Davies's wish for the Ordnance Survey to select place-names spelt in "Irish and civilised orthography" was not met. Given the explicit Hiberniophile overtures of policy, the scenario is rather ironic.

The anglicisation of the Irish namescape by the Ordnance Survey has been described as a process of translation by writers within the academy, the media and the arts. This interpretation of Ordnance Survey orthographic actions has infuriated the historian John Andrews who devoted the larger part of his career to writing the history of the Irish Survey. Andrews has directed most of his criticism to the playwright Brian Friel and his play *Translations*. The play is set in the Irish-speaking community of Baile Beag, county Donegal in 1833 and traces the personal and cultural impacts of the Ordnance Survey's mapping of Ireland. The central drama revolves around the arrival of a detachment of Royal Engineers who, with the aid of an Irish collaborator, attempt to

268 Additional irony stems from the minor adaptations in name spellings. Names would be altered to fit catalogues and hence lose their meaning in Irish. Then these names were changed further to gain a meaning in English. Such actions make explicit which language and which audience was valued. For example, O'Donnovan writes "Rathfraoleann is pronounced Raa-freelian but I observe that almost every word that ends in "nn" in Irish, when anglicised is usually in modern times made "nd" as Loughbrickland Drummond, Rathfriland, Drumgooland. The reason is manifest, because the termination land is significative in English and applicable no doubt to land." O'Donnovan, Castlewellan, 23 April 1834.
map the local area and translate its Gaelic place-names into English equivalents. Andrews considers the play to perpetuate the myth that the Irish Survey translated place-names. Yet his criticism lies not with the play per se, he even acknowledges that "there can be more than one kind of historical fiction." What does disturb Andrews however is that Translations is frequently presented and received as historical fact. In a Cartographica review of a history of the Ordnance Survey, one critic suggests that "anyone seriously interested in the Ordnance Survey of Ireland should read Friel's Translations". Friel in a purportedly non-fictitious account of Ordnance Survey practices explained to The Guardian newspaper, "new place-names were put on those maps ... the whole country was re-christened." His description was more relevant to the plot line of Translations than to the actual practices of the Irish Survey. With such slippage occurring between the dramatic and historical events Andrews felt it problematic that Translations "gives a grossly false account of the organisation of the Ordnance Survey, of the training and competence of Ordnance Survey employees, and of the powers vested in Ordnance Survey officers."

Andrews considered it necessary to put the record straight when even J.B. Harley described the translation of Indian names into English as being "just as with the Ordnance Survey and the Gaelic names of nineteenth century Ireland." Here was a commentator who being an acknowledged expert on Ordnance Survey history "should have known better" than to than to perpetuate the myth that the Irish Survey translated place-names. Andrews set about writing an article that distinguished the fact from the fiction in Translations. Realising that "to state the facts of the case without comment must seem humourless, ultra-pedantic, and no more dramatically relevant than counting the number of Lady MacBeth's children" Andrews nevertheless felt that "however unpleasant the task, historical misconceptions in historical discourse have to be challenged."

It is in this article that Andrews addresses the most clearly that "the names on Irish Ordnance maps are not translations and transliterations into English

Cartographica 31 no.3 Autumn pp.60-1, quote on p.60.
274 ANDREWS, J.H. 'Commentary' p.61, citing from J.B. Harley 'Victims of a map: New England cartography and the native Americans' typescript, 1990, quote from p.16.
275 ANDREWS, 'Notes for a Future Edition of Brian Friel's Translations'.
invented by junior army officers, as Friel suggests." Only a small minority of names were of English origin and almost none were new. Thus to describe the Survey as re-christening Ireland is an misleading exaggeration.

Why does the anglicisation of place-names by the Survey not comprise a process of translation? Translation occurs when the meaning of a word is represented in a word from another language. The letters, the sound and the spelling of the translated word is often radically different from the original word, but the meaning is retained as closely as is possible. A translated place-name would thus retain "transparency" to speakers of the language into which it was translated. Since the anglicised place-names selected by the Ordnance Survey only looked and sounded less Irish and did not contain any meaning for an English-speaker, they cannot be described as translations.

Translation is currently a popular metaphor being used to symbolise all the cultural mischief done by Englishmen in Ireland which probably explains why reputable scholars have preferred to use this concept than examine the actual treatment of place-names by the Ordnance Survey. However, the process the Ordnance Survey was actually engaged in, the anglicisation of place-names, was having a far more destructive effect to the Irish namescape. It was taking transparent, meaning-filled names and fixing them in a corrupted, opaque form. Irish place-names no longer had a meaning to English or Irish speakers.

CONCLUSIONS

By the end of the Survey in 1846, Colby's instructions with regard to place-names had been satisfied: the persons employed on the Survey had endeavoured to obtain the correct orthography of place-names by diligently consulting the best authorities within their reach. However, not all fundamental principles for recording place-names had been met with such success. As the Ordnance Survey journeyed through Ireland collecting and recording place-names for publication on its six-inch series maps, more than the cartographic requirement of attaching referents to places had been catered to. The Ordnance Survey's aim to restrict its choice of place-names to those already in existence with preferably those in contemporary usage was soon encroached upon by political and scientific pressures that promoted the Anglicisation and standardisation of place-name orthography. In addition, the very process of recording names and
publishing an official namescape caused some modification of that environment. By 1846 the Survey’s activities, shaped by ideological influences promoting anglicisation and Anglo-Irish political union, had both actively and passively altered the very nature of the namescape it sought and avowed to directly record. The most significant change being that the movement from a transparent, meaning-filled namescape to an obscured, opaque one had been furthered.
FIGURE 27: HOW TO MAKE THE IRISH STEW

How did the mapping and naming practices of the Ordnance Survey correlate with the complex political situation between England and Ireland in the nineteenth century? When it was agreed in 1824 that a national mapping of Ireland was to be undertaken, the decision was not taken in Dublin but in London. This displacement reflected the loss of autonomy incurred by Ireland as a result of the Act of Union. Eschewing and replacing private cartographic endeavours, the new six-inch map was to bring the whole of Ireland within a new system. The Ordnance Survey was ostensibly chosen to perform the mapping because it was comparatively inexpensive and its personnel could be trained quickly; however this discourse of efficiency masked the political force of a decision to send in British troops. The choice of the six-inch scale was an assertion of the Act of Union. The scale had no particular appropriateness to the Irish terrain but it was favoured by the Ordnance Survey perhaps because it rendered empty the fields of Ireland. Ireland was to be mapped by a British institution that relied on military discipline for its organisation and the British Exchequer for its funding.

On another level the completed maps also made a statement about the unity of England and Ireland. A number of key features of the sheets of the topographic maps were designed to link Ireland with England. A common meridian was used and the triangulation gave Ireland a position relative to Britain. The work of the Survey, although intended as a process of record, had made interventions in local practice with the extension of the statute measure to Ireland. The Irish soil had to submit to standardisation by adopting English land units: unification through uniformalisation. The mapping of Ireland also allowed its integration into the system of British national mapping and into the imagination of an England obsessed with numerical and graphic accuracy.

The mapping of Ireland was a hegemonic enterprise rather than one of crude domination. It operated through discourse and representation rather than physical brutality and material transformations. Works such as Said's *Orientalism* have eloquently stated that representations of the "Other" to the western world and to those being represented has been at least as powerful in destabilising and radically altering
societies as major economic, technological and political reorganisation. Thus it was with the standardised system of representation that inhabitants began to lose their grip on their own surroundings. The insistence on standardisation was a powerful tool in cultural disenfranchisement.

However, the Ordnance Survey strove to produce a series of maps that could be considered authentically Irish. This was the only means by which the maps could guarantee the justice and inevitability of the Act of Union. Thus, when the Ordnance Survey mapped Ireland, Irish place-names were not erased. Instead they were modified so as to comply with the Survey's values of uniformity and rationality, to be acceptable to an English-speaking audience and yet still retain a Gaelic air. The retention of Gaelic-based place-names was desirable because it endorsed the fairness of the state of Union between Britain and Ireland. However this Gaelicised feature of the map was merely a token gesture which bore no real witness to Irish ownership of the soil. Power determines meaning and can co-opt points of origin for its own ends. Masquerading as a process of systematic record, the mapping of Ireland was instead a prolonged act of cultural displacement and textual processing which co-opted and re-inscribed Ireland's ancient place-names and boundaries. The Irish themselves were largely excluded from executive participation in this project - except in antiquarian matters. This allowed British control to remain unchallenged while visibly incorporating Irish knowledge. Thus, an official Ireland was produced, an English-speaking one with its on ideology of Irish space but one that sung the praises of the Union.

This thesis has focussed upon the orthographic procedures of the Ordnance Survey and has employed the narrative of the Irish Survey to illuminate the political relations between England and Ireland. I demonstrate how the cartographic operation was one means by which England strengthened its position of control over Ireland. In conclusion I alter my focus. Using the same narrative of the Irish Survey I ask what this study can add to existing place-naming literature, how can it enlarge our understanding of place-naming practices in general and the linkages between naming and colonialism in particular.

The majority of existing toponymic research has focused on place-names rather than on the process and practice of naming places. Consequently, there is an abundance of work that is confined to collecting, classifying and seeking the origin of place-names and a relative lack of critical, analytical research on the process of place-
naming. This thesis attempts to redress this imbalance. Understanding the process of installing the namescape is necessary if one is to appreciate the continual element of change in namescapes, the writing over of existing namescapes that occurs and the political ramifications of the naming process.

Rather than focusing on place-names fixed on the Ordnance Survey maps in this thesis has been focused upon the practices of selecting and editing names for the Ordnance Survey maps. I have examined the textual processes by which the Ordnance Survey's journey through Ireland resulted in its place-names becoming fixed in print. In so doing I have shown that the place-names appearing on the Survey maps are by no means natural or inevitable selections but rather the products of journeying, of struggles and of social and political negotiations.

The process of naming is never a simplistic, linear activity. The dominant group does not simply affix names to the landscape with just a flourish of a pen. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland encountered unceasing difficulties in their attempt to apply the same logic utilised for the quantification of space to the task of inscribing place. Words did not respond to the same logic as numbers and the slipperiness of language resisted the schemes and systems devised by the Survey in a way that the soil did not. The irregular and messy world proved to be incommensurable with the Survey's grid-like, positivistic, scientific mode of approaching information. This resulted in a variety of oscillations of policy.

It was not only the nature of language itself that resisted the imposition of a system to Irish toponymy. As Leslie and Skipper state, "the meanings of names are the result of complex social negotiations".277 Place-names result from the negotiations of different people and groups with varying levels of power. The chronicling of place-naming can assist a history of the interactions of colonisers and colonised, and of interactions between classes, genders and ethnicities within a population.

Even amongst the employees of the Survey there were divisions. Nationality, class and military rank all affected employees' opinions on how the place-name

---

collection and selection should be conducted. A broad tension in the treatment of place-names during the Survey existed between two geographically-separated and ideologically-opposed groups. On the one hand, the central authorities wished to apply the same principles for quantifying space to Irish toponymy. On the other, the scholars and surveyors in the field attempted to modify official policy by incorporating the seasoned, grounded knowledge they had gained from localised, practical experience in the field. Surveyors working in the field were acutely aware of the obstacles lying between policy and its practical realisation. John O'Donnovan spearheaded their critiques. Grounding his criticisms in a sensitivity to localised and particular experiences O'Donnovan's nonetheless opposed the over-arching, mechanical treatment of names proposed by Survey policy. As an Irish Roman Catholic in a sea of Anglo-militarists O'Donnovan occupied an uneasy position in the Survey which produced tensions that resurfaced in reference to place-names throughout the Survey. The incompatibility of these two viewpoints is evident in the production of two different versions of every name. One name form conformed with the Ordnance Survey's desires for uniformity and rationality and was published on the Ordnance Survey maps. The other name form was an approximation of the "original" Irish version of the place-name and was formed from O'Donnovan's consultation with Irish speakers and Irish manuscripts.

This thesis demonstrates that names appear on maps and upon physical landscapes after a series of power struggles. Namescapes are in continual flux as various groups compete for their interpretation of place to be written and recorded on the landscape. However, what I hope this thesis really shows is that these struggles do not exist solely between groups but also within them. Here, the process of naming reveals something of the nature of colonialism. Naming, like colonialism, has moments of contradiction, of hesitation and of struggle. These difficulties exist because of internal issues as much as from external factors.

The recognition that the namescape is not immutable but dynamic allows its 'constructed-ness' to be conceived. It is in the construction - the very process of naming - that place-names become intertwined with the politics of language, national and cultural identity, nation-building and state-formation. The power struggles implicated in the establishment of the namescape do not begin nor end in the establishment of a namescape. This thesis makes clear the connection between the Ordnance Survey of Ireland's naming practices and the wider political context of Anglo-Irish relations. By centring on place-naming controlled by an authority and organised on a national basis
this thesis shows how acts of naming and placing were utilised by the Ordnance Survey as Foucauldian "tactics and strategies" for the "control of territories and organisation of domains." Carter describes the names selected by Captain Cook during his exploration of Australia as "instruments of persuasion" precisely because they conjured up a place where people could imagine and therefore imagine settling.\footnote{CARTER, The Road to Botany Bay, quote from p.121.}

The place-names installed by the Ordnance Survey in Ireland similarly comprise spatial gestures that encourage the development of a certain political consciousness. A centrally controlled standardised system of toponymy facilitated the flow of information, land, and the ordering of people and knowledge into formal systems of governance.

Naming never occurs in a political vacuum. Place-naming is not only a story of appropriation but also of erasure as a new toponymic framework of geographical knowledge officially supersedes pre-existing ones. Names symbolise the political project of "possession through dispossession."\footnote{CARTER, The Road to Botany Bay, quote from p.xxiv.} The power of naming as a means of taking possession by displacement is seen as the original culture and the soil is textually unpicked and a new ownership asserted. Maps record this colonising process by installing the new names. However, scholastic attention is usually focused on the process of installing names rather than the resultant process of erasure. Despite vast amounts of work on the effects of namescapes - the political consciousness they induce and the messages they emit as regards national identity and authorised versions of history, there is almost no consideration of the effect of the erasure of local place-names on a people's history, language and sense of identity.

In Ireland, the encroaching anglicisation "involved more than the straightforward imposition of one language over another."\footnote{WITHERS, C.J.W. (1988) Gaelic Scotland: The Transformation of a Culture Region (Routledge, London) quote from p.164.} The Ordnance Survey mapping constituted just a small element of the changing configurations of power, knowledge and geography which fuelled this process of linguistic and cultural formation. The Ordnance Survey did not erase existing names but contain them. The "original" versions of Irish names were either found or restored by O'Donnovan and his team and documented in the name books, to be archived in the fireproof stores. This was a politically astute move. It paid respect to the Irish language names whilst actually taking one aspect of it out of circulation.
The Ordnance Survey did not just engrave the names by which it was recommending that places should be known on its maps but also the names of the men to be credited with producing the finished map. Centred at the foot of every sheet of the six-inch series in minuscule copperplate is a small summary paragraph. By its precision of dating, its hierarchy and its reinforcement of civilian subordination to military authority, the notice guarantees the integrity of the representation. Sheet 34 county Cork bears the legend:


The paragraph also confirms Ireland's subjected status; what is recorded is both the work and the property of the colonist. Difference, whether issuing in variation of place-names or in the clash of Irish and English surnames, has been cancelled. Ireland has been investigated and reduced to a single universal formula in black and white. And that, the left hand corner declares is "Published and sold on behalf of Her Majesty's Government."
Printed Books & Articles:


DILLON, Thomas A. (1864) *Observations on the value of the Ordnance name of Irish townlands for purposes of registration and as a means of preserving the old names of Ireland.* Paper read before the statistical society of Ireland, (Dublin, Alexander Thom).


HARLEY, J.B. (1990) *Maps and the Columbian Encounter: an interpretive guide to the travelling exhibition* (Golda Meir Library, University of Wisconsin; Milwaukee).


MASON, W.S. (1816) *A statistical account or parochial survey of Ireland*.


PORTLOCK, J.E. (1869) *A Memoir of the life of Major-General Colby* (London).


TIMMONS ROBERTS, J. (1993) "Power and Place-names: A case study from the contemporary Amazon frontier" Names 41(3) pp.159-181.


Newspapers:

Dublin Evening Post, 23rd September 1828.
Dublin Penny Journal, 8 June 1833.
The Nation, July 1844.

Parliamentary Papers

Report from the Select Committee appointed to consider the best mode of apportioning more equally the local burthens collected in Ireland, and to provide for a general survey and valuation of that part of the United Kingdom. PP 1824 (445) VIII.

First Report from the select committee appointed to consider what provisions it may be expedient to establish for regulating the grand jury presentments of Ireland, p.4, H.C. 1822 (353) vii.

49 Geo. III, c. 102. Reports of the commissioners appointed to enquire into the nature and extent of the several bogs in Ireland: second report pp.28-9 (instructions to surveyors) H.C. 1810-11 (96), vi.

Hand-written Documents of the Ordnance Survey

1. OSLR: Ordnance Survey Letter Register (1824 – 1847) National Archives of Ireland

- a series of indexes which contains records and summaries of the content of all the incoming and outgoing mail to and from the Ordnance Survey's Irish Office, "Mountjoy" situated in Dublin's Phoenix Park.

OSLR(I) #113, 19 May 1825
OSLR(O) #150, 30 May 1825.
2. John O’Donovan’s letters from the field (1835) Royal Academy of Ireland

- letters sent from John O’Donovan, an Irish scholar employed by the Survey to Larcom, the head at Mountjoy.

O’DONNOVAN, Belfast, 15 March 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Belfast, 18 March 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Lisburn, 21 March 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Lisburn, 22 March 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Bainbridge, 2 April 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Newry, 10 April, 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Bainbridge, 13 April 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Castlewellan, 23 April 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Downpatrick, 31 May 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Cluain Eois, 31 May 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, 16 October 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Enniskillen, 6 November 1834.
O’DONNOVAN, Buncranagh, August 23 1835.
O’DONNOVAN, Rathfriland, 19 April 1835.
O’DONNOVAN, Donegal, 5 September 1835.
O’DONNOVAN, Monaghan, 4 May 1835.
O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, May 6 1835.
O'DONNOVAN, Monaghan, 9 May 1835.
O'DONNOVAN, Ballybay, 11 May 1835.
O'DONNOVAN, Cootehill, May 25 1835.
O'DONNOVAN, Leitrum 30 June 1836.
O'DONNOVAN, Roscommon, 27 July 1837.
O'DONNOVAN, Athlone, 26 August 1837.
O'DONNOVAN, Mayo 6 August 1838.
O'DONNOVAN, Galway 10 October 1838.

3. The Monthly Reports (1825 – 1847)  
Ordnance Survey Office

- monthly accounts of the business of the Ordnance Survey and are entitled the OS Progress Reports and Returns. These start on the 1 December 1825. The accounts for 1837, 1840 and 1841 are missing.

Ordnance Survey Progress Report, D District, 1st February 1827.
Ordnance Survey Progress Reports and Returns, Jan - December 1826.
Ordnance Survey Progress Report, C District, 1 April 1827.
Ordnance Survey Monthly Reports, 28 October 1830.

4. Explanation (of names in Antrim, Donegal, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Meath, Tyrone and Westmeath by O'Donnovan and O'Reilly 1830).  
Ordnance Survey Office

- these are bound documents, written mostly by O'Reilly, include notes and questionnaires to be sent out to field officials and the answers from the officials. There are also some notes by Larcom about spelling, from the period in 1830 when O'Reilly was absent and O'Donnovan was yet to be appointed.

Explanation, 253.
Explanation 253.
Explanation 257.
Explanation 267.

5. Orthography of the names of townlands in the County of Antrim (1831 –2)  
Ordnance Survey Office

- a very similar collection as the Explanations, but the documents compiled in this set of bound volumes is mainly written by O'Donnovan. It includes O'Donnovan's questionnaires and the responses by the officials.

Orthography 6, 8 October 1832.
Orthography 6, 27 September 1832.
Orthography 6, 8 October 1832.
Orthography 6, 15 October 1832.
Orthography 49, 1 March 1832.
Orthography, 57v, 16 January 1833.
Orthography 24, 4 March 1832.
Orthography 36, 20 March 1833.
6. Memoranda - these memoranda were compiled for every county and then bound. The contents include letters written to landowners requesting their preferred spellings.

Cavan Memorandums, 4 October 1836.
Donegal Memoranda, 23 November 1836.
Roscommon Memoranda 1.149.
Roscommon Memoranda 1.152-4.
Roscommon Memoranda 1.154.
Roscommon Memoranda 1.154.
Roscommon Memoranda 1.221.
Longford Memoranda 1.34.
Longford Memoranda 1.35.

Other Manuscripts


LARCOM, T. (1832) Heads of Inquiry, copies at the Ordnance Survey Office and in LP 7550.
Figure 28: Ireland's Place-Names in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Officers and Cadets</th>
<th>Other ranks</th>
<th>Civilian Assistants</th>
<th>Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 December 1825</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December 1826</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December 1827</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 30: Numbers employed in the Survey of Ireland.**

Source: Compiled from OS Progress Reports and Returns.