

Catherine Porter

Hunter Bursary Scheme 2021/22

Name Catherine Porter

2a. Year awarded: 2022

2b. Title of project: From the plat to the field: a new view on the escheated maps of Ulster.

2c. Summary of project
(Minimum 100 words):

This research employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the surveying practices used to map the Plantation in Ulster during the first decade of the seventeenth century. Offering a unique and progressive approach to the study of Ulster history and the history of cartography, this re-assessment of the cartography of Ireland focuses specifically on a key corpus of maps, the Maps of the Escheated Counties in Ireland, created under the leadership of Sir Josias Bodley (1609). The research aims to reveal hitherto unknown detail on the mapping processes and practices involved in the survey.

By building on the work of eminent historians such as R.J. Hunter, J.H. Andrews and J.B. Harley, *From the Plat to the Field* explores the cartography through new and innovative twenty-first century mechanisms of research. This shifts the traditional focus from describing the visual content of the maps to quantifying the survey behind the cartography.

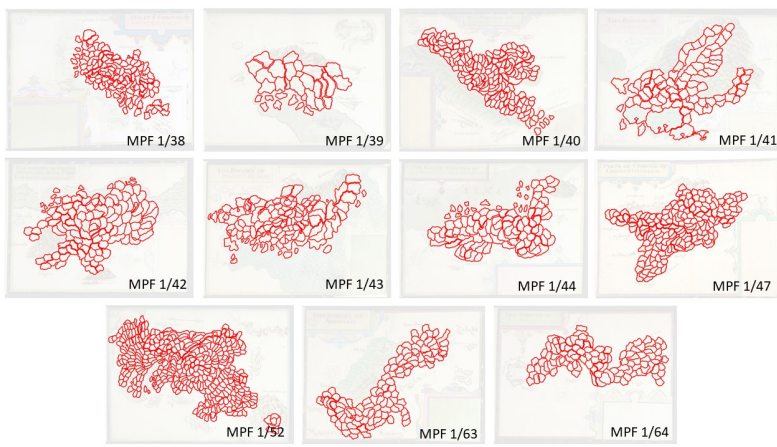
It is with great thanks the author acknowledges the R.J. Hunter bursary scheme in helping forward this research on early Ulster. The funds from the bursary specifically tackle ten of twenty-eight extant maps in the collection at The National Archives, London. As part of a broader, ongoing project, once completed this research will furnish the first digital ‘deconstruction’ and reconstruction of the ‘Bodley maps’ to reveal previously unknown information about the survey practices employed and lead to a fresh consideration of the social and cultural importance of this Planation venture.

2d. Date report was submitted: Nov 25, 2022

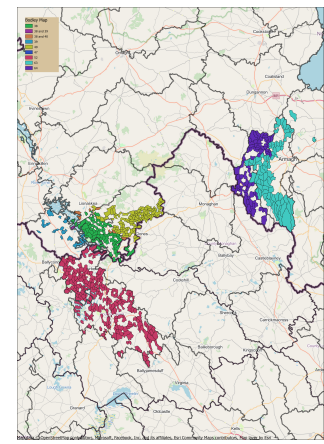
2e. Please provide at least one appropriate image

Right: Figure 1: Parte of Ye Baronie of Loghinsholin (MPF 1/47).
Courtesy of The National Archives, London.





Above: Figure 2: Vectorised townland boundaries



Above: Figure 3: Location of place-matched townlands from the Bodley maps

2f. Please outline the objectives of the project:

Given the importance of these maps to English Crown planning, the research asks questions about surveyor practice and the ‘accuracy’ of the map outputs derived from the survey, specifically, what can the Bodley maps of Ulster tell us about the surveying practices employed by the survey team? This encompasses broader questions around early modern cartographic methods as well as the veracity of the maps and the survey team, and the social and cultural implications of this Plantation venture.

The above research question will be met through five objectives:

1. To digitise (vectorise townlands as polygons) ten of the extant escheated maps of Ulster.
2. To collect, collate and append place name attribute data to the vectorised townlands on a selection of these ten maps.
From this (outside of this funding):
3. To determine if different survey methods were employed during the survey and hence point to different surveyors and/or surveyor practices.
4. To assess the quality and veracity of mapping in each barony providing insight as to the skillset of the surveyors employed.
5. To explore the land divisions presented on a selection of the maps in terms of size and land quality, compare this to ‘modern’ townland maps, and in so doing, quantify the real and cultural division of land between the Irish and the planters.

2g. Please describe the methodology used in conducting the research:

This creative and innovative research will employ digital and quantitative analyses to expose hitherto unknown information on Ireland’s complex mosaic of cartography, specifically, early surveying practices in Ulster. The research constitutes a mixed methodology incorporating the more traditional skills of the historian of cartography alongside innovative digital mechanisms.

There are five core aspects to the research. Firstly, the purchase of ten carefully selected high-resolution digital scans of the Bodley maps from The National Archives, London (TNA). One map from the corpus was previously been purchased for use in a related publication. Secondly, each of the ten historic map images was sized in a Geographic Information System (GIS) according the true dimensions of the map to produce a digital replica of the cartography. Thirdly, the townland boundaries on the maps were vectorised in the GIS as digital polygons. Fourthly, the place names (townlands) on a selection of the vectorised maps were matched with modern place names based on records painstakingly collected and collated by the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project and Logainm.ie, many of which are published in related texts to which the author has access. Lastly, the outcome of this was a digital dataset of all townlands shown on ten of the Bodley maps and on a smaller selection their corresponding modern names and location. This will enable further study of the maps through a mix of innovative digital techniques (linear regression,

bidimensional regression, moving window regression and geographically weighted regression) and more traditional history of cartography methods of interpretation.

2h. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved. (Please refer to the intended outcomes stated in your application form)

The following was successfully achieved during short the timeline of the project:

Stage 1: Project set-up and collation of source material

High-resolution digital images of ten of the Bodley maps were purchased and downloaded from TNA at the beginning of the project.

Stage 2: Digitisation

A competent research assistant with experience working with historic maps in a digital context was identified and tasked with digitisation of the townland boundaries on the maps. The author of this proposal shared this digitisation exercise. The digitisation (vectorisation) of the townlands depicted on the escheated maps was completed in ArcGIS Pro.

Stage 2a: Creation of vector data

Based on the initial estimations for vectorisation efficiencies, all ten maps were successfully vectorised by the end of August 2022. The digitisation duties were split between the author of this proposal and the research assistant.

Stage 2b: Population of attribute data

Arguably the most important portion of the proposed project is in the attribution of the townland vectors created in Stage 2a. The budget and time constraints of the project allowed for the place name attribution of six of the ten maps digitised in Stage 2a, one more than had been anticipated in the initial planning and funding proposal. This stage was completed by the end of September 2022. As this is an ongoing project, the author intends to apply for future funding to complete the remainder of the vectorisation (Stage 2a) and attribution of the remaining maps.

3a. Please provide details of the dissemination of the outcomes from this project (Publications, presentations, outreach, media etc) including details of any social media/web platforms used to publicise this project:

The research will be disseminated in one suitable peer-reviewed journal which has been recently drafted with an aim for submission and publication in 2023. The research assistant's contribution and the R.J.Hunter Bursary Scheme will be duly acknowledged in this publication. Further to this, the material generated through this grant will be used as the basis of a larger grant to further the research to incorporate all twenty-eight Bodley maps.

The research will also be disseminated via the social media (Twitter and Instagram) accounts of the author (@CatSPorter), their department (@ULGeog and @HistoryJUL) and the University of Limerick. Given the project is ongoing more can be expected when further research and interpretation have taken place.

3b. Number of academic papers/articles published:

One methodological publication is currently in draft. The author plans for this to be a 2023 publication. Those interested in the research methodology can refer to the earlier related co-authored publication Lilley, K.D. and Porter, C. (2013) 'Mapping Worlds? Excavating Cartographic Encounters in Plantation Ireland through GIS', *Historical Geography*, 41, pp:35-5.

3c. Number of lectures given/outreach events involved in:

A lecture was given to the Armagh Robinson Library (2022) where the author spoke about the analysis of one Bodley map from the wider map suite. In May 2021 they also delivered a presentation to the Conference of Irish Geographers (CIG) on the Bodley maps. The broader project planning will incorporate the Bodley maps into a revised and refreshed Bodley map presentation at CIG 2023.

3d. Media coverage (articles in newspapers/ University websites etc.:

As yet there has been no formal media coverage outside of social media. Given the structure of this on-going project, wider media coverage is expected in the future with full acknowledgment to the R.J.Hunter bursary.

3f. How will you continue to communicate the results of your project?

This is an on-going project. The extended project planning involves building on the data collected and collated with the use of the R.J Hunter bursary during 2022 and other funding previously received from the J.B. Harley fellowship in the History of Cartography until a full dataset of all twenty-eight Bodley maps is created. It is from this point onwards a full analysis of the suite of maps can begin and communication and dissemination through peer-reviewed articles, the media and social media will begin in earnest. In cooperation with libraries and archives, the author wishes to develop an online resource so academics and the public can access the data generated through the project. After the close of this portion of the project, further funding will be sought to progress the research for which the RIA and R.J.Hunter Bursary Scheme will be given full acknowledgment. This will result in further publications that will serve to highlight the importance of these maps to the history of cartography, early modern Ulster, and the application of digital methodologies to the study of map history.

3g. What are your publication plans?

One publication is in draft with anticipated publication in 2023. Further to this, and given the wealth of information that has come to light over the course of this funding period the author now wishes to pursue an illustrated monograph on the escheated maps of Ulster.

4b. Please tell us about any additional funding that you received from other government sources, Trusts, EU funding, or any other sources including the amount of the award:

Previous funding for this research was received through the competitive J.B. Harley Fellowship in the History of Cartography (J.B. Harley Trust).

5c. How did the bursary enhance your professional development (e.g. in terms of specific opportunities, opportunities for enhancing skills, collaboration with others etc.)?

The bursary has enhanced my professional development by allowing me to further pursue a line of inquiry in map history and Irish history that would otherwise be impossible with my allocated University research funds. I am incredibly grateful to the R.J. Hunter family and the RIA for funding this research.

5d. What plans (if any) do you have to further your proposal/ project?

During the course of this research, it has also become clear that the project (the subject) has the scope to produce a monograph.

The project will continue to advance via the application for further funding. Specially IRC/SFI funding.