This volume offers new perspectives on the political, military, religious, social, cultural, intellectual, economic, and environmental history of early modern Ireland and situates these discussions in global and comparative contexts. The opening chapters focus on ‘Politics’ and ‘Religion and War’ and offer a chronological narrative, informed by fresh research. The remaining chapters are more thematic, with chapters on ‘Society’, ‘Culture’ and ‘Economy and Environment’, and often respond to wider methodologies and historiographical debates. Interdisciplinary cross-pollination – between, on the one hand, history and, on the other, disciplines like anthropology, archaeology, geography, computer science, literature and gender and environmental studies – informs many of the chapters. The volume offers a range of new departures by a generation of scholars who explain, in a refreshing and accessible manner, how and why people acted as they did in the transformative and tumultuous years between 1550 and 1730.

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This authoritative, accessible and engaging four-volume history vividly presents the Irish story – or stories – from c.600 to the present, within its broader Atlantic, European, imperial and global contexts. While the volumes benefit from a strong political narrative framework, they are distinctive also in including essays that address the full range of social, economic, religious, linguistic, military, cultural, artistic and gender history, and in challenging traditional chronological boundaries in a manner that offers new perspectives and insights. Each volume examines Ireland’s development within a distinct period, and offers a complete and rounded picture of Irish life, while remaining sensitive to the unique Irish experience. Bringing together an international team of experts, this landmark history both reflects recent developments in the field and sets the agenda for future study.

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1550–1730
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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
IRELAND

VOLUME II
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Edited by
JANE OHLMEYER
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Thomas Bartlett, MRIA

General Editor, The Cambridge History of Ireland
In November 2014 we held a workshop in the Trinity Long Room Hub in Dublin where contributors to all four volumes of *The Cambridge History of Ireland* met and discussed our vision for what, we hoped, would be a flagship series that would form part of Ireland’s ‘decade of commemorations’ (2012–2022). This is the fruit of those discussions.

I am deeply grateful to my fellow contributors to volume II for providing such fresh perspectives on the political, military, religious, social, cultural, intellectual, economic and environmental history of early modern Ireland. They have been a delight to work with and I have truly appreciated their patience and good humour. Working closely with my fellow editors, Tom Bartlett, Jimmy Kelly and Brendan Smith, has been a privilege. John Cunningham deserves special thanks for his editorial assistance.

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Cruit Island, County Donegal and
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Conventions

Unless indicated otherwise dates throughout are given according to the Old (Julian) Calendar, which was used in Scotland, Ireland and England but not in most of continental Europe. The beginning of the year is taken, however, as 1 January rather than 25 March.

Unless otherwise stated all monetary values are sterling.
General Introduction

The aims of this four-volume History of Ireland are quite straightforward. First, we seek to offer students, and the general reader, a detailed survey, based on the latest research, of the history of the island from early medieval times to the present. As with other Cambridge histories, a chronological approach, in the main, has been adopted, and there is a strong narrative spine to the four volumes. However, the periods covered in each volume are not the traditional ones and we hope that this may have the effect of forcing a re-evaluation of the familiar periodisation of Irish history and of the understanding it has tended to inspire. A single twist of the historical kaleidoscope can suggest — even reveal — new patterns, beginnings and endings. As well, among the one hundred or so chapters spread over the four volumes, there are many that adopt a reflective tone as well as strike a discursive note. There are also a number that tackle topics that have hitherto not found their way into the existing survey literature. Second, we have sought at all times to locate the history of Ireland in its broader context, whether European, Atlantic or, latterly, global. Ireland may be an island, but the people of the island for centuries have been dispersed throughout the world, with significant concentrations in certain countries, with the result that the history of Ireland and the history of the Irish people have never been coterminous. Lastly, the editors of the individual volumes – Brendan Smith, Jane Ohlmeyer, James Kelly and myself – have enlisted contributors who have, as well as a capacity for innovative historical research, demonstrated a talent for writing lucid prose. For history to have a social purpose — or indeed any point — it must be accessible, and in these volumes we have endeavoured to ensure that this is the case: readers will judge with what success.

Thomas Bartlett, MRIA
General Editor, The Cambridge History of Ireland
Map 1. Map of Ireland.