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A Representation of the Bride Valley in Ireland during the eighteenth century

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Abstract

This research is a brief analysis of one of the earliest and most comprehensive estate surveys made in Ireland. An estate was a very large landholding unit sometimes exceeding 5,000 hectares created under the auspices of English colonisation mainly in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was conducted by a surveyor in the early years of the eighteenth century, hired by the estate owner and it consists of individual maps for different 'townlands'. Each one of which has an accompanying paper description known as a 'terrier'. An overall plan of the entire survey area was also produced. An attempt is made here to assess the nature of farming and landscape representation by essentially focusing on the characteristics of the areas landesque capital. By landesque capital, I mean the man-made farming and settlement infrastructures represented on the surveyors maps such as houses and outbuildings, embankments and roads. This evaluation confirms that different forms of land colonisation and enclosure were then in vogue: firstly, large scale systematic improvement involving planned enclosure and settlement and secondly spontaneous small-scale improvement mainly associated with more marginal and less productive land.

Keywords: Ireland, estate survey, landscape representations.

Resumo

Esta investigação constitui uma breve análise de um dos primeiros e mais completos levantamentos de propriedade realizados na Irlanda. Um *estate* era uma propriedade muito vasta, por vezes excedendo 5000 hectares, criado sob os auspícios da colonização inglesa, principalmente na primeira metade do século XVII. Este levantamento, realizado por um avaliador nos primeiros anos do século XVIII que foi contratado pelo proprietário, consiste em mapas individuais para os diferentes lugares. Cada um destes é acompanhado por uma descrição em papel conhecida como 'terrier' (inventário). Foi também produzido um plano geral de toda a área do levantamento. Neste artigo tenta-se uma abordagem à natureza da agricultura e das representações de paisagem, essencialmente através da análise das características do que aqui se designa de 'landesque capital'. Por este termo quero qualificar todas as infraestruturas agrícolas e de povoamento representadas nos mapas do avaliador, tais como casas e outros edifícios, taludes, aterros e estradas. Esta análise confirma que diferentes formas de colonização de terras e tapadas estavam em voga: primeiramente, melhoramentos sistemáticos de grande escala envolvendo cercas e povoamentos planeados e, em segundo lugar progressos espontâneos de pequena escala principalmente associados com as terras mais marginais e menos produtivas.

Palavras-chave: Irlanda, levantamento de propriedades, representação de paisagens.

I Introduction

Recently published inclusive lists of articles pertaining to the study of the past in Ireland appearing in journals such as 'Irish Geography' and the 'Irish Journal of Social and Economic History' indicate that estate surveys now rarely feature as core sources for investigation. It is unclear whether this reflects fashion or a move away from the examination of the material context of landscape and lifestyle in the past. The Irish Blackwater Valley in the province of Munster is a strange area (Fig.1). Besides its name, which connotes a physical togetherness, one might expect this area to have shared a degree of cultural and economic uniformity. It never has. Indeed it has always been a varied collection of different and distinctive zones. Here can be instanced Youghal and its hinterland, the Blackwater/Bride confluence, the zone between Cappoquin and Fermoy extending westwards as far as Mallow, the zone between this area and Millstreet and finally, the Slieve Luachra on the Cork Kerry border (Fig.1).

Reflecting perhaps these cultural diversities a range of scholars have mined aspects of the past heritage of this fractured zone in a most discrete manner. Barry and Hoppen (1979) have worked at Youghall, Andrews (1970) above Cappoquin, O'Flanagan (1987) and Proudfoot (1995) on estate towns, Brookfield (1952) at Mallow and Cullen (1993) nearby. If we throw the county or sub-region into the arena, the list is even vaster culminating in Dixon's (2005) recent magisterial regional survey.

Indeed, only one writer, a namesake of this writer, J. R. O'Flannagan was tempted to pen a kind of eulogy for the entire valley in 1844 and it is not unlike the earlier efforts of Richard Cox some hundred and fifty years earlier. Both authors strangely celebrated their locales on the eves of important conjunctures, the Williamite campaign (1690s) and the Great Famine (1845-1848) respectively. It is an area deeply pervaded by the long-term consequences of the Munster Plantation (1583-1641), but even then, it was a frontier between different worlds. It is also an area that can boast of long standing - three hundred years at least - village and town settlement. The influence of the great intrusive magnate is still all too obvious in the now truncated Lismore estate, its settlement structure and architecture. Mid-seventeenth century demographic patterns illustrate ingrained ethnic diversities between natives and newcomer planters. Evidence from the Civil Survey (1650s) and the Lismore Papers stresses the degree to which the lower Blackwater was transformed in the first half of the seventeenth century. It surely is no coincidence that one of the earliest estate surveys that survived was executed for part of this estate.

A surveyor called Josias Bateman, from Tallow in County Waterford on the banks of the river Bride produced a most tantalising survey of part of the Lismore estate between 1716 and 1717 (Bateman 1717). He produced some 80 odd coloured plans, most were of individual townlands for the agent of the Earl of Cork (Townlands are spatial denominations of enclosure whose average size is c.110ha. They are not unlike *aldeas* or *lugares* in northern Portugal or Galicia). Covering some 40,000 acres of land stretching from north of Youghal to the minute settlements of Aghern and Knockmourne to the west of Tallow and back again to Youghal. The survey involved parts of the county Waterford's immense barony of Coshmore and Cosbride, it also extended to a handful of townlands in county Cork's

Kinnataloon Barony. All of this territory lay within the confines of the first and 'great' Earl of Cork's Lismore estate and covered large tracts of land beside both the Blackwater and the Bride rivers. A detailed analysis of this so-called survey, I believe, raises pertinent issues in relation to the nature of improvement, farming and landscape conditions at that time. It also questions notions of representation (Barnes & Duncan 1991). Finally it must make us consider what exactly was a 'Survey' (Andrews 1985).



Figure 1 Blackwater River

II Josias Bateman's representation.

Few estates in Ireland were as extensive and complex as the Cork, later known as the Devonshire territories. Fewer still have as rich and diverse cartographic legacy. Indeed, a crude estimate might allow for a forty percent mislaid or lost corpus of maps for this estate (O'Flanagan 1982). Two major surveys were made of the area in the eighteenth century: Bateman's in 1616 - 1717 and another by Scalé in the mid 1770s. Our concerns rest exclusively with Bateman.

The instructions given to the surveyor in the early years of the 18th century indicate that the then Earl of Cork, wished that an entire survey of his Munster properties should be accomplished (Bateman 1717). No evidence is presently available to confirm whether any other area or areas, other than those surveyed by Bateman, were expedited. The magnate desired an exact valuation of all his lands and interestingly all '... the building thereon' perhaps as a prelude to the instigation of new leasing policies.

The Bateman survey then is a splendidly varied set of documents consisting of :

1. A book of 'real value' and rent for each area surveyed, there being some seventy-eight plans, breaking down into ninety percent individual townlands and some ten percent ploughlands. (Ploughlands were medieval

land assessment units of Norman origin whose variable extent was related to their productive capacities.) Each ploughland subsequently was sub-divided by Bateman into several townlands.
2. Separate plans of the town of Tallow and the village of Kilmacow.
3. An 'intire plan' of the area surveyed.
4. Detailed descriptive terriers accompanying each plan.
5. Miscellaneous documents such as the surveyor's instructions, payment schedules, rough outs of three plans and correspondence relating to disputes over payments.

The term terrier, employed above may be inappropriate in relation to Bateman as numerical information relating to scale, size, rentals and leasing arrangements are the normal fare of such documents. What makes Bateman distinctive is his attention to the landesque capital in each plan (Blaikie & Brookfield 1987). This rather cumbersome term refers to the auxiliary infrastructure for all rural activities and includes water availability, firing materials, roads, bridges, housing types and categories of outhouses as are magnificently illustrated by the 'keys' to his plans. Put the other way, the range of information supplied by Batemen in relation to the area he mapped is far more exhaustive than what we normally associate with other contemporary or many later terriers.

It may be then no coincidence that Bateman, a native of Tallow, was charged with surveying an area that he knew himself at first hand. In addition, the part of the estate that he assessed was then evidently the zone undergoing profound transformation. Indicative of these changes were the sizable portion of lands which were being then actively reclaimed, improved for arable farming and being permanently settled for the first time. This area too was on the immediate margins of the Bride and included some of the most developed and profitably farmed parts of the estate. The northern sector of the estate, that is the southern slopes of the Knockmealdowns, remained wooded and was, in the early eighteenth century, regarded as having little productive potential.

Bateman, visited each of the areas he surveyed where he firstly devised a rough sketch, noted details of farming practice and farming potential, he also made an inventory of all presently utilised landesque capital on each holding. Later on, no double from the comfort of some kind of studio, he completed the plans and prepared the 'terriers' between 1716 and 1717.

The area he surveyed falls into three distinctive zones identifiable on the basis of the then leasing arrangements, rental value per acre, and the size of the denominations and the nature of ongoing improvements and they were as follows (Fig.1):

1. Ballinatray to Canmuchy (now Headborough)
2. Canmucky to Aghern and Knockmourne
3. The southern uplands

i Ballinatray to Canmuchy

The first zone surveyed extends in a south to north direction between Ballinatray (just north of Youghal) and Canmuchy at the confluence of the Blackwater and Bride, and was then distinctive in a number of revealing dimensions. All of its denominations had frontage onto the Blackwater and in virtually every instance they were ploughlands, each of which consisted of an average of five designations which were let out on long leases by the Smiths who resided at Ballinatray. Indeed this family, related by marriage to the Boyles, held on to some of these lands from the very early 1600s to the mid 1960s (Irish Times 27/8/97). Colours are

employed excitingly and skillfully by Bateman to distinguish contrasts in land use. Here what was critical were the distinctions between permanently improved arable or pasture illustrated in green and 'the mountains' shown as brown. Each of the plough lands or half ploughlands boundaries are indicated and their areal extents were estimated, but smaller subleased units, if they existed, were neither mapped nor mentioned. Can it be assumed that each of them was a separate leasehold? The presence, or absence, of a substantial house may well offer discriminating proof in this regard. Given the sheer size of some of these ploughlands, it is probable that their head tenants leased some properties onwards and downwards so to speak. Woods, bogs, water sources such as springs and streams were meticulously displayed. Hills are symbolised stylistically and in a cursory manner.

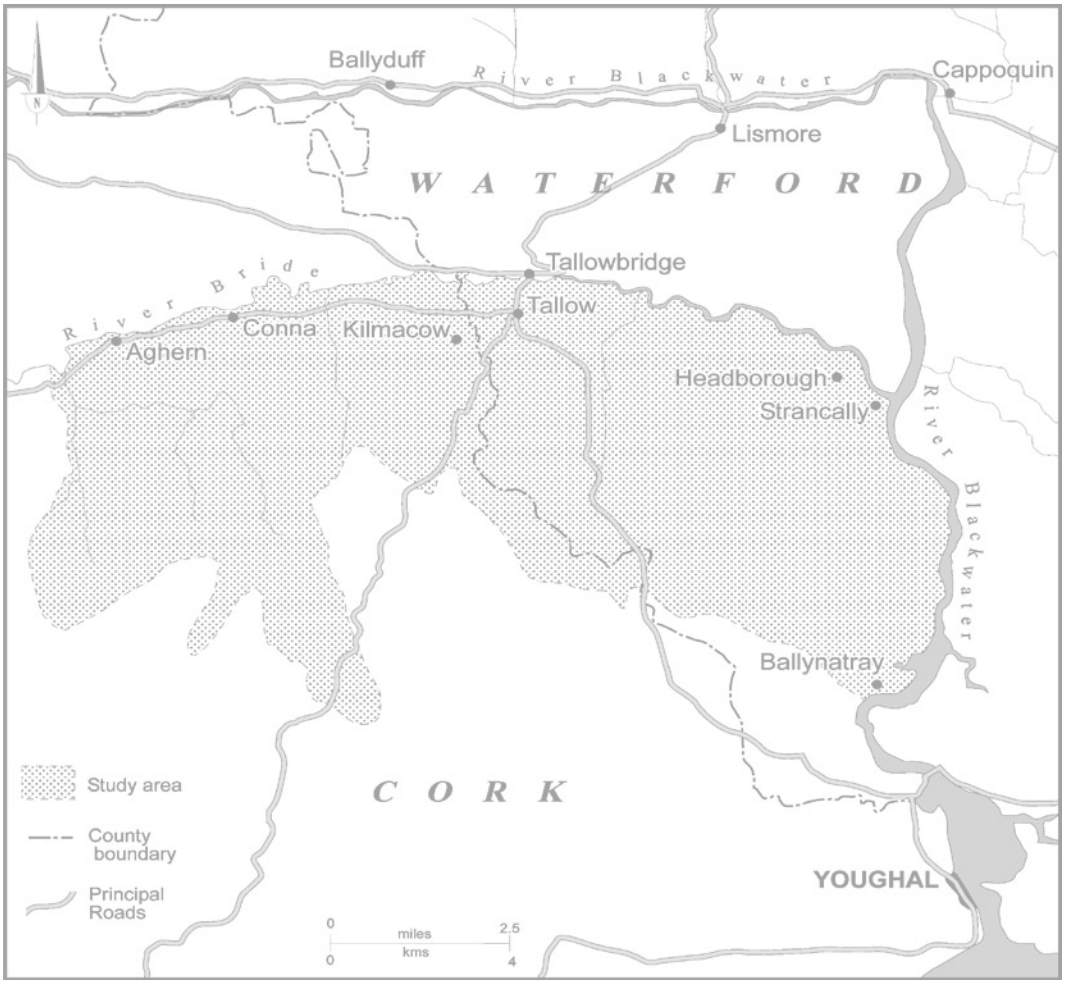


Figure 2 Blackwater (study area)

Settlements are shown by a combination of symbols or words on the plans and the term village, when employed, usually connoted a collection of cabins of which never more than four are inserted. A range of outhouse types is indicated, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between them and cabins but this apparent obstacle can be overcome by reference to the accompanying 'terrier' which are, in effect, encyclopaedic tallies of buildings of all kinds. Outhouse types included barns, stables, cart-houses and pigeon houses. Also, structures such as salmon-trap weirs, coney warrens, grist mills, roads (where colours denote categories), a masshouse, the ruins of a steel mill and monastic remains are marked. The only sign of embellishment was a formal garden beside Smiths' residence at Ballinatray where there was a walled orchard and perhaps an incipient demesne shown as a meadow.

The accompanying terrier also supplies information in relation to distance to the nearest market that served as a index to calibrate land value. It anticipates the printed instructions that Richard Griffith gave to his surveyors more than a century later. These documents also corroborate the details of landesque capital depicted on the plans. The information shown on each plan and terrier is not always consistent; in fact, the written detail is usually more fulsome and general comments are made about the improvement capacity of each property.

In summary, the surveyor shows that the considerable Smith property portfolio was well farmed and occupied by improving tenants. There were few signs of active transformation of its then treeless more marginal lands and here there was little evidence of prosperity apart from an incipient demesne and one major residence and large sectors of this zone gave the impression of having been only recently reclaimed. Confirming this impression the plans indicate that roads of all kinds, especially through roads, were weakly developed.

ii Canmuchy to Aghern

The zone extending, east to west, between the confluence of the Bride with the Blackwater and the small village and bridging point of Aghern in county Cork was then, by far, the most prosperous part of the estate as testified to by the presence of a suite of substantial slate houses, a litany of different kinds of outhouses, many enclosed orchards and crudely estimated, more than ninety per cent of the land was improved (O'Flanagan 1982). Here, without exception, individual townlands were the most frequent category of enclosure. The majority were separate holdings and some were divided into two properties. Average townland size was c. 94 ha and average holdings extent was c.87 ha. This area was criss-crossed by several through roads and the lowlands beside the river, which were subject to flooding were banked and carefully constructed sluices meticulously regulated water flow. Also, a discriminating index of improvement noted by Bateman was the presence of landing facilities for manure and sea sand and the off-loading of farming produce for dispatch down river by lighter. Other aspects of evident affluence and stability were the presence of churches, ferries and parish pounds. The virtual absence of woods and trees emphasises the intensity of farming in what was a work-a-day landscape. Apart from the large number of substantial farm houses, there were no signs whatever of any solid embellishments, save for the incidence of modestly enclosed small orchards and a neatly latticed regular pattern of holding

boundaries. In this well endowed intensely farmed zone, Bateman's early eighteenth century plans confirm that corn and grass covered almost equal amounts of improved land.

iii Southern uplands

Conditions on the uplands extending on an anticline to the south of the Blackwater/ Bride confluence to the village of Aghern stood out in stark contrast to the relative affluence of the zones already subject to scrutiny. Nearly two thirds of this area was being actively reclaimed or had recently been improved. Twenty- plus percent of this zone was indicated by the surveyor as being 'mountain', the greater part of which he refers to as 'outmountain', the remainder was bog. The 'inclosed-mountain' was in the process of being actively reclaimed and it had been provided with gates to allow access to it. The 'inlands' or the enclosed areas were mainly reclaimed and improved and they were being energetically farmed. All the evidence points to recent reclamation as no so-called 'inlands' were evident on the holdings nearer to the Bride. In addition, parts of these 'mountain' areas are noted as 'commons' sometimes mentioned as being 'under dispute'. Most of the properties here were enormous and many were leased usually on thirty-one year terms. Settlement was absent from the entire 'mountain' sector; its desolation was accentuated by being treeless. Even individual furze bushes were depicted by the surveyor on his plans. Most of the 'mountain' was ranked by Bateman in terms of its 'meadowing' potential indicating that these 'meadows' may have served as a kind of summer outfield for improved 'inlands' beside the river Bride. It is not clear whether, head or under-tenants, or both, had privilege or access to these territories. Also, some of these 'mountains' provided 'firing' for locals and the residents of Tallow had rights to wood on the 'mountain' above the town.

The plans and terriers provide indirect but ambiguous and sometimes conflicting evidence in relation as to how reclamation was actually accomplished. Evidently, one way of expediting this work was to mark out an extensive block of 'mountain', enclose it and then improve it. This appears to have been a systematic means of reclamation. The local head tenant with the approval of the magnate may have instigated it. Another procedure employed to achieve these ends appears to have been more individualistic miniature enterprises. Small 'closes' were gouged out of the mountain and improved. The plans indicate a number of these 'closes' whose size varied from 1 to 5 hectares. It may well be that these clearances were the result of piecemeal spontaneous activities of local landless people or under-tenants. Most of the land was reclaimed by the more systematic method already outlined and this kind of outcome is not surprising as these lands were entirely leased out as a rule to one principal tenant under improvement contracts.

The example of the townland of Glenballycollanane clearly illustrates some of these practices. Its 'inland', which cuts deeply up a valley between hills, was densely settled. Here were seven separately named clusters. A number of small 'closes' had been carved out of the 'mountain', one of which was located on the edge of the 'inland'. Bateman's use of deep green to represent these 'closes' may well betoken their recent creation. In this instance, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the subtenants were slowly and tenaciously hewing these 'closes' out of the mountain in a

piecemeal manner. These upland enclosures exuded an ambience of both newness and rawness.
Their improved inlands supported a necklace of cabin clusters while the bleaker mountains still performed the role of summer outfields possibly for all the tenants. The process of reclamation, in this sector at least, was painfully long drawn out and it was not completed until the early decades of the nineteenth century.

III Settlements and landesque capital

Bateman's record yields critical insights into the nature of housing, settlement- locations and types and disposition and landesques capital of the area he surveyed. His portrayal is plagued by problems of inaccuracy and ambiguities specifically in relation to representation. In one dimension at least, there is no obfuscation whatever and that is evident in his categorisation of houses types that included:

Farm house (Ballinatray only)
Slate stone walled houses (one/two storied)
Thatched stone walled houses (one/ two storied)
Thatched houses
Dairy houses
Cabins

No separate valuations are indicated for these classes of domestic residences, each terrier displays a clear prioritisation of house types. With the exception of the cabins, the houses were either gable-hearth or hearth-lobby types.
On each improved holding, the most common settlement arrangements was a stone house, perhaps accompanied by a dairy-house, several cabins and outhouses all of which were partly detached from the 'inland' by an immured orchard. Secondly, small groups of cabins, with or without a dairy house or outhouses were the most frequent type of buildings and were often labelled 'villages' or 'village of cabins' by the surveyor. A rough estimation would suggest that a fifth of all the dwellings were isolated cabins. Larger residences were never depicted in isolation, with the exception of the chief residence at Ballinatray, which was a very substantial building. No settlements of any kind were evident of the 'commons' or 'mountains'. Tallow and Kilmacow (whose credentials for this honour were extremely flimsy) were referred to as towns. None of the villages were graced by the presence of a substantial farm houses, churches, any productive facility, nor of any kind of embellishments which might imply that they were essentially aboriginal settlements. In addition, the surnames of the residents or tenants, apart from the immediate lessor (who may or may not have been a resident), never appeared on any of Bateman's' documents.
No attempt was ever made by the surveyor to furnish the exact number of cabins at any location; 'several' is the term that was invariably employed. Symbols for the cabins were stuck on the maps as transfers so there are no hints of morphological organization. A further distinction sets the quality housing apart from the cabins or dusters. Many slate houses were then joined to the local roads by purposely-constructed access routes and very few of them occupied immediate roadside locations. Alternatively, most of the cabin 'villages' were located at end of the road locales, many on the edges of the 'inclosed mountain'.
Tallow and Kilmacow were the only two

non-rural settlements surveyed. Of the two, Kilmacow looked as if it were on its last legs. In the early seventeenth century, it was a vibrant iron-smelting centre. By Bateman's time, it was a shrunken settlement dominated by cabin dwellings, though it had two minute tan yards, a skin yard and its agricultural orientation was further stressed by the presence of a lime-kiln. Surrounding the settlement were fifteen holdings most of which were described as small 'closes'. (It should be noted that these were a different category of 'close' to those already mentioned. They were small areas of highly productive lowlands most likely acting as kitchen gardens for some of Tallow's residents.) The fact that ten of these denominations were on year-to-year leases tells its own story. The propinquity of the two settlements, less than a half-mile separated them, had impacted more negatively on Kilmacow.

Tallow was a larger settlement; a house count there yields a multiplier of 500 plus people. Besides its church, it had mills, a forge and quays at Tallowbridge for the river transport of merchandise. Encircling the town was the ploughland of Tallow Lands which was divided up into a series of closes varying between two and three hectares in size and leased on short term contracts to local town residents.

IV The 'intire plan'

The purpose of this sizable index was manifold: it served as reference map for each individual plan and it furnished synoptic quantitative data for each holding. Colours indicate general differences in land use and land use potential and it supplied an excellent overview of the landesque capital. The bridges, ferries, forges and roads were all clearly represented as were the principal residences on each holding and the village and cabins. More decisively, the roads were always precisely marked and it is possible to distinguish a north-to-south axis linking Tallow to Youghal and a less important route along the banks of the River Bride. Other lanes, paths, roads and tracks were linked to the principal through routes. In appearance, it is the next best thing to an early eighteenth century air photograph as it provides a sweeping panorama of what the surveyor felt should be represented (Andrews 1985). In one dimension, it is a portrait of accomplishment in that it verifies what has been achieved especially in terms of land enclosure and improvement. In another, it represents a desideratum of what had yet to be completed. Clearly identified were the remaining problematic areas namely the bogs, the marshes and the hills that were circumscribed by broad areas of magnificently improved land. The basic distinction lay however between the remaining extensive swathes of 'mountain' and the improved lands downslope. The surveyor's adroit and dexterous use of colour endows all his efforts with considerable artistic merit besides clearly distinguishing different types of land use.

V Overview and problems of representation

Despite the emphatic differences between the three distinct areas which can be discerned from a study of Bateman's work, it is evident that we may need to rethink our appraisals of the nature of farming and settlement in early eighteenth century Ireland. It seems certain that most of this area's basic landesque capital

was in place by then, that is apart for the zone catogorised as 'mountain'. Indeed compared with the 1841 printed first edition of the Ordnance Survey for this area, an estimation indicates that ninety per cent of the roads were in service by the early years of the eighteenth century. Continuity, both forward and backwards in time is evident in relation to the incidence of holdings and substantial houses on the lowlands. On the uplands to the south the picture is different, some of the larger townlands were divided into separate holdings and later these new enclosed and improved holdings emerged as new townlands in their own right. Bateman, however, may have been the first surveyor to represent the 'dairy house' for what it was. Indeed, the general impression which may be gleaned from this survey is of relatively dynamic farming conditions.

In the end, Bateman was the supplier and the Earl of Cork the customer and hence his judgement of what should be represented might be expected to stem from his contractual instructions. This makes this issue of representation tendentious in that we must remember that "...our texts are not mirrors which we hold up to the world, reflecting its shapes and structures immediately and without distortion. They are instead, creatures of our own making..." (Gregory & Walford 1989). The then magnate was especially concerned with, boundaries of properties, profitable and unprofitable lands and the residences thereon. Indeed, the implicit message of 'the instructions' was to supply precise measurements boundaries so that the survey could act as a legal text. Bateman, if anything, seems to have significantly exceeded his brief. Informed by his intimate local knowledge, his cartographic rendering of the areas topography is both novel, idiosyncratic and inadequate. It is instructive as a procedure of representation. In this way, his omissions and generalisations are understandable. No attempt at illustration whatever was made of enclosures below farm or holding level. His tallies of cabin numbers were variable and most probably linked to the formula selected by him portray them. What he means by a village is unclear. His precision as a surveyor as I have shown elsewhere is also open to critique (O' Flanagan 1982). In a sentence, Bateman seems to have been one of the first practising Irish surveyors whose representation is a blend of measurement, as well as, depiction by the skilful employment of symbols, colours and other innovations confirmed by his attempts to imply relationships between topography and degree of improvement.

Despite his eccentricities Bateman's work poses many critical questions for us. The estate he surveyed was arguably one of the largest in the region, if not in the entire country. So apart from these difficulties of interpretation it raises the question namely: to what extent was the general and particular depiction of farming conditions in this area a mirror of other zones of this estate, in neighbouring ones and those of further afield in Munster or, indeed in Ireland? This challenge perhaps cannot be successfully answered from cartographic sources alone but my feeling is that conditions on this large estate were more representative that postulated heretofore.

Finally, Bateman has essentially produced much more than a basic rural survey. It might be regarded as a kind of rural resource inventory in that it offers multidimensional insights into certain aspects of rural lifestyles at a time when few other sources were so bounteous.

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