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THE 'CORK REGION': CORK AND COUNTY CORK, c.1600-c.1900

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INTRODUCTION

Cork is a county of superlatives; it is the largest county in Ireland and in an exclusivist sense it is a republic within a republic. The city of Cork however has never advanced beyond second place in Ireland's hierarchy of urban settlements. Indeed it only held this position for about two and a half centuries to be overtaken by Belfast in the second half of the nineteenth century. Also, it can lodge an indisputable claim to have been the country's most eminent, prosperous and thriving Atlantic port city.

Only a handful of settlements in Ireland can boast of sustaining an influence far beyond the confines of their county boundary. Cork is one of these and it might be argued that the 'Cork Region' attained its maximum areal extent - to judge from the scale of its provisions' catchment area and even more critically of other raw materials such as wool - sometime in the late eighteenth century. In addition, it has been contended that Cork City is unique in that it alone has experienced all possible phases of urban development(Bradley and Halpin, 1993).

The contributors to this publication have opted to examine an eclectic range of issues related to contemporary Cork. This piece seeks to set the scene for these deliberations by addressing some basic dimensions which relate to the growth, evolution and changing spatial architecture of the city and its region. The early development of the city, its emergence as an Atlantic port city, the transformation of its urban topography, the articulation of its complex hinterland and its port ethos have been selected for analysis. It will become instantly and starkly evident that all that can be presented is an 'archaeology' of these themes as we remain at a very early stage of understanding the changing dynamics of this city and its region and their interrelationships.

Strangely, perhaps ironically, scholarly endeavour has helped us appreciate much about the emergence of Cork City and the 'Cork region', but the early cultural production process promoting county allegiance and identity in Ireland is a mystery. Gaelic sources interestingly suggest that county Cork, like most other counties, only won acceptance and acknowledgement in the daily lifeworld of those who considered themselves Irish from the later part of the eighteenth century onwards(Buttimer,1998). Newcomer (New English) attachment to the county entity may well have preceded that of the native. Cox's well known treatise of the 1680s may well reveal this perspective. It was, in essence, an eulogistic colloquy exhibiting the presence of an embryonic newcomer county community as illustrated in his clarion call of villages which no doubt were recited to reflect progress and improvement(Day,1902). This process of adaptation had matured by 1750 into some 200 seats in Smith's encyclopedic *History of Cork* which is an excellent testament to the consolidation of this county community (Smith,1750). Other aspects of Corkness were, and are, evident in the civic institutions such as the Corporation and its Wide Streets Commission and the Committee of (butter) Merchants, who devoted their energies to improving an expanding and sometimes booming city.

Cork is the island's largest county, covering ten percent of the country and counted some-850,000 residents in 1841. With 81,000 people in the same year, Cork City was second-largest settlement and its port third in the nation. Its markets and marts were probably the most magnetic in southern Ireland and certainly the dominant ones in the province of Munster. Nevertheless, the county counted many 'pays' throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the work of Dickson (1977) and Burke (1967) have verified. T.R. O'Flanagan (1844) recognised many of them in the Blackwater valley as late as the eve of the Great Famine in 1844. Was this evidence of poor connectivity within the county or differential penetration of the county capital ?

GROWTH OF CORK CITY

Early seventeenth century Ireland was characterised by a low level of urbanization; perhaps no more that eight percent of the population lived in urban settlements, most of which were minute by the then continental standards. Islandwide, a weakly structured, poorly linked and fragile hierarchy was also apparent. Along the southern coastlands, Waterford was then the

largest centre with c.3000 inhabitants; Cork, Kinsale and Youghal were not far behind recording population totals just in excess of the 2000 mark. The sustained effects of inmigration during, and after, the so-called Munster 'plantation' from 1586 to the outbreak of the rebellion in 1641 (McCarthy Morrough, 1986) radically helped to reshape south Munster in confessional, cultural, economic and urban terms. Canny's (1993) portrayal of the incidence of deponents in 1641 bears eloquent testimony to this 'sea change'. During this period, county Cork's urban hierarchy, as we now know it, became effectively solidified; the only major settlements to be subsequently grafted were Charleville, Fermoy and Mitchelstown (O'Flanagan, 1993).

Before the 1641 rebellion, the city had somehow stayed aloof from the planned newcomer intrusion. Until then its destiny had stayed in the hands of the patriarchate that was such an ingrained feature in the preceding century. It also had retained its chief function as an inner Atlantic trading port involved in the first place in commerce with the Bay of Biscay and Bristol Channel towns. In the second, Atlantic Iberian towns of similar size were also enduring trading partners, especially for salt and wine. The expulsion from Cork in 1644 (mainly to Macroom) of many Gaelic and Anglo Norman residents, the deliberate razing of many properties and the constant billeting of troops, initiated a new phase in the fortunes of the settlement which arguably was to culminate in a golden age of expansion and prosperity during most of the following century.

These were of course developments that manifested themselves in seismic changes in the composition and structure of the urban population, a diversification and transformation of its functions and critically, a massive expansion and fundamental reorientation of its built fabric. What indices best exemplify these changes? Undoubtedly the most basic was the ballistic population expansion (Table 1).

By 1659,Cork was the leading port town on the south coast, most of its attributes surpassing those of its Munster rivals. A recent attempt to estimate its population has affirmed a total of c.14,000; it includes however the residents of the liberties and a military compliment (MacCarthy, 1996). Interestingly, this author confirms that 35 percent of the residents within the walled area were of Gaelic origin giving the lie to the fact that this element had

been written out of the script by expulsion. Cox's inflated figure of 20,000, for the 1680s, may be off the mark. Hence, in Munster, the early 1700s - when more reliable figures are available - saw Cork establishing a commanding lead, and the years up to 1735 recorded the most spectacular demographic surge (Table, 1). Between 1744 and 1840, the population doubled again. Natural increase cannot account for such a precipitous rise. But where did all these newcomers originate? Was it from inside or outside the island, and if so, from where, and why did so many arrive? Present indications suggest that it is not going to be easy to provide satisfactory responses to these questions for some time.

Table 1: Population and Housing in Cork c.1600 - 1841

Year	Population	Houses
1600	c.3000	?
1659	c.14000	?
1680	20000	?
1706	17600	4602
1719	27000	6340
1725	35000	7536
1744	38000	7366
1752	41000	7665
1760	45000	8268
1766	52000	10340
1793	54000	10610
1796	57000	?
1821	72000	11180
1841	80720	12647

Source: See Burke, 1967; Day, 1902; Dixow, 1977; MacCarthy, 1997; O'Flanagan, 1993

Whatever about the growth of population there was also a staggering turnaround in ethnicity due to the partial expulsion of the Irish and the arrival

of New English and Cromwellian settlers. But that turnaround is now evidently not as sharp as claimed by some authorities and it paralleled conditions at Bandon with a c.60:40 ratio in the newcomers' favour (O'Flanagan, 1988). The second Williamite cleansing in the 1690s was more severe in that it further sharpened existing divides.

Without any exaggeration the seventeenth century was transcendental for Cork City. No other large Irish urban settlement was ever so quickly reshaped and, subsequently, so thoroughly reconstituted. Fire razed significant sections of the city in 1622, the 1641 rebellion witnessed its hinterland and its residents destabilised by hostilities followed by the so-called expulsion of the Gaelic householders in 1644 and considerable inmigration by refugees. The 1690 Williamite siege resulted in the city loosing more of its native residents and its impressive walls. Paradoxically, this devastation freed up the city and unleashed two centuries of unparalleled physical expansion.

CORK CITY AS AN ATLANTIC PORT

English engagement in the New World became Cork's opportunity and its strategic location allowed it to nurture a provisions trade as an outport following the political turmoil of the c.1641-1660 period. Cork City functioned more as a distribution centre for its hinterland's products rather than a classic Atlantic entrepot specialising in redistribution of colonial goods by trans-shipment. For these reasons Cork was not a typical Atlantic port city. The ports that Cork supplied in New England from mid-century provided little back in return to Munster. But Cork never possessed many vessels of its own which was a sure indication of a more independent port. Only fifty vessels registered there in 1691. Boats tended to ply, Bristol Channel - Cork, New England, the Caribbean, back to England carrying sugar, spices, tobacco and dyes. Boats also plied directly from Cork to the Caribbean. Like most other Atlantic port cities then Cork's secondary sector was not dominant and it could not boast of any proto-industrial activities. Shipbuilding, for instance, was never a major employer during its golden age and it can be argued convincingly that Cork remained effectively a pre-industrial centre up to the end of the eighteenth century. The colonial government did not significantly participate nor did it intervene in trading activities, but it did support a number of manufacturing endeavours through direct subsidies or protective tariffs. It

did not promote Cork specifically as a port.

Cork's growth from the 1650s must be seen within a framework in which Petty (1691, p.74) asserted that between 1652 and 1673 the country's trade "... advanced from one to four". The foundations then of Cork's provisions trade were reflected in an immense increase in flock size and the evolution of commercial dairying which furnished butter for export. This 'dairying zone' was in essence the bedrock element of the Cork region and within the zone itself many aspects of farming practices were modified and drastically improved and rural society was restructured (Dickson, 1993). Which came first? Did a restructured farming zone provide a basis for take-off, or did outside demands for the products of its hinterland fuel Cork's vertiginous expansion?

A complex, refined and well-managed marketing structure associated with the emerging Cork butter market, allowed city merchants to grasp pre-eminence and attract producers, farmers and dairymen to sell to the city at the expense of other centres in the province. Quality control was the key element. (Each foreign market demanded a distinct butter product which was exemplified in different salting regimes.) Complimentary to, but not spatially coincident with, these activities came other provisions such as salted beef and pork. Just as with the fortified wine trade out of Porto, Cork's 'Committee of Merchants', established formally in 1769, exercised a decisive influence on the trade, principally regulating quality. Cork then dominated the national butter trade to the New World (83 percent of all Irish butter in 1733), it exercised a commanding lead to European destinations and, moreover, it also was paramount in the salted beef trade to Europe. Other ancillary items, such as salted pork, tanned hides, tallow and mainly re-exported fish were also noteworthy commodities. During Cork's golden age there were major variations in volume of exports, but the port obstinately remained as the chief locus for butter for the colonial trade. This was no mean achievement. In Europe, Portugal continued as the largest market for Cork's butter.

Cork's eighteenth-century foreland for exports consisted of the east coast of Americaa nd Canada, from Newfoundland to Boston and the Virginas, as well as many Caribbean islands but especially Jamaica, Antigua, Barbados and Montserrat. In Europe, it included most of its Atlantic facade, principally

Portugal and Holland, Italy, England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Prussia and even, very episodically, Turkey and New Zealand. Even Greenland featured, though only on two successive years. Africa, Asia and Ibero-America figured sporadically as export destinations for the city.

By the early years of the eighteenth century, Cork had evolved into a specialised Atlantic port city. It counted several of the requisite trappings of this very distinctive urban category. It had registered a meteoric rise in population, while customs records tell us about the rise of the provisions trade. Here though matters may not be altogether straightforward; a depiction of custom receipts for 1683 confirms that Cork was then only a whisker ahead of its principal Munster rivals(Andrews, 1976). It was not a capital like Lisbon. It was not an entrepot like La Rochelle. It had its merchant community. Slaves don't seem to have figured on its merchants' inventories. It welcomed little in return. Trans-Atlantic trade was not an exclusive function. Irish merchants and traders whoh ad settled across Atlantic Europe from Nantes to the Canaryi slands filtered their commerce through Cork.

But Atlantic port cities exhibited great diversity. Many, like La Rochelle, shared a colonial flavour, but it was a different type of colonialism(Clarke,1981). There, however the similarity ended. La Rochelle produced little of value from her hinterland. Her foreland was that of a classic entrepot. It extended from Africa to the Caribbean and on to French Canada and Louisiana. It was the national headquarters of several colonial trading companies. Slaves as a final gamble became her staple. The relentless loss of the colonies and commodities which had made up the backbone of her trade and her failure to retain overseas markets plunged La Rochelle into a vortex of decline from the early nineteenth century. This city in some respects, like Cork, has yet to find a new vocation.

URBAN TOPOGRAPHY

Few urban areas in Ireland boast of a topographical inheritance which is at once diverse and easy to unravel. Complex but compact must be the trade mark of the city's morphology. Cork alone can boast of experiencing all the major periods of urban growth in Ireland. There were three formative periods in the emergence of the city's topography: the first was medieval the next

occurred during Cork's golden age and in the nineteenth century the addition of suburbs and the arrival of railways completed the changes initiated in the preceding century.

The Pacata map c.1600 and Speed's map of 1610 both eloquently capture the ambience of the medieval settlement. The essential contours of Cork's early morphology are also evident on a series of subsequent maps and plans. Running north - south, the medieval settlement straddled two islands in one of the marshiest parts of the tidal zone of the Lee. Its name in Irish (Corcaigh) means 'a marsh' and is strangely analogous to Lisbon's ancient rocio. These early maps endow Cork with the aura of a classic bastide; but it was not. Along the north-south axis ran the main urban thoroughfare. A honeycomb of lanes dart off from it, invariably at right angles. A series of impressive gate houses and bastions stood along the town wall. The port of Cork appears to have been located for centuries in the widest channel which separated the two islands on which the city was built. This is represented today in the area between St Patrick's Bridge and the bridge beside the North Gate. Present day Castle Street then acted as the principal quay.

There were also a plethora of small watercourses and quays which joined the main channel and these were especially numerous around the south island; some of these features were to become petrified in the urban fabric when they were filled during the eighteenth century. The early port was small, but in the fourteenth century it was the third-ranking centre in the south of Ireland with New Ross in the lead and Waterford a close second. Exports were mainly agricultural products and salt, spices, textiles, tools and wines were the leading luxury items moving inwards.

The presence in the later medieval period of a range of monasteries, convents, churches, forts and 'suburbs' at both ends of the settlement, outside the walls, on the mainland is manifest testimony of growth. The rectilinear, enclosed and almost floating core settlement on the marsh remained intact for at least four hundred years, as did its controlling north - south axis. In this regard, Cork resembles Aveiro, another renown Portuguese Atlantic port city. A hangover from this inertia is still conspicuous in the present day street line of the town's former axis and its intricate legion of lanes.

Up to 1761 Cork's physical expansion was constrained by the absence of sufficient bridges. Only North Gate and South Gate bridges crossed the river but, on the other hand, the removal of the walls in 1690 facilitated brisk physical expansion thereafter. Many other major Atlantic port cities only broke free of their defenses as late as the nineteenth century. A rapid analysis of a number of eighteenth century maps of Cork allows us marvel at the scale of its expansion. It was at least a 180 degree transformation. Smith (1750), Rocque (1759 and 1773) and Connor's 1774 plans allow us to take stock of the situation. Grogan's sumptuous 1780 painting '*View of Cork*' is also pertinent.

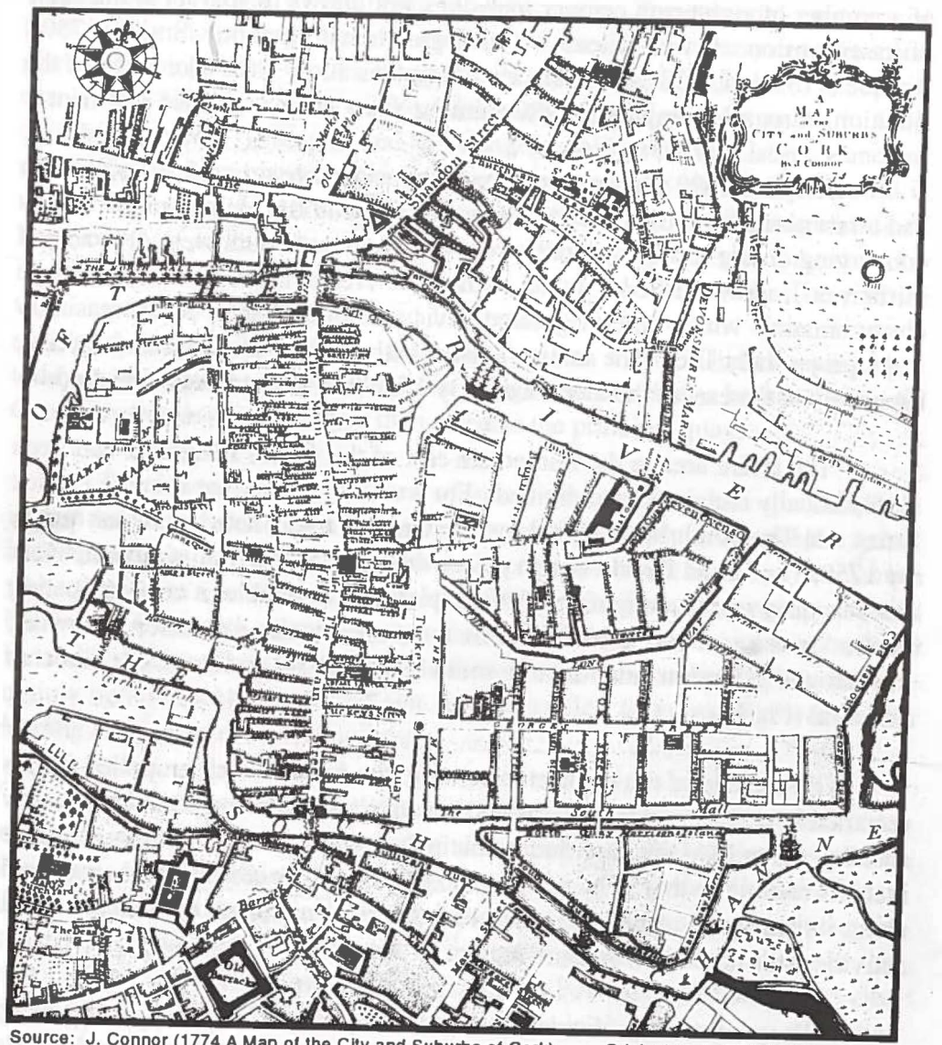
Story's c.1690 plan stresses that a considerable amount of expansion had taken place, even by then. It was focused around the main approach roads converging on the town, especially from the north and south west. Piecemeal initiatives accomplished some strategic reclamation and drainage consummation while a reinvigorated civic authority began to increasingly impinge on daily life. The main marshes still awaited drainage and dyking, especially to the east of the urban axis. By 1750 that too had been achieved.

The entire area to the immediate east of the town's main axis had been systematically reclaimed and drained. For a while longer what became Patrick Street and The South Mall, linked by The Grand Parade, acted as major quays. By 1759, The Grand Parade was in place while The South Mall simultaneously acted as quay and thoroughfare. To complete the ensemble, a new competing 'centre ' to the east had appeared. The most spectacular expansion, however, was around Shandon and on the south bank on all sides of St Finbarr's cathedral (Fig.1).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the forces which propelled Cork's remarkable expansion had also sifted the city's residents and sorted out a new social geography. Directory and municipal records yield particularly valuable insights relating to this. The medieval axis had by now lost its focal allure and along its lanes and alleys lived the more deprived members of society. Craft activities still flourished in some sectors of this area.

The new eastern district attracted many merchants and professionals who resided in the geometric interstices between Patrick Street and George's Street, now Oliver Plunket Street. The erection of the Custom House in this

area was symbolic of commercial leadership and vitality. This was Georgian Cork. Housing here may have lacked the refinement of the Georgian quarters of either Dublin or Limerick. It was remarkably unpretentious, except on The Mall. No gracious squares nor open spaces emerged for public congregation.



Source: J. Connor (1774 A Map of the City and Suburbs of Cork) Original scale (277 feet in an Inch)

Figure 1: Cork City (Part of after J. Connor 1774)

Indeed, Georgian Cork's delicate symmetrical layout embodied its thriving and varied civic and economic functions. Merchants, artisans, traders and retailers lived cheek by jowl and the area was circumscribed by boats, quays and water. A relatively small area to the west of the medieval axis had been reclaimed and here stood the leading civic offices, Mayoralty House, which endowed this area with a certain refinement and made it an attractive residential zone for the more affluent.

Finally, so intense had been the change at either landward end of the old urban axis that it was no longer apposite to refer to these areas exclusively as suburbs. Barrack Street and Shandon Street were integrated as part of the urban fabric and were hemmed in by an aureole of gardens and houses of all kinds. It is no wonder that contemporary descriptions also stress the incredible social mix of these areas.

By 1841 there were some 81,000 Cork residents. La Coruna across Biscay could then only boast of c.4,000. But a French visitor reported that the city in 1790 resembled a colony "...where, men go to make money but where they would have no desire to live out their lives" (Ni Chinneide, 1973, p.2).

The building of St Patrick's Bridge in the late 1700s and many other attempts at embankment ushered in the final phase of urban expansion. The harbour moved yet again. Indeed its present upper limits are marked by this bridge. The industrial suburb of Blackpool involved in paper production, brewing, agricultural implements and textiles grew explosively. A number of fashionable suburbs, for instance, Montenotte, Sundays Well and Tivoli on the northern side, and Blackrock and Monkstown on the south side, emerged as the affluent sought to escape from more cramped urban conditions. Railway and tram extensions loosened further the friction of distance for those who could afford to live on the outskirts, and centres along the west harbour facade as far as Monkstown experienced further growth reflected in the appearance of many fine mansions with panoramic harbour views. Some ephemeral marine industries made an appearance in several west harbour settlements. Long before 1900, Cork's suburbs had breached their municipal boundary.

The end of Napoleonic hostilities and technological innovation abroad, coupled with American independence and growing self-sufficiency, sapped

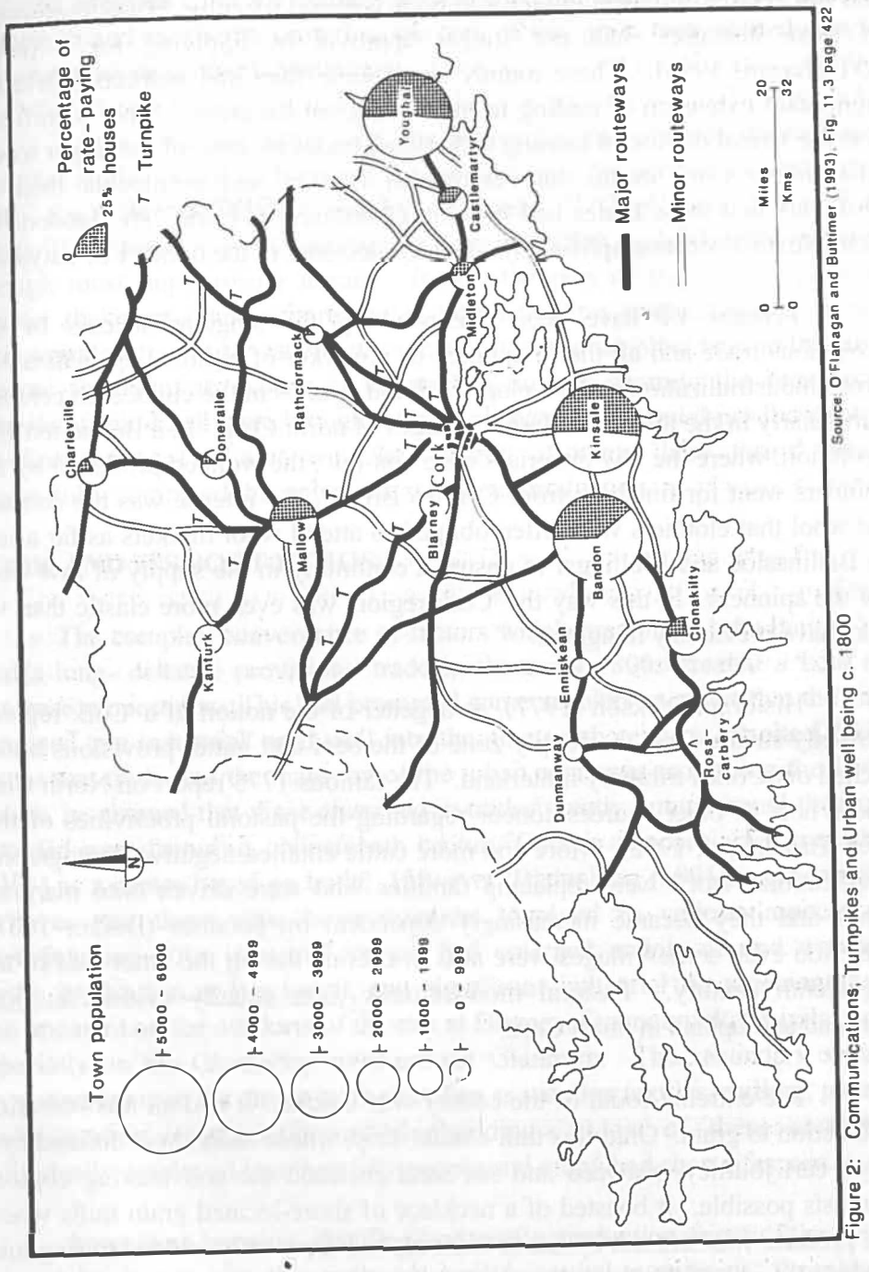
demand for Cork's staple products such as grain, provisions and textiles. The city never recovered from the loss of its long-distance provisions trade. By the early decades of the 1800s it had lost its chief raison d'etre as an Atlantic port. Like La Rochelle, Cork, some would argue, has never fully recovered from that misfortune.

APPROPRIATING AND MAINTAINING A HINTERLAND: THE 'CORK REGION'

Can we invoke some form of crude determinism to account for Cork's initial reluctant and dilatory growth? It was unlike most of the larger port towns such as Dublin, Galway or Limerick which have always had easy access to their adjacent bountiful lowlands. East-west ridges and valleys complicate access from south Cork to the north, and the especially sensitive Railway Commissioners were acutely aware of this difficulty.

To the east and the immediate south west came grain for brewing and distilling. From the grasslands of the north and west came butter and the 100,000 black cattle that one visitor claimed were slaughtered each year in the mid-eighteenth century. Present evidence would suggest that the 'Cork region' was 'a movable feast', in that it spatially waxed and waned over time. Vesting road creation and maintenance in Grand Jury care, and later into the Turnpike Trusts, witnessed a patchy and very uneven improvement in county road quality. The road connecting Limerick City with Cork was transferred to this system in 1731 (O'Sullivan, 1937). The road linking Killarney via Millstreet to Cork was built sixteen years later. Was this the classic butter road? The connection between Kanturk and Cork via Nad was the next addition in 1765. The evidence suggests that the turnpikes developed in the areas with poorest communications linking them and more prosperous areas more directly with Cork. Griffith completed this process when he laid out 79 miles of road on the marginal land of north west county Cork in the early years of the nineteenth century. Figure 2 confirms for the end of the eighteenth century the degree to which these roads were all converging on Cork and that, by then, the city had assumed a pivotal regional role.

Other features which authenticate Cork's regional dominance in the latter part of the eighteenth century include the growth of a plethora of market



Source: O'Flanagan and Buttimer (1993). Fig 11.3 page 422

Figure 2: Communications, Turnpikes and Urban well being c. 1800

and fair centres, a third of which had been initiated illegally. Their promoters, in these instances, had not sought approval by applying for a patent (O'Flanagan, 1993). These mainly small-scale fairs and markets marked a significant extension of trading to more marginal locations. More significant was the virtual demise of tanning and related trades in some of the larger towns adjacent to Cork in the late eighteenth century and comments then by observers that these trades had become centralised in Cork. At Bandon, for example, this was exemplified by a sudden decrease in the number of tanyards.

Perhaps we have been overawed by the singular success of the provisions trade and all that it entailed as a marker of regional specialization. Proto-industrialization had developed around textiles in the eighteenth century, particularly in the towns and larger villages of north Cork. In a Bennetton-like operation, where the raw materials were 'put-out', the worsted produced by the spinners went for finishing from Cork to Bristol. So intense was the demand for wool that clothiers were often obliged to attend wool markets as far afield as Ballinasloe and Mullingar to ensure a continuity in the supply of raw wool for the spinners. In this way the 'Cork region' was even more elastic than we may have previously imagined.

Historian Dickson (1977), as begetter of the notion of a 'Cork region', correctly stresses that the supply zone of the beef and butter provisions trades etched out Cork's tributary hinterland. The famous 1775 report on North Cork and a host of other sources concur regarding the pastoral proclivities of this area (Brookfield, 1952). More and more cattle entailed negative demographic implications; stock were replacing families who were driven onto marginal lands and they became increasingly dependent on potatoes (Burke, 1967). Here too even some villages were also in decline during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Pastoral monocultures were equally evident in both lowland and upland in north Cork.

The extreme south of the county was unique. It had an unswervering dedication to grain. Onto this thin coastal strip, whose radius was defined by a day's cart journey, seaweed and sea sand enriched the soil making copious harvests possible. It boasted of a necklace of shore-located grain mills where the produce was sent out by sea to Cork or, less frequently, abroad to England. It was also one of the most densely populated parts of the county. Grain from

this area supplied Cork City's brewing and distilling facilities. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the core of this grain zone shifted east to its present position around Midleton.

To the west and north west, the peninsulas and uplands were classic marginal lands opened up by roads for the first time for permanent settlement from the late eighteenth century onwards. One such zone was Kingwilliamstown, now Knocknagree, where Griffith gouged out roadways through most unpromising terrain. It was the part of the Cork region to register the most intense increases in population up to the Great Famine. Although its agriculture was mainly subsistent, it too supplied beef to the city. Cleared finally of its woods in the mid eighteenth century, the bounteous uplands of mid-Cork were brought into permanent commercial production for the first time. This area was the location of many dairy farms which successfully combined this enterprise with beef production.

CORK AND ITS PORT ETHOS

The complex convergence of factors which precipitated the demise of Cork's long- distance provisions' trade in the early 1800s created a void of immense proportions. This had prompted some scholars to assert that the city remained 'pre-industrial' until well into the nineteenth century. Burke (1967) argues that trade was the mainstay of the urban economy and, citing the 1841 census, he claimed that those classified in trades greatly outnumbered those in recorded manufacturing. Nineteenth century Cork is also projected by Fahy (1993) as a centre based on trade. However, Bielenberg (1991) convincingly confirms that there were large numbers involved in various aspects of manufacturing. An industrial suburb had emerged mainly around woollen textile production at Blackpool, and significant industrial development was also apparent on the outskirts of the city at Blarney, Donnybrook, Douglas and especially on the Glashaboy river around Glanmire. The secondary sector employed many in the city in such activities as woollen textiles, milling, paper, glass, tanning, engineering and shipbuilding. Most of these concerns individually employed less than fifty people and many had short lifespans.

Apart from brewing, distilling and textile production, most of the city's industrial units were small in scale and weak in capital investment. Promotors

rarely kept abreast of technological change and most were largely dependent on city and provincial markets for their sales. With the exception of a major gunpowder facility at Ballincollig, most of the larger production units and complexes were located outside the city at Bandon, Blarney, the Glanmire area and Midleton (O'Flanagan, 1993). The steady decline of textile production in south and west county Cork in the pre- Famine years seems to have depressed demand and led to the rapid decay of some of these centres such as Bandon, which with a reputed population tally of 14,000 in 1805 free fell to just over 6000 in 1841. The regional implications of such contraction must have been catastrophic.

Those who made their fortunes in trade in Cork seem only exceptionally to have invested their rewards in manufacturing. Also the activities and influence of Cork's rentiers and shopocray in the reshaping of the city remains to be explored, as does the political and cultural implications of the emergence and consolidation of the city Catholic middle class. Despite all these vicissitudes in 1900, as in 1800, Cork City had no rival in its county, region or province. Its position as third city on the island also remained solidly secure.

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INDUSTRIALISATION WITHIN THE GREATER CORK AREA

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INTRODUCTION

In 1961, 46.4 percent of Ireland's manufacturing workforce was located within the country's four largest port cities: the county boroughs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford. The primacy of Dublin was particularly apparent with its manufacturing workforce (68,500) being seven-times larger than the country's second-largest industrial centre at Cork (Fig. 1). During the 1960s, however, significant changes occurred as a result of a national development strategy which sought to stimulate industrial growth and spatial re-distribution via a policy of free trade and foreign direct investment.

Initial results were beneficial, with total manufacturing employment in Ireland increasing by one third between 1961 and 1981 to reach 238,144 (Brunt, 1989). Central to this growth was the attraction of large numbers of branch plants to Ireland. This reflected part of a global response by multinational corporations to the competitive pressures of late fordism by sitting production units within low cost peripheries.

Within Ireland this had the effect of branch plants selecting sites outside larger urban areas, and thereby contributed directly to a suburbanisation and, more especially, ruralisation of industrial production. In contrast, longer-established and indigenous industries, which were located predominantly within major cities, faced growing competition for markets, especially after Ireland's access into the EC in 1973. This meant that while underdeveloped and rural parts of Ireland benefited from increases in branch plant employment, the four county boroughs lost almost 21,000 manufacturing jobs (23.7 percent) between 1971 and 1981.