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The 1641 Depositions

1641 Depositions, Jane Ohlmeyer, Thomas Bartlett, Micheál Ó Siochrú, John Morrill (ed.), 2010.
<http://1641.tcd.ie> (Last Accessed: 01.02.2017). Reviewed by Walter Scholger (University of Graz),
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Abstract

This paper reviews the digital edition of the *1641 Depositions*, a collection of witness accounts related to the Irish rebellion of 1641. An invaluable source for the cultural, social and religious history of Ireland, this collaborative effort of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Aberdeen and the University of Cambridge provides 19,010 pages of original documents online in digital form, alongside valuable background and context information. Despite the significance of the material and the commendable effort at making it available to the public as an online edition, the project suffers from a number of technical failures and design flaws. The most significant flaw, however, is the lacking re-usability of the online material for further research due to the restrictive copyright policy and the unavailability of the TEI-encoded transcription files.

Introduction

1 The fully searchable digital edition of the 1641 Depositions, documenting the experiences of Protestant men and women of all classes following the (Catholic) Irish rebellion in 1641, aims to conserve, digitise, transcribe and make available online 8,000 depositions or witness statements, examinations and associated materials, amounting to 19,010 pages, kept in the Manuscripts and Archives Research Library of Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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1641 DEPOSITIONS

Trinity College Library Dublin

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Member Area

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The Online Depositions Website

Fully searchable digital edition of the 1641 Depositions at Trinity College Dublin Library, comprising transcripts and images of all 8,000 depositions, examinations and associated materials in which Protestant men and women of all classes told of their experiences following the outbreak of the rebellion by the Catholic Irish in October, 1641... [More](#)

[Using the 1641 Depositions](#)



Search Depositions [Advanced Search](#)

Forename:

Surname:

County:

Free Text:

GO

[Browse Entire Catalogue](#) 

[More Search Options](#) 

Search By County

Click on a county to start your search





Portrait of Henry Jones, head of the deposition commission and later bishop of Meath from Trinity College Dublin art collection, image produced by the courtesy of the Board of Trinity College, Dublin.



Sir Phelim O'Neill, one of the leaders of the 1641 rebellion produced by the courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

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 Trinity College Dublin  University of Aberdeen  University of Cambridge  Arts & Humanities Research Council  IRCHSS

Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2

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Fig. 1: 1641 Depositions Website.

2 The transcription of the depositions is dedicated to the exact and faithful representation of the original documents and was encoded according to the Guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). The project began in 2007 and finished in September 2010 as a collaboration between TCD, the University of Aberdeen and the University of Cambridge, and was officially launched on October 22, 2010, alongside the temporary exhibition "Ireland in Turmoil: the 1641 Depositions", by the then-President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

The original 1641 Depositions

3 The 1641 Depositions are witness testimonies collected after the outbreak of the *Irish Rebellion of 1641*. That rising started – in the context of the much larger crisis of the Stuart kingdoms at that time – in the Northern Ulster region and quickly spread throughout the island as Catholic leaders took up arms against what was perceived as English Protestant oppression.

4 A *Commission for the Despoiled Subject* was set up by the English authorities in Dublin in December 1641 under the auspices of eight clergymen of the Church of Ireland, to collect witness accounts mainly by Protestants refugees, but also some Catholics, from various social backgrounds. Their testimonies document a broad range of topics, from the loss of property to military activity, to the alleged crimes committed by the Irish insurgents against the Protestant subjects, including assault, imprisonment and murder. A first collection of depositions was taken within two years of the alleged events, another in the 1650s as records of judicial interrogations and investigations by government officials gathering evidence against individuals accused of acts of murder or massacre. The latter are therefore both more focused in content as well as more formal in expression than the mostly more verbose and emotional but also more personal accounts right after the rebellion. In all, about 8,000 witness statements, examinations and associated materials, amounting to 19,010 pages bound in 31 volumes, were collected. The majority of the documents are difficult to decipher, since, due to the age and materiality of the originals, the script has faded to virtual illegibility. Furthermore, the spelling of names and places is inconsistent and erratic, as is the use of grammar and punctuation, since many different scribes were involved in the preparation of the documents.

5 Nevertheless, the resulting corpus provides an unparalleled resource for the social, economic, cultural, religious, and political history of seventeenth-century Ireland, England and Scotland in general, and the causes and events surrounding the 1641 rebellion in particular. The depositions were used in the examinations of the high courts of justice to persecute culprits implicated in the 1641 crimes in the decades after the events and eventually came into the possession of a private collector, before being gifted to the Library of TCD in 1741. The alleged atrocities and crimes collected in the original depositions of 1642-43 became the justification for the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland in 1649-53 and have remained part of the narrative underpinning the sectarian division

in Northern Ireland. The fact that the publication of the Depositions has been dropped twice in the 20th century (once in the 1930s after the creation of the Free Irish State and another time in the 1960s at the outbreak of the Troubles in Northern Ireland) pays testimony to the ideological and cultural significance of the collection.

The digital Depositions

Background

6 The 1641 Depositions Project was realized as a cooperation between TCD, the University of Aberdeen and the University of Cambridge, in partnership with IBM LanguageWare. <http://web.archive.org/web/20161110160626/http://www.eneclann.ie>, a private company specializing in genealogical research affiliated with Trinity College, was commissioned to digitize the manuscripts and to design and implement the technology behind the project. Funding of "over 1 million Euro" was granted by the *Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, the *Arts & Humanities Research Council in the UK and the Library of TCD*.

7 The principal investigators on the project were Professor Jane Ohlmeyer (TCD), Professor Thomas Bartlett (University of Aberdeen), Dr Micheál Ó Siocchrú (TCD) and Professor John Morrill (University of Cambridge), the transcriptions were edited by Professor Aidan Clarke (TCD), with a much larger team from the various partner institutions providing further contributions to the project. All this background information is readily available on the 1641 Depositions website, with detailed attribution and information about individual contributors.

Digitization

8 The digitization of the delicate original volumes was concluded with special care to the conservation of the source material. The imaging process was concluded using an overhead digital array that conforms to archival standards, employing lamps that emit no harmful UV, infrared light or heat exposure. The original images were captured as 24-bit full colour scans with 600 DPI resolution, and saved as uncompressed TIFF files. The surrogate images used on the website are of considerably lower resolution and saved as compressed JPG files.

1641 DEPOSITIONS

Trinity College Library Dublin

HOME ABOUT USING THE DEPOSITIONS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND THE PROJECT BROWSE THE DEPOSITIONS CONTACT

Example results

Primary source

fol.

412

John kee fitz a E Ex gur per Lan (W he wi put cha



z | 1/4

Log Out

that did see attempt their of often hearing the Armed men saie that they would liue there, this Examinant being resolved to shooe but kill her saith that Thomas Ash, Henry Ash & William A{ } fol{ } od often threatened to kill this Examinant onely for that hee was an man, the said Ashes were formerly dwellers in the Naas{ } at Allen both of them within their three weekees, & carried so(m } < R goodes thither, one Edward Dungan of Blackwood be{ } about the said tyme, besides Sir Richard Barnewell being also { } before the said Morris his going away from his house many { } And saith that Morris fitz Garrett hath onely one kinsman of h{ } Boggs with him, & none

Fig. 2: Facsimile view using Zoomify.

9 The facsimiles on the website require *Adobe Flash Player 9* and can be viewed using a *Zoomify* viewer which allows zooming into the documents on character level. However, the quality of the reproductions deteriorates with the grade of the zoom, with the images becoming increasingly blurry. The handling of the Zoomify viewer is simple due to the very limited – but, in the context of this edition, sufficient – functions (zoom, pan, reset to full document view). The viewer window can be closed by clicking on a close icon at the bottom right corner which seems counterintuitive since that icon is usually found in the top right corner, but proves convenient since all the other viewer icons are also located at the bottom of the window. The greatest drawback of the facsimile view, however, is that the viewer window is automatically placed in the middle of the screen, thereby eclipsing the transcription. Since the viewer window can be neither moved nor resized, the user can either study the transcription or the facsimile, but has no possibility to view transcription and facsimile next to each other.

Transcription

The screenshot shows the homepage of the '1641 DEPOSITIONS' website. At the top, there is a red navigation bar with the title '1641 DEPOSITIONS' and 'Trinity College Library Dublin'. The navigation menu includes links for HOME, ABOUT, USING THE DEPOSITIONS, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, THE PROJECT, BROWSE THE DEPOSITIONS, and CONTACT. A 'Log Out' button is also present. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a heading 'Examination of John Harrison'. To the right of the heading is a small link '« Back to results'. On the left, there is a thumbnail image labeled 'View Originals'. To the right of the image, there are several fields: 'Reference: MS 813, fols 028r-029v', 'County: Kildare', 'Date: 20/5/1642', and 'Type: Examination'. Below these fields is a section labeled 'Nature of Deposition: Military Action, Words'. At the bottom of this section, there are several links: Print, How to Cite, Add Comment, Add to Favourites, View Comments, and View Favourites. The main text area begins with 'fol. 28r' followed by the transcription of the document.

412
John Harrison his examinacion taken vpon [oath] befo[re] mee the xxth daie of Maie 1642.
<O> Saith that he was by his Master the Lord Lambert sent to Mor[ris fitz] Garrett of Allen about Candlemas last with his Gosseha[wk to] keepe hir there which direccions was sent to his Ancient [f.] Kilbeggen for this Examinitants soe doing; further saith that th[e said] Morris fitz Garrett hath not beene within his owne house {} weeke, his wife onely once at home for a night & noe mor[e and] that they keepe in a Bogg a myle beyond his owne hous(e and) haue removed some Trounkes & other houshold goodes or{} said house, but whether this Examinitant knoweth not: further saith their are in his owne house about .20. men able to bear { } <P> Muskets, 3 Calivers, 5 other gunnes, and 30ty Pykes, but w[ether]? Powder match & Bullet is there hee knowes not, but saith{ } there was noe want that hee perceived at all; And saith that {} retourne of Phillip fitz Garrett brother to the said Morris Dublin hee brought him from the Lord Lambert about {} Powder to kill halkes meate; further saith that the said {} was governor of Allen, and in his absence one Nicholas (Weaseley?) was cheife there, the said Phillip fitz Garrett being abs{} the English forces cam thither on the xvijth of May last, {} did hee at that tyme see the said Weaseley, but one Ony (Dermott?) tooke then vpon him to bee cheife there, saith that the En[gl]ish were within a myle of Allen before such tyme as they h{ } <Q> them, and as soone as they heard of their coming neere the{} comaunded to put on every one their Bandoleers & tooke their {} and other peeces & charged them all & lighted their match{} said Ony dermott giving charge that if any of the English (sh) attempt vpon the house, they should make it good by all m[an]es? they could, and to shooe at any that did soe attempt their {} often hearing the Armed men saie that they would lue {} there, this Examinitant being resolved to shooe but kill noe {} further saith that Thomas Ash, Henry Ash & William A{} ffo[od] often threatened to kill this Examinitant only for that hee was an {} man, the said Ashes were formerly dwellers in the Naaf(s) at Allen both of them within their three weeke[s], & carried so[m] <R> goodes thither, one Edward Dungan of Blackwood be{} about the said tyme, besides Sir Richard Barnewell being also {} before the said Morris his going away from his house many {} And saith that Morris fitz Garrett hath onely one kinsman of h{ } Boggis with him, & none

Fig. 3: Transcription view.

10 The transcriptions of the depositions strive to be exact and faithful to the originals, observing and replicating spelling or grammatical errors and different spellings of place or person names. Additionally, scribal interventions like deletions and additions are thoroughly recorded. A guide to the applied *transcription conventions* is available on the website as a distinct page and explains how specific editorial phenomena have been transcribed (e.g. interlinear words are transcribed in italic type, illegible words appear in square brackets). Another page provides an overview of abbreviations commonly used in official documents of that period, providing an explanation of their meaning and images with exemplary cases. This documentation is quite helpful when dealing with the actual transcriptions. Unfortunately, however, this additional information is given on separate webpages and can only be accessed through the main menu bar and not viewed alongside the actual transcriptions.

11 It is claimed that the transcriptions were encoded using the TEI/XML encoding standard. Since the TEI files themselves are neither available for download nor can they

be viewed on the website, there is unfortunately no way to verify the actual level of annotation.

12 The depositions were encoded to provide a structured view on the information contained in the documents, recording information such as the *people* and *places* involved in each deposition, the *dates* on which alleged crimes took place and the nature of these *crimes*. This information is consequently used for various search functions in the collection and to provide some basic metadata on the webpages containing the transcriptions of the individual documents. Unfortunately, there is no further information on either the TEI elements and modules used, the application of a project-specific schema, or the depth of the annotation in general. The aforementioned lack of downloadable TEI files of the transcriptions makes it impossible to further evaluate the encoding.

13 While it is claimed that ‘the use of TEI to describe the depositions facilitates the integration of numerous related digital resources with the 1641 Depositions’ (1641 Depositions, How have the 1641 Depositions been marked up?) there is no mention of such resources, nor are they recognizable on the website itself. Needless to say, the lack of viewable and especially downloadable (i.e. re-useable) TEI files of the transcriptions is a capital weakness of this project and in contradiction to common practice and state-of-the-art of current digital scholarly editions.

14 As noted above, the transcription is faithful to the originals and captures the original script and scribal intervention. While the website includes a lot of context information on both the collection itself and the historical background of the events leading to the depositions, that information is only available on separate webpages through the main menu bar and cannot be accessed directly from the transcriptions. There is no further information about the acting protagonists, the persons mentioned in the deposition or the places and dates, and no reference information to other depositions dealing with the same event or actors. The addition of editorial comments and references to other related documents in the collection would constitute an invaluable improvement.

User interface and navigation

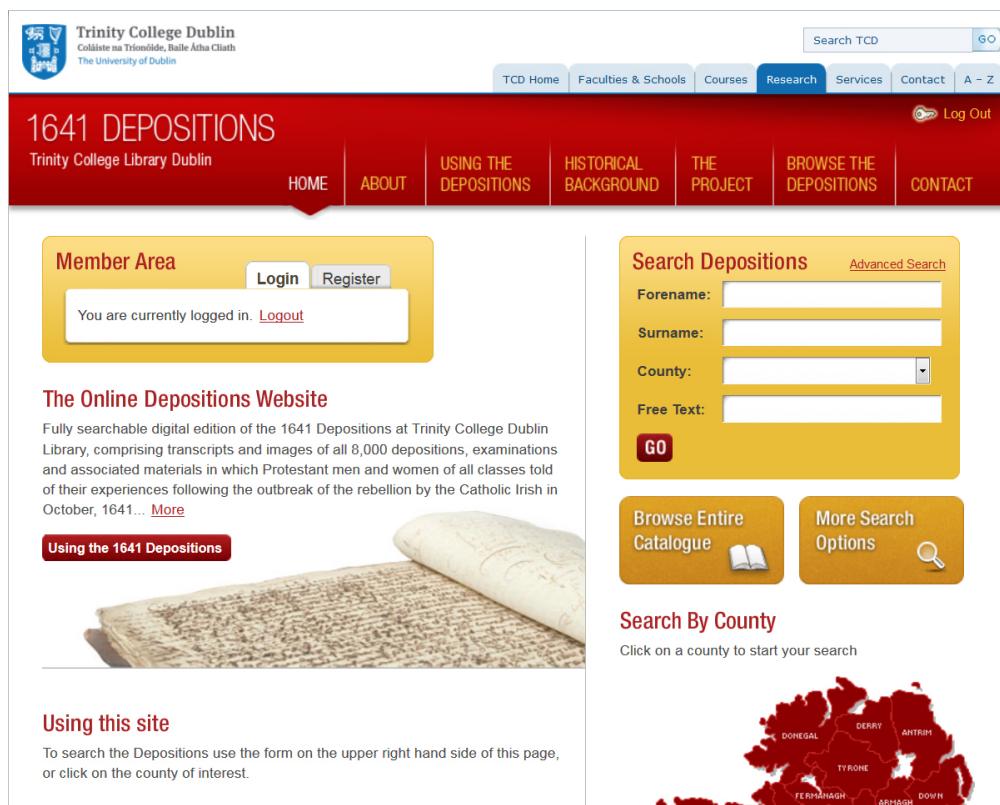


Fig. 4: Website menus and structure.

15 The 1641 Depositions website is embedded in the greater web presence of TCD and therefore has to adhere to a rather simplistic design and interface in observance of the TCD [Web Accessibility Statement](#). The appearance and navigation of the website is somewhat dated, yet functional. The combination of colours – largely red, white and grey – is unproblematic, the fonts are well readable in size and form.

16 The principal navigation on the website is done via seven menu buttons – ‘Home’, ‘About’, ‘Using the Depositions’, ‘Historical Background’, ‘The Project’, ‘Browse the Depositions’ and ‘Contact’, respectively – which are grouped horizontally at the top of the page. While some of these buttons ('Home', 'Contact') are self-explanatory, other menu headers include numerous sub-entries that fold out on mouse-over. Much useful information can be found on the website, but the composition of the main menu bar is not always clear and includes several duplicates and redundancies: ‘About’ contains a list of pages introducing the origin, nature and content of the depositions, and explaining the relevance of the source in the historical and cultural context. Other entries point toward further reading and other related useful online resources.

17 ‘Using the Depositions’ contains several subordinate pages which give an overview and inventory of the different deposition volumes, the aforementioned transcription and palaeographic notes, but also an essay on the use of the depositions in their original context – which should probably rather be placed under the ‘Historical background’ menu – and an FAQ file which contains information that is also available, albeit in fragmentary form, through the ‘About’ and ‘The Project’ menus and seems out of place in this menu.

18 ‘Historical Background’ groups several pages on the historical context of the 1641 rebellion: the events and political steps that ultimately led to the escalation of the conflict, the timeline of events connected to the rebellion, but also the collection itself, and a contextualization of comparable atrocities in other parts of the world and the significance of the 1641 heritage for the Protestant/British identity in Ulster (i.e. Northern Ireland).

19 ‘The Project’ points to a number of pages that contain information about the project itself rather than its content, most notably the funders, institutions and individuals involved in its realization. There are also notes on the sustainability of the project, the technologies and standards used in the process, and the conservation of the original (analogue) collection. Of particular interest is the indication of two related projects (re-)using the digital edition of the 1641 Depositions (see below). Unfortunately, there are just short texts about these projects provided, but no links.

MS no	County	folios
809	Dublin I	352
810	Dublin II	402
811	Wicklow	247
812	Carlow/Kilkenny	338
813	Kildare	400
814	King's County	275
815	Queen's County	446
816	Meath	347
817	Westmeath/Longford	338
818	Wexford I	331
819	Wexford II	310
820	Waterford	377
821	Tipperary	327
822	Cork I	288
823	Cork II	229
824	Cork III	267
825	Cork IV	320
826	Cork V	310
827	Cork VI	353

MS no	County	folios
829	Clare/Limerick	457
830	Galway/Roscommon	288
831	Leitrim/Mayo/Sligo	287
832	Cavan I	231
833	Cavan II	296
834	Louth/Monaghan	204
835	Fermanagh	266
836	Armagh	269
837	Down	189
838	Antrim	317
839	Derry/Donegal/Tyrone	156
840	Miscellaneous	217
841	Index	117

Fig. 5: "Browse" function view.

20 ‘Browsing the Depositions’ transfers the user to a listing of the individual volumes of the Deposition Manuscripts and additionally provides the County (or Counties) covered in that volume and the number of folios that each volume contains. Hence, it provides quick, if largely unstructured access to the transcriptions.

Functionalities and Access

21 While searching the database is possible without registration, access to the transcriptions or the facsimile images requires the registration of a dedicated user account. However, the account is immediately created and does not require any additional verification. Upon successful login to the ‘Members Area’ of the digital edition, users can use various search approaches to access individual depositions in the collection and – in theory – a number of functionalities linked to the individual account.

Exploring the collection

Search Depositions [Advanced Search](#)

Forename:

Surname:

County:

Free Text:

GO

[Browse Entire Catalogue](#)  [More Search Options](#) 

Search By County

Click on a county to start your search



The map shows the 32 counties of Ireland, each labeled with its name in white text against a dark red background. The counties are: Donegal, Derry, Antrim, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Monaghan, Armagh, Down, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Louth, Mayo, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Meath, Galway, Offaly, Kildare, Dublin, Clare, Limerick, Tipperary, Waterford, Cork, Wexford, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, and Kerry.

Fig. 6: "Search" functions.

22 In total, there are four different exploration scenarios which allow users to interact with the collection:

1. a *simple search* interface enabling the search for forenames, surnames, counties and a full text search in the transcriptions,

2. an *advanced search* interface which provides an online form with 14 different fields like ‘Place’, ‘Name’, ‘Occupation’ or ‘Role’ (victim, suspect, ...) in that particular deposition,
3. an *interactive map* of Ireland which leads to an overview of depositions by county,
4. a *Browse* button which – mirrored in the principal navigation bar – points to a list of the individual 31 volumes of the depositions.

Fig. 7: "Advanced Search" and suggested search terms.

- 23 Both, the simple and the advanced search forms provide assistance in form of an automatically generated list of terms matching the entered character string, for example the entry ‘mac’ in the ‘surname’ field would yield a suggestion of all surnames beginning with ‘Mac’ or ‘mac’.
- 24 The search queries are not case-sensitive, but use only the original spelling. There is also no possibility to use wildcards or fuzzy search. While that approach is in keeping with the premise of the accurate and exact transcription of the original documents, it poses several difficulties, since spellings of the same name may vary due to either actual errors by the scribes or because of different language versions (Latin,

English, Irish, respectively). Unfortunately, there has been no normalization of place or person names to address this difficulty.

25 There are no further possibilities to engage with the material. Visualisations of statistics, key concepts (e.g. in keeping with the terms used for the *advanced search*) from the collection and timelines, or the provision of cross-linked indices would constitute major improvements to the digital edition and should not be hard to implement based on the existing data.

Transcription view

26 At the core of this digital edition are the transcriptions of the individual depositions. Each transcription has a distinct identifier which is also used for citation. The interface is simple and straightforward: On top of the page, the title of the document is provided, along with a thumbnail picture of the corresponding facsimile and a reduced metadata set recording the manuscript number ('Reference'), 'County', 'Date', 'Type' and 'Nature of the Deposition' in question. Clicking on the thumbnail launches the Zoomify viewer window which, as noted above, unfortunately cannot be moved or resized and conceals the transcription.

27 As noted, the transcriptions are faithful to the original regarding the spelling and scriptorial phenomena, but do not intend to recreate the original layout and appearance of the depositions from a documentary editing perspective. The font is pleasant enough to read, but since the transcription conventions used cannot be viewed alongside the transcription on the same page, a fluent perusal proves challenging. There is no scrollbar embedded next to the transcription, only the full page can be scrolled which in the case of a longer transcription removes the navigation bar at the top of the page from view.

28 A context menu featuring six menu tabs offers a couple of functionalities to the (logged in) user: 'Print' generates a very plain document for printing which only includes the transcription, but not the related metadata, and opens a print dialogue. While a preview window opens below that dialogue window, said preview can neither be resized nor scrolled nor in fact interacted with (e.g. by highlighting or copying the content).

Examination of John Harrison

[« Back to results](#)



[View Originals](#)

Reference: MS 813, fols 028r-029v

County: Kildare

Date: 20/5/1642

Type: Examination

Nature of Deposition:

TCD, 1641 Depositions Project, online transcript
January 1970
[http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID=<?php echo
813028r015?>] accessed Thursday 10 November
2016 03:52 PM

[Print](#) | [How to Cite](#) | [Add Comment](#)

fol. 28r

412

John Harrison his examinacion taken vpon
<O> Saith that he was by his Master the L
keepe hir there which direccions was sent
fitz Garrett hath not beeene within his owne
a Bogg a myle beyond his owne hous(e) ar
Examinate knoweth not: further saith() th
gunnes, and 30y Pykes, but w{hether? } Powder match & Bullet is there hee knowes not, but saith() there was noe want that hee
perceaved at all, And saith that { } retourne to fitz Garrett brother to the said Morris Dublin hee brought him from the Lord
Lambert about { } Powder to kill halkes meete, further saith that the said { } was governor of Allen, and in his absence one Nicholas
{Weasely?} was cheife there, the said Phillip fitz Garrett being abs{ } the English forces came thither on the xvijth of May last, { } did

Candlemas last with his Gosseha(wk to)
ing, further saith that the said Morris
ght & noe mor{e and} that they keepe in
xes or{ } said house, but whether this
<P> Muskets, 3 Calivers, 5 other
Minimize

Fig. 8: "How to Cite" popup window: more confusion than reference.

29 'How to Cite' opens a citation suggestion in a pop-up window. However, that citation method seems insufficient for academic use, especially since the actual URI of the resource contains a confusing PHP code snippet and does not correspond to the URL as shown in the browser.

Deposition	Comment	Date Recorded	Reference	Edit	Delete
Deposition of John Kerdiff	tes	09 November, 2016 06:11PM	MS 839, fols 012r-016v	Edit	Delete
Deposition of John Kerdiff	test	09 November, 2016 06:11PM	MS 839, fols 012r-016v	Edit	Delete

Fig. 9: "Comments": bugs prevent customisation.

30 The remaining four menu tabs allow the registered user to 'Add' and 'View' comments and favourites by saving personal notes regarding a deposition ('Add Comment') or saving a deposition as part of a personal collection ('Add Favourite'). These functions would be quite valuable and facilitate actual research using the depositions. Unfortunately, they do not work: On several occasions, using different browsers, I tried to access and use these functions but was not able to add comments or

favourites. Despite this, the ‘View’ functions returned results which were neither related to the transcription currently displayed, nor originally submitted by me but rather from another user which could not be identified. Despite the existence of the ‘delete’ option, it was not possible to remove the faulty data. While the displayed features would considerably add to the value of this digital edition, they are sadly not functional.

Dissemination and Re-use

31 In addition to the digital edition of the 1641 Depositions, a hard copy print edition was commissioned by the Irish Manuscripts Commission in 2014, edited by Aidan Clarke who is also listed as the responsible editor for the digital edition. At this point, five volumes have been published (Clark 2013ff.).

32 The digital objects which were generated as part of the 1641 Depositions project are hosted and sustained within the TCD Library's [*Digital Collections Repository*](#). It is claimed that the medium resolution images would be freely available there but the reviewer could not find any indication of the 1641 Deposition scans on the Digital Collections website. High resolution images for long term storage and digital preservation are reputedly available on a password protected basis to users with an academic background.

33 The copyright to the original images of the 1641 Depositions is claimed by the Board of the Library of TCD. Unfortunately, there is no license information: to the contrary, the website's FAQ states that these images ‘are not available to be downloaded’. Similarly, the copyright to the transcriptions is jointly held by the 1641 Depositions Project and the Library of TCD, with the statement that the transcriptions may not be published without express permission. This restrictive copyright policy is unusual and puzzling, since the original depositions of course have been in the public domain long since and the entire collection is owned by the Trinity College Dublin Library which as the rights-holder to the originals, the digitisations and the transcriptions could just as well have decided to take an open and sharing approach. The overall inability to re-use any of the materials produced or collected in the 1641 Depositions project considerably depreciates this digital edition despite the great historical and cultural significance of the material.

34 The 1641 Depositions were re-used in two specific related projects submitted by original partners in the digital edition project:

1. [*CULTivating Understanding Through Research and Adaptivity* \(CULTURA\)](#) aimed at delivering innovative adaptive services and an interactive user environment to empower users to investigate, comprehend and contribute to digital cultural collections.
2. [*Language and Linguistic Evidence in the 1641 Depositions*](#), geared towards the creation of a personalised computer environment in which linguistic researchers can conduct sophisticated discovery, analysis and visualisation of the digitised 1641 Depositions, and collaborate with other colleagues on these resources.

Conclusion

35 The original 1641 Depositions are a unique and invaluable source for the social, economic, cultural, religious, and political history of Ireland (and the Stuart kingdoms as a whole) and questions of Irish and Anglo-Irish identity which are topical to this day. The digitization, transcription and online provision of the corpus is a commendable effort and enables scholars and the general public to engage with a pivotal era in Irish history.

36 The digital edition itself is somewhat simplistically realized, but provides a lot of valuable contextual information beyond the mere transcription of the original documents. Unfortunately, many of the functionalities offered by the digital edition itself are deficient. The search functions offer different views on the material, but also pose considerable restrictions on the user due to the lack of wildcard operators and the reliance on original spelling. The personalized user-specific features like comments and favourites are faulty and therefore unusable. Furthermore, the facsimile images and the transcriptions can only be viewed individually and not in juxtaposition.

37 The transcription is true to the source and accurate, but lacks further enrichment in the form of editorial commentary or reference between related documents in the collection. While the academic diligence and applied methods undoubtedly make the 1641 Depositions a *scholarly* digital edition, the mentioned lack of enrichment precludes it from being considered a *critical* digital edition.

38 The greatest flaw, however, is the lack of any possibility to re-use the online material for further research due to the restrictive copyright policy and the unavailability

of the TEI-encoded transcription files. The digital edition of the 1641 Depositions provides a thrilling and rich corpus for research, but unfortunately falls short of the largely agreed upon standards for the re-use of research data in the field of Digital Humanities. Despite the noted deficiencies, the digital edition in itself is undoubtedly a useful resource.

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Factsheet

Resource reviewed	
Title	1641 Depositions
Editors	Jane Ohlmeyer, Thomas Bartlett, Micheál Ó Siadhail, John Morrill
URI	http://1641.tcd.ie
Publication Date	2010
Date of last access	01.02.2017

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Documentation		
Bibliographic description	Is it easily possible to describe the project bibliographically along the schema "responsible editors, publishing/hosting institution, year(s) of publishing"? (cf. Catalogue 1.2)	yes
Contributors	Are the contributors (editors, institutions, associates) of the project fully documented? (cf. Catalogue 1.4)	yes
Contacts	Does the project list contact persons? (cf. Catalogue 1.5)	yes
Selection of materials		
Explanation	Is the selection of materials of the project explicitly documented? (cf. Catalogue 2.1)	yes
Reasonability	Is the selection by and large reasonable? (cf. Catalogue 2.1)	yes

Archiving of the data	Does the documentation include information about the long term sustainability of the basic data (archiving of the data)? (cf. Catalogue 4.16)	yes
Aims	Are the aims and purposes of the project explicitly documented? (cf. Catalogue 3.1)	yes
Methods	Are the methods employed in the project explicitly documented? (cf. Catalogue 3.1)	yes
Data Model	Does the project document which data model (e.g. TEI) has been used and for what reason? (cf. Catalogue 3.7)	no
Help	Does the project offer help texts concerning the use of the project? (cf. Catalogue 4.15)	yes
Citation	Does the project supply citation guidelines (i.e. how to cite the project or a part of it)? (cf. Catalogue 4.8)	yes
Completion	Does the edition regard itself as a completed project (i.e. not promise further modifications and additions)? (cf. Catalogue 4.16)	yes
Institutional Curation	Does the project provide information about institutional support for the curation and sustainability of the project? (cf. Catalogue 4.13)	yes
Contents		
Previous Edition	Has the material been previously edited (in print or digitally)? (cf. Catalogue 2.2)	no
Materials Used	Does the edition make use of these previous editions? (cf. Catalogue 2.2)	not applicable
Introduction	Does the project offer an introduction to the subject-matter (the author(s), the work, its history, the theme, etc.) of the project? (cf. Catalogue 4.15)	yes
Bibliography	Does the project offer a bibliography? (cf. Catalogue 2.3)	yes

Commentary	Does the project offer a scholarly commentary (e.g. notes on unclear passages, interpretation, etc.)? (cf. Catalogue 2.3)	no
Contexts	Does the project include or link to external resources with contextual material? (cf. Catalogue 2.3)	yes
Images	Does the project offer images of digitised sources? (cf. Catalogue 2.3)	yes
Image quality	Does the project offer images of an acceptable quality? (cf. Catalogue 4.6)	yes
Transcriptions	Is the text fully transcribed? (cf. Catalogue 2.3)	yes
Text quality	Does the project offer texts of an acceptable quality (typos, errors, etc.)? (cf. Catalogue 4.6)	yes
Indices	Does the project feature compilations indices, registers or visualisations that offer alternative ways to access the material? (cf. Catalogue 4.5)	yes
Documents		
Types of documents	Which kinds of documents are at the basis of the project? (cf. Catalogue 1.3 and 2.1)	Collection of texts
Document era	What era(s) do the documents belong to? (cf. Catalogue 1.3 and 2.1)	Early Modern, Modern
Subject	Which perspective(s) do the editors take towards the edited material? How can the edition be classified in general terms? (cf. Catalogue 1.3)	History
Presentation		
Spin-offs	Does the project offer any spin-offs? (cf. Catalogue 4.11)	none
Browse by	By which categories does the project offer to browse the contents? (cf. Catalogue 4.3)	Documents, Dates, Persons, Places, other: event and actor type
Search		
Simple	Does the project offer a simple search? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	yes

Advanced	Does the project offer an advanced search? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	yes
Wildcard	Does the search support the use of wildcards? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	no
Index	Does the search offer an index of the searched field? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	yes
Suggest functionalities	Does the search offer autocompletion or suggest functionalities? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	yes
Helptext	Does the project offer help texts for the search? (cf. Catalogue 4.4)	no
Aim		
Audience	Who is the intended audience of the project? (cf. Catalogue 3.3)	Scholars, Interested public
Typology	Which type fits best for the reviewed project? (cf. Catalogue 3.3 and 5.1)	Archive Edition
Method		
Critical editing	In how far is the text critically edited? (cf. Catalogue 3.6)	other: scribal interventions recorded
Standards	(cf. Catalogue 3.7)	
XML	Is the data encoded in XML?	yes
Standardized data model	Is the project employing a standardized data model (e.g. TEI)?	yes
Types of text	Which kinds or forms of text are presented? (cf. Catalogue 3.5.)	Facsimiles, Diplomatic transcription
Technical Accessability		
Persistent Identification and Addressing	Are there persistent identifiers and an addressing system for the edition and/or parts/objects of it and which mechanism is used to that end? (cf. Catalogue 4.8)	Persistent URLs
Interfaces	Are there technical interfaces like OAI-PMH, REST etc., which allow the reuse of the data of the project in other contexts? (cf. Catalogue 4.9)	none
Open Access	Is the edition Open Access?	yes

Accessibility of the basic data	Is the basic data (e.g. the XML) of the project accessible for each part of the edition (e.g. for a page)? (cf. Catalogue 4.12)	no
Download	Can the entire raw data of the project be downloaded (as a whole)? (cf. Catalogue 4.9)	no
Reuse	Can you use the data with other tools useful for this kind of content? (cf. Catalogue 4.9)	no
Rights		
Declared	Are the rights to (re)use the content declared? (cf. Catalogue 4.13)	yes
License	Under what license are the contents released? (cf. Catalogue 4.13)	No explicit license / all rights reserved
Personnel		
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