

No. 10

IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS

# KILKENNY

By JOHN BRADLEY



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Maps prepared in  
association with the  
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Northern Ireland

Royal Irish Academy



# KILKENNY

## CONTENTS

	Page
Preface and introduction	Cover
General abbreviations	Cover
The topographical development of Kilkenny	1
Topographical information	9
1 Name	
2 Legal status	
3 Parliamentary status	
4 Proprietorial status	
5 Municipal boundary	
6 Administrative location	
7 Administrative divisions	
8 Population	
9 Housing	
10 Streets	
11 Religion	
12 Defence	
13 Administration	
14 Primary production	
15 Manufacturing	
16 Trades and services	
17 Transport	
18 Utilities	
19 Health	
20 Education	
21 Entertainment	
22 Residence	
Bibliography	27
Note on Maps 1 and 2	28
Acknowledgements	28
Illustrations	
Text figures	
1 Kilkenny, c. 1200 to c. 1550	
2 Land use in Kilkenny, 1654	
3 Municipal, parish and ward boundaries, 1842	
Maps, views and photographs of Kilkenny (loose sheets)	
Map 1 Ordnance Survey, 1894–1900, 1:50,000	
2 Reconstruction, 1842, 1:2500	
3 Ordnance Survey, 1999, 1:5000	
4 Down Survey, c. 1655	
Plate 1 View of Kilkenny, c. 1698	
Map 5 Rocque, 1758	
6 Growth of Kilkenny to 1758	
Plate 2 View of Kilkenny, c. 1760	
Map 7 Ordnance Survey extract, 1841	
8 Valuation of residential buildings, 1850	
Plate 3 Kilkenny from the air, 1991	
4 High Street, c. 1900	
5 View from Kilkenny Castle, c. 1900	
Legend sheet	

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## PREFACE

Urban history as it is practised today is much more than the local study of a particular town. As part of social and economic history it needs a comparative approach. The topographical aspects of towns, the layout of streets, rivers and canals, the localisation of public buildings and defence works and the general setting of the town in its geographical environment, are particularly well suited to such a comparative approach. The International Commission for the History of Towns, therefore, having recommended since its foundation in 1955 the publication of historic towns atlases in its member countries, set out in 1968 a number of guide lines concerning the scale and contents of the principal maps to be included in

these atlases. The Commission's guide lines have been followed more or less strictly by most of the many countries and regions where historic towns atlases have been produced since. Among these countries Ireland with its Irish Historic Towns Atlas has produced a model in this respect.

Ghent, 1995

Adriaan Verhulst  
President of the International  
Commission for the History of Towns

## INTRODUCTION

It was in a spirit of co-operation after the second world war that in 1955 the International Commission for the History of Towns recommended the publication of a series of European national historic towns atlases to encourage a better understanding of common European roots and to facilitate comparative urban studies. Since then over 300 towns and cities in fifteen European countries have been published, more or less on the lines recommended by the Commission. This fascicle is part of Ireland's contribution to the scheme.

At an interdisciplinary symposium on 'Irish towns and medieval Europe', organised in 1978 by the Board of Medieval Studies in University College, Dublin, the idea of an Irish historic towns atlas was first publicly discussed following a lecture by Heinz Stoob from Münster on the German towns atlas project. In June 1981 the Council of the Royal Irish Academy agreed to publish the Irish Historic Towns Atlas and the government of the Republic of Ireland subsequently provided funds for the employment of a cartographic editor. The joint editors of the first four fascicles were J.H. Andrews (Department of Geography, Trinity College, Dublin) and Anngret Simms (Department of Geography, National University of Ireland, Dublin). H.B. Clarke (Department of Medieval History, National University of Ireland, Dublin) was appointed as an additional joint editor in 1990 and Raymond Gillespie (Department of Modern History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth) in 1994. John Andrews retired as editor and became consultant editor in 1992. K.M. Davies acted as cartographic editor and project co-ordinator from September 1981 to January 1999 and in February 1999 Sarah Gearty was appointed to this position.

This editorial board has been complemented by an editorial committee in which the editors have been joined over a period of time by Terry Barry (Department of Medieval History, Trinity College, Dublin), John Bradley (Department of Modern History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth), M.J.D. Brand (former Director, Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland), Richard Haworth (Department of Geography, Trinity College, Dublin), A.A. Horner (Department of Geography, National University of Ireland, Dublin), Richard Kirwan (Director, Ordnance Survey Ireland), Gearóid Mac Niocaill (formerly of the Department of History, National University of Ireland, Galway), Philip Robinson (Ulster Folk and Transport Museum), Katharine Simms (Department of Medieval History, Trinity College, Dublin), M.C. Walsh (former Director, Ordnance Survey of Ireland) and Kevin Whelan (University of Notre Dame). In 1999 the editorial committee was further enlarged by the appointment of Mary Clark (City Archivist, Dublin City Archives), Michael Cory (Director, Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland), M.E. Daly (Department of Modern Irish History, National University of Ireland, Dublin), Jacinta Prunty (Department of Modern History, National University of Ireland, Maynooth) and Matthew Stout (Information Graphics). The atlas is indebted to Michael Brand and Michael Cory as well as Muiris Walsh and Richard Kirwan for practical support from their respective departments. Valuable assistance has also been received from research staff of the Royal Irish Academy. The editorial board is greatly indebted to Bord Fáilte (the Irish Tourist Board), FÁS (the Training and Employment Authority), the Marc Fitch Fund (Oxford) and the Luther I. Replogle Foundation (Washington D.C.) for supporting the preparation of the atlas.

The atlas has been planned as a series of fascicles, one for each town in a selection representing various size-categories, various regions of the country from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and various periods of origin, growth and change, with some bias in favour of the medieval period but not excluding the estate towns, industrial towns and resort towns characteristic of more modern times. The principal map in each fascicle is a large-scale (1:2500) representation of the town as it is believed to have stood at a period as close as possible to 1840. The reconstruction is

based on the large-scale manuscript town plans made by the Ordnance Survey in 1832-42 and on the manuscript maps compiled at the same time or soon afterwards by the General Valuation Office. Use is also made of surviving contemporary estate maps and, where necessary, of the earliest (1833-46) published Ordnance Survey maps at six inches to one mile (1:10,560). The reconstructions include buildings, streets, roads, paths, yards, gardens, orchards, parks, fields and surface watercourses. Contemporary names are used wherever possible. The base map on which these data are assembled is the most accurate available nineteenth-century town plan, which in most cases is the one published by the Ordnance Survey on a scale of either 1:1056 or 1:500 at some time during the period 1855-95.

A second map shows the town in its mid-nineteenth-century setting at 1:50,000. This has been prepared from the first (1855-95) edition of the one inch to one mile (1:63,360) Ordnance Survey map of Ireland. The third map common to all fascicles is a modern Ordnance Survey town plan at 1:5000. A selection of facsimile maps is included, some with their accompanying reference tables. Where possible there are also growth maps and large-scale single period maps reconstructing significant phases of development before the end of the nineteenth century. Other graphic material includes the town's armorial bearings, if any, a modern air photograph and facsimiles of early views. The text accompanying the maps comprises an introductory essay, topographical information on the town as a whole and its component parts, selected documentary and literary extracts where appropriate, and a bibliography.

The maps and topographical information are derived directly from primary sources and to that extent are incapable of becoming out of date. But readers may also expect to be given an interpretation of the sources, and this is the role of the introductory essay. Each town is described in relation to its physical site and setting, and its development is reviewed in chronological sequence from the beginnings of urban life to the end of the nineteenth century, with a brief indication of its twentieth-century history. The essay is intended to deal primarily with the form and layout of the town as expressed in the accompanying maps. Individual buildings may receive attention as topographical entities, but the atlas does not usurp the functions of an archaeological or architectural survey. In the same spirit, political and socio-economic factors are introduced in so far as they seem relevant to an understanding of the townscape and not as ends in themselves.

The bibliography lists all important items devoted to a single town, especially those of topographical relevance, and is not necessarily confined to works cited in the footnotes. Other sources mentioned in the footnotes are not separately tabulated, except where their titles have been abbreviated in a way that requires explanation. Abbreviations of more general application are listed inside the back cover of each fascicle. Grid references follow the Irish National Grid as shown on current Ordnance Survey maps, and throughout the atlas placenames are spelt as in the maps of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland or the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

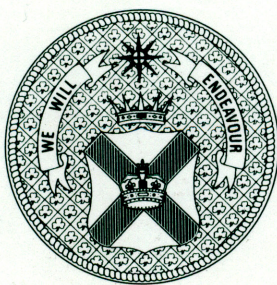
Finally the atlas expresses the belief that large-scale plans constitute the best kind of source material for a comparative analysis of the topography of European towns, whether as a starting point for retrospective topographical research or as a basis for studying the changes associated with modern urban expansion. As such, it is proving useful not only to students and teachers of history, geography, archaeology and architecture, but also to planners, conservationists and local government officers, and thus directly or indirectly to all residents and visitors in the towns concerned.

June 2000

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