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# O'Neill, O'Donnell and the Nine Years War

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## List of Abbreviations

*AFM = Annals of the Four Masters*

*CSPI = Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Ireland, of the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth,*

*Life = The Life of Aodh Ruadh O'Domhnaill*

## **Comparing and contrasting the personalities of Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell's and its effect on their military tactics during the Nine Years War.**

Ulster was the last bastion of Gaelic Ireland but by the end of the sixteenth century it was under threat from the Tudor government. They were determined to extinguish Gaelic Ireland's hold on Ulster and anglicise the region. The Irish chieftains were not willing to give up their rule in Ulster and traditional way of life so they turned to rebellion. This rebellion was known as the Nine Years War and took place from 1594 to 1603 but it ended in defeat for the Irish. They may have been defeated but the Irish more than held their own against the English forces and were a serious threat to the Tudor government's authority not only in Ulster but also in the rest of Ireland as the rebellion that started in Ulster spread to all corners of Ireland. As the uprising spread, a nation-wide Gaelic confederacy emerged to confront the English. The leaders of this Gaelic confederacy were the second earl of Tyrone, Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell. Under the leadership of these two men, the Irish confederacy was able to secure a number of notable and impressive victories over the crown forces. Yet these men had contrasting personalities which caused disputes between the two, especially over military tactics. This essay will examine the contrasting personalities of Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell's and see how it affected their military strategies during the war.

When investigating the character of the two leaders, their backgrounds should be examined first because they shaped their dispositions. O'Neill ruled over the O'Neill lordship which encompassed modern Tyrone, most of Armagh and parts of southern Derry.<sup>1</sup> While O'Neill's strength was located in the heart of Ulster, he actually was brought up in the Pale because he was fostered by Giles Hovenden, an English planter after his father was killed in 1558, when O'Neill was only eight. Being exiled from Ulster for nearly ten years and brought up among the English of the Pale led the lord deputy Sir Henry Sidney to believe that he

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan, Hiram. "Gaelic Lordship and Tudor Conquest: Tir Eoghain, 1541-1603." *History Ireland* Vol.13, issue.5 (Sep. - Oct., 2005): p.38

could be trusted to serve the government and remain a loyal servant to the Queen if returned to Ulster. Therefore in 1568 Sidney set up O'Neill in Oneilland, in county Armagh. Sidney hoped that the establishing of O'Neill in the O'Neill lordship would divide it and confine the dangerous threat of Turlough Luineach O'Neill, (who had the title of the O'Neill, which was the title of the leader of the O'Neill lordship) to north of the River Blackwater. The support from the government continued after Sidney's tenure as lord deputy and O'Neill used the military and financial aid his state backing afford him to expand his authority in Ulster and loosen Turlough's hold on the lordship. His growing authority was recognised by the government in 1587 when they made him the second earl of Tyrone.<sup>2</sup> O'Neill's early interactions with the English were therefore mostly positive and he could see that there were benefits to cooperating with them. He also saw the consequences of rebelling against the English when he helped put down the Desmond Rebellion.<sup>3</sup> The brutality that was used to subdue the rebellion can be seen in the writings of the famous English poet Edmund Spenser. For example he described the aftermath of the English government's use of a scorched earth policy:

'In those late wars in Munster; for notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, that you would have thought they could have been able to stand long, yet ere one year and a half they were brought to such wretchedness, as that any stony heart would have rued the same. Out of every corner of the wood and glens they came creeping forth upon their hands, for their legs could not bear them; they looked Anatomies [of] death, they spoke like ghosts, crying out of their graves; they did eat of the carrions, happy where they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, in so much as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves; and if they found a plot of water-cresses or shamrocks, there they flocked as to a feast for the time, yet not able long to continue therewithal; that in a short space there were none almost left, and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man or beast.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> McGinty, Matthew, 'The Development and Dynamics of the Relationship between Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell', M.A., National University of Ireland Galway, 2013, pp.15-20

<sup>3</sup> Finnegan, Michael, 'Tyrone's rebellion: Hugh O'Neill and the outbreak of the Nine Years War in Ulster' M.A., National University of Ireland Galway, 2001 p.19

<sup>4</sup> Spenser, Edmund. *The Works of Edmund Spenser*. Ed. Edwin Greenlaw, Charles Grosvenor Osgood, Frederick Morgan Padelford, and Ray . Heffner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1949. p.158

The Chief Baron of the Exchequer, Sir Lucas Dillon certainly thought this witnessing of how the English dealt with disloyalty affected O'Neill and would result in him remaining loyal to the queen.<sup>5</sup> Dillon was wrong that it would prevent O'Neill from rebelling but it probably contributed to O'Neill hesitating to break out in open rebellion, adopting a cautious approach during the war and negotiating with the English.

After 1587 the government began to fear O'Neill's growing power so instead of helping him, they hindered his ambitions in Ulster but they largely failed. One reason for their failure was the fact that O'Neill had been busy developing connections and alliances with the Irish of Ulster. The most important of these alliances was his marriage alliance with the O'Donnells. With the help of Red Hugh O'Donnell, his son-in-law and ruler of the Tír Chonaill lordship (which covered roughly modern Donegal), O'Neill was able to final eliminate Turlough's power in Ulster in 1593 and two years later when Turlough died O'Neill officially acquired the title of the O'Neill.

Red Hugh O'Donnell's early experiences with the English government were the polar opposite to O'Neill and these dealings with the English had a profound effect on O'Donnell's attitude towards the English. In 1587 the then fifteen year old O'Donnell was kidnapped by the English because the lord deputy Sir John Perrot was anxious about O'Donnell becoming ruler of Tír Chonaill and allying with his father-in-law, hence making Hugh O'Neill even more powerful. O'Donnell was held in Dublin castle and this really radicalised him as he was exposed to other Irish prisoners who had endured suffering at the hands of the English government and they told their stories of woe to O'Donnell. English and Irish sources point to these interactions with fellow Irish prisoners as having a substantial influence on O'Donnell and contributing to him having a strong anti-English stance.<sup>6</sup> Lughaidh Ó'Cléirigh states that during peace talks with the English during the Nine Years War, O'Donnell was very wary of making peace with them because he did not trust them. This mistrust was because:

‘he had been listening [to stories about the English] ... during the four years and three months he was in prison in Dublin; and that was the tale he remembered best from the captives cast into prison along with him, and he said that the promises of the English were always vain and deceitful, and that by false promises they had stolen their

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<sup>5</sup> *CSPI Vol. III*, p. 280

<sup>6</sup> McGinty, Matthew, ‘The Development and Dynamics of the Relationship between Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell’, pp.19-28

patrimony from the Irish of the province of Leinster and the province of Munster....the English will tell lies now, and they will attack you when they find you unprepared'.<sup>7</sup>

An English contemporary Captain Thomas Lee also noted the dangerous effect O'Donnell's confinement with his fellow Irish (along with his youth making him impressionable) could have. Lee stated that 'he being young... and kept still amongst those who were ever notorious traitors against your majesty having no other counsel or advice, or company, but theirs, what good come to this young man and his education among such'.<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell escaped in January 1591 but was quickly recaptured. The following year he successfully escaped and returned to Tír Chonaill but he returned to a troubled place as it had experienced much repression in his absence. While he was imprisoned, Tír Chonaill had been subjected to raids and pillaging by the new lord deputy Sir William Fitzwilliam and numerous other English captains, most notably Captain Humphrey Willis.<sup>9</sup> O'Donnell's bad experiences with the English help to explain why he was uncompromising and hostile towards the English during the war.

When looking at O'Donnell's character it is obvious that he was quite aggressive. English observers at the time noted Red Hugh's antagonistic nature. For example one English official described O'Donnell as the firebrand of all the rebels, while another official appointed to a commission in early 1596 to partake in peace talks with the Irish also remarked on O'Donnell's insolence. These two observers also noticed O'Donnell's arrogance and pride.<sup>10</sup> During the war O'Donnell preferred using force instead of diplomacy or some other alternative. These personality traits coupled with his deleterious relations with the English in his youth help to explain O'Donnell's more aggressive military style during the war.

Therefore the two leaders had contrasting dispositions. O'Neill was cautious and measured, while O'Donnell was impetuous and belligerent. These differing temperaments meant that they often had different opinions how best to proceed militarily. An example of this occurred shortly after O'Donnell's escape from prison. When O'Donnell was in prison Captain Humphrey Willis the sheriff of Donegal, along with his 200 men set up camp at the

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<sup>7</sup> *Life* pp. 128-9

<sup>8</sup> Lee, Thomas, "A Brief Declaration of the Government of Ireland." *Desiderata curiosa Hibernica*, Dublin, 1772 pp. 96-97

<sup>9</sup> McGinty, Matthew, 'The Development and Dynamics of the Relationship between Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell', pp.25-6

<sup>10</sup> *CSPI, Vol. V*, p.465, *CSPI Vol. VI*, p.275

monastery at Donegal Town and proceeded to ransack southern Tír Chonaill causing many to flee to the mountains.<sup>11</sup> One contemporary, Captain Thomas Lee was disgusted by the vile acts of Willis and claimed that Willis and the ‘rascals and scum’ that accompanied him did ‘rob and spoil that people, ravished their wives and daughters, and made havock of all.’<sup>12</sup> O’Donnell made the expulsion of Willis from the monastery his first order of business when he returned to Tír Chonaill from his captivity. He gathered up his forces and went to confront Willis. Instead of attacking Willis, O’Donnell gave him an ultimatum. He told Willis that he and his men would be allowed to leave the monastery unmolested as long as they left behind the plunder they had taken from the people of Tír Chonaill. The English accepted the offer and departed the monastery.<sup>13</sup> It would appear that O’Donnell could show restraint and could seek a more diplomatic solution to the problem of English encroachment on his lordship but if Captain Lee is to be believed, the tactful decision to let Willis depart unharmed was not O’Donnell’s doing. Lee stated that it was only down to O’Neill’s intervention that Captain Willis and his men were able to escape unharmed because otherwise they would have all ‘been put to the sword’.<sup>14</sup> Therefore this would indicate that it was O’Neill that persuaded O’Donnell to allow the English to leave unscathed because left to his own devices O’Donnell would have killed them all. This conveys the two diverse temperaments of the men.

O’Neill urged further restraint when he travelled to Tír Chonaill and convinced O’Donnell to journey to Dundalk and submit.<sup>15</sup> More than likely O’Neill’s reasoning behind convincing O’Donnell to submit was to increase his reputation as a loyal servant to the Queen and strengthen O’Donnell’s position as leader of the O’Donnell lordship. O’Donnell had many rivals that sought his position of ruler and if O’Donnell proved to be problematic for the English government, they could simply lend their support to one of his rivals in the hope that they could oust Red Hugh as leader of Tír Chonaill. By submitting, Red Hugh got state recognition of his position as the ruler of Tír Chonaill. This acknowledgement by the government denied the other contenders for the leadership of Tír Chonaill like Niall Garbh O’Donnell, government backing. This in conjunction with O’Donnell’s ruthless campaign against them convinced them to fall in line behind O’Donnell.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> McGettigan, Darren. *Red Hugh O'Donnell and the Nine Years War*, Dublin: Four Courts, 2005 p. 47

<sup>12</sup> Lee, Thomas "A Brief Declaration of the Government of Ireland.",p.106

<sup>13</sup> *Life*, pp.33-7

<sup>14</sup> Lee, Thomas "A Brief Declaration of the Government of Ireland.", p. 106

<sup>15</sup> *CSPI Vol. IV* p. 568

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, Hiram. "The Real Red Hugh." *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh: The Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell; Historical and Literary Contexts*. Ed. Pádraig. Ó Riain . London: Irish Texts Society, 2002 p.8

This utilisation of a less violent and less risky tactic that quite often involved subterfuge by O'Neill instead of O'Donnell's preferred use of arms approach was a feature of the war, especially during the beginning. The spark that ignited the war was the introduction of Captain Humphrey Willis as sheriff of Fermanagh in the spring of 1593. The chief of Fermanagh was Hugh Maguire who had succeeded his father as the Maguire in 1589 and like O'Donnell was a son-in-law of O'Neill. Willis in concert with Captain George Bingham plundered Maguire's lordship which he was anxious to keep intact so he expelled Willis from his lordship. At this stage of the conflict there is some debate about O'Neill's involvement with the embryonic Gaelic confederacy that was emerging with the aim of defending their lands by force. It could be argued that O'Neill was at the head of the confederacy, directing the movements of the rebels and using other Irish leaders to fight a proxy war. An alternative theory is that O'Neill could not control his Irish allies and he wanted to prevent a war with the English.<sup>17</sup> Whether O'Neill was behind the scenes orchestrating the activities of the rebels or attempting to avert a rebellion is not important. What is important is that both ideas about O'Neill's involvement show that he was circumspect about breaking out in open rebellion. He did not openly rebel until 1595, by which stage the war had been raging for about a year. O'Neill even fought with government forces against Maguire in late 1593 at the Battle of Galloon Ford in order to save his image as a loyal servant to the queen, which was fading fast as he was being accused of being in league with the insurgent Maguire. O'Donnell had no such qualms about personally joining Maguire in his efforts to defend Gaelic Ulster from the English government's attempts to impose their authority on the region. O'Donnell was going to openly assist Maguire in 1593 but in the end he did not as his army were not as prepared as he would have liked but more importantly he refrained from openly attacking the government's forces and withdrew because O'Neill had command him to do so.<sup>18</sup> O'Neill's desire for O'Donnell not to be associated with Maguire's revolt and to keep intact some semblance of a loyal subject in contrast to O'Donnell desire to confront the English further reinforces the idea of the two leaders having different mind-sets when it comes to choosing the best way to proceed. O'Donnell did in fact openly revolt in 1594, about a year before O'Neill did and this would indicate that he did not have the patience of O'Neill.

O'Donnell did not always yield to O'Neill's more careful approach so easily and there were arguments between the two. One such quarrel occurred after O'Neill had a meeting with

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<sup>17</sup> McGinty, Matthew, 'The Development and Dynamics of the Relationship between Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell', pp. 29-44

<sup>18</sup> *Life*, p. 67



the Earl of Essex. Essex had been sent to Ireland with 17,300 in 1599 to put down the rebellion. The rebellion was now nationwide so Essex sent his army south to suppress the rebels in Munster and Leinster instead of sending his army against O'Donnell and O'Neill. This accomplished little except gaining him some castles and submissions of rebels but it exhausted his troops.<sup>19</sup> He eventually turned his attention to Ulster and O'Neill but instead of attacking O'Neill he had a parley with him and the two agreed to a truce. O'Donnell was furious with O'Neill because they had allied themselves with the Spanish and had promised them that they would not conclude a peace treaty without consent from the Spanish king. O'Donnell then showed his more belligerent nature by demanding that he be able to go to Connacht but Tyrone forbid him from doing this because of the cessation. During their argument O'Donnell also admitted that the only reason why he had not burned the entire Pale up to Dublin was because O'Neill prevented him. O'Neill prohibited O'Donnell from burning the Pale because he predicted that if O'Donnell ravaged the Pale, the 'spoiled men of the English Pale would devour our country by begging and otherwise'. It was not the first time O'Donnell had criticised O'Neill for agreeing to a cessation with the English instead of continuing to use force. In December 1597 O'Donnell sent a letter to O'Neill, criticizing him for agreeing to a cessation as he pointed out that the rebels were strong in Leinster, Connaught was obedient to him and in Ulster they had not sustained any great damage. O'Donnell then informed Tyrone that he would break the cessation although he never did.<sup>20</sup> O'Donnell's eagerness to travel to Connaught, break the cessation, raid and burn the Pale compared to O'Neill's objections because of the potential consequences and his agreement to truces with the English clearly exemplifies the contrasting personalities and military preferences of the two men. The disagreements also show there was a struggle between the two to exert their preferred strategy.

On the two occasions previously mentioned, O'Neill was able to rein in his ally as O'Donnell did reluctantly observe the cessations that O'Neill had agreed to. This along with O'Donnell's admission that it was O'Neill that prevented him from burning the Pale obviously shows that O'Neill's more careful mind-set had won out but this was not always the case. Occasionally it was O'Donnell's bellicose attitude that was more influential in deciding the strategy of the Irish. The most famous example of O'Donnell being able to overrule O'Neill's cautiousness and employ a more forceful course of action occurred at the

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<sup>19</sup> Lennon, Colm. *Sixteenth Century Ireland*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2005, pp.295-304, Ellis, Steven, *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors*, London: Longman, 1998, pp.339-350

<sup>20</sup> *CSPI, Vol. VI* p. 487, *CSPI, Vol. VIII* p.159

Battle of Kinsale. A Spanish invasion force numbering 3,400 under Don Juan del Águila landed at Kinsale in September 1601 with aim of supporting their Irish allies. The Spanish were quickly besieged by lord deputy Mountjoy and his force of 7,000. O'Neill and O'Donnell responded by marching the length of the country to support their allies. They set up a blockade cutting the English off from receiving provisions overland and their horses from grazing.<sup>21</sup> Mountjoy's secretary, Fynes Moryson was present at the battle and painted a grim picture of the English's predicament and showed the devastation that desertion and disease was causing them. He noted that the winter weather was so bad that English sentinels were dropping dead at their posts and so many were deserting that there was a proclamation stating that anyone who left the camp without permission would be executed. It was not only the soldiers that were suffering as their horses were as well. They were desperate pleas from the English for 2,000 pounds of oats to be urgently sent to them because 'without which undoubtedly our horses will be starved'<sup>22</sup> Then it would seem that to beat the English, the Irish could simply wait and allow the harsh winter weather to take its toll on the English forces but the Irish faced a quandary as Don Jean del Águila had been sending letters to O'Neill and O'Donnell, urging them to assault the English, who he assured were few and weakened by the harsh conditions.<sup>23</sup> The Irish annalists claim that these letters from the Spanish had a profound effect on O'Donnell. They say he 'was oppressed at heart and ashamed to hear the complaint and distress of the Spaniards without relieving them from the difficulty in which they were, even if his death or destruction, or the loss of his people, should result from it'.<sup>24</sup> This would indicate that O'Donnell's prideful, aggressive and impetuous nature got the better of him but O'Neill still urged caution and at an Irish war council he thought that they should:

'not relax the siege which they had laid upon the English till they [the English] should die of hunger, as many of them had died already and they would give up their noblest into their mercy and protection at last, and that he did not wish to gratify his enemies, for they were better pleased to fight for their lives and to be killed immediately than to die of plague and hunger'<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> McGettigan, Darren. *Red Hugh O'Donnell and the Nine Years War*, pp. 103- 4

<sup>22</sup> Moryson, Fynes, *An Itinerary Vol. III*, London, 1617, pp.66-7

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid* p. 73

<sup>24</sup> *AFM*, p. 2283

<sup>25</sup> *Life*, pp.329-31

However O'Neill's pleas for restraint fell on deaf ears and the Irish decided to go with O'Donnell's plan to attack the English forces but the Irish were decisively beaten by the English. Some historians doubt that there was a disagreement between O'Neill and O'Donnell over tactics. Military historian G.A Hayes McCoy doubted the stories of a discord between O'Donnell and O'Neill. Hiram Morgan also expressed doubts and states that no English or Spanish source mentions a disagreement between O'Donnell and O'Neill.<sup>26</sup> The only evidence for the dispute comes from O'Sullivan Beare and Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh's accounts of the battle. Historians John McGurk, J.J Silke, Darren McGettigan and Cyril Falls all take O'Sullivan Beare and Ó Cléirigh's accounts of the disagreement to be true.<sup>27</sup> Also it would not have been the first time O'Donnell induced O'Neill into abandoning a siege in favour of a full frontal assault. In 1598 O'Neill was besieging the Blackwater Fort in Armagh and O'Donnell arrived to assist O'Neill. Yet again O'Donnell believed a full frontal assault was the best option and convinced O'Neill to attempt to storm the fort. Just like Kinsale the Irish failed in their attack, losing over one hundred men in the assault so O'Neill's force reverted to his original plan of trying to starve the fort's defenders into submission.<sup>28</sup>

All this evidence would make it seem that O'Donnell's military capability was very limited as he often relied on simply attacking his enemy but that would be unfair to O'Donnell and his condemnations of O'Neill's actions at the Battle of Moyry Pass in October 1600 show he could devise a more complex plan. The battle occurred because O'Neill was endeavouring to halt lord deputy Mountjoy's attempt to penetrate Armagh and establish a garrison. O'Neill had several skirmishes with Mountjoy's forces but O'Donnell wrote to him and reprimanded him for these skirmishes with government troops. O'Donnell thought that his skirmishes with Mountjoy wasted munitions and provisions and resulted in the loss of good men without anything really being gained. O'Donnell then demonstrates that he did have some ability to design a strategy that did not simply involve launching an offensive. He informed O'Neill that it would have been better if he had not engaged Mountjoy when he marched through Moyry Pass because it would have been preferable to fight with him when he was deeper in enemy territory as Mountjoy's forces would be further

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<sup>26</sup> Morgan, Hiram. "Disaster at Kinsale", *The Battle of Kinsale*. Ed. Hiram Morgan. Bray: Wordwell, 2004. p.126, Hayes-McCoy, G. A. *Irish Battles*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1980, p.159-60

<sup>27</sup> McGettigan, Darren. *Red Hugh O'Donnell and the Nine Years War*, pp. 103-4, Falls, Cyril. *Mountjoy, Elizabethan General*. London: Odhams, 1955, p.179, Silke, John J. *Kinsale; the Spanish Intervention in Ireland at the End of the Elizabethan Wars*, Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1970, p.142, McGurk, John. "The Kinsale Campaign Siege, Battle and Rout." *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*: Vol.19 Issue.1 (2002):pp.64-5

<sup>28</sup> O'Sullivan Beare, Philip. *Ireland Under Elizabeth*, ed. Matthew Byrne, Port Washington, Kennikat Press, 1970, p.103

away from reinforcements, provisions and a safe place to retire. O'Donnell then points out to O'Neill that this with the addition of the bad weather would make Mountjoy and his troops easier to defeat. O'Donnell ends his advice to Tyrone by telling him that after the English had established their garrison and left some of their men there; it would have been simpler to harass them on their return home.<sup>29</sup> O'Donnell's strategy for dealing with Mountjoy requires patience as one would have to allow their opponents to march unimpeded into their territory and wait until the factors that O'Donnell had mentioned had taken their toll on the government's troops to attack. This alone is not enough evidence to dismiss the perception of O'Donnell's as being impetuous and impatient because the examples of him acting rashly still outweigh the examples of him using patience but it does show he was not completely devoid of the patience O'Neill had shown at Kinsale and at the start of the war. The fact that O'Donnell could devise a tactic that needed more thought than simply deciding to engage the English would suggest that his preference for launching an offensive at Kinsale and Blackwater fort was not a result of his incapability to formulate a strategy that was more complex than a full frontal assault but it was more likely down to his pugnacious and prideful nature getting the better of him.

Sometimes O'Donnell's bellicosity was exactly what was needed. One such occasion occurred in 1594. Government troops were attempting to resupply the besieged troops at Enniskillen and the prospect of a relief column victualing Enniskillen castle was troubling O'Donnell. At this point O'Neill was still not in open rebellion and trying to maintain his façade as an obedient subject of the Queen but O'Donnell wrote to him and stated that 'he must consider' O'Neill 'his enemy, unless he came to his aid in such a pinch.'<sup>30</sup> O'Neill responded by sending reinforcements under his brother Cormack McBarron and the combined forces of Cormack and Hugh Maguire defeated the relief column, killing 56 English soldiers in a battle known as the battle of the 'Ford of the Biscuits' from the biscuits left behind by the English.<sup>31</sup> O'Neill's loyalty was already being heavily questioned so his involvement in the battle certainly did risk him being associated with the rebels. His involvement did indeed result in English intelligence reports connecting him to the battle and the Gaelic confederacy but without O'Donnell's demand to take this risk and send aid the

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<sup>29</sup> *CSPI, Vol. IX* p.521

<sup>30</sup> O'Sullivan Beare, Philip. *Ireland Under Elizabeth*, p.79

<sup>31</sup> Lennon, Colm *Sixteenth-century Ireland*, p.291-5, Ellis, Steven G. *Ireland in the Age of the Tudors, 1447-160*. pp.334-338

relief column may have made it to Enniskillen.<sup>32</sup> Therefore this time O'Donnell's more combative approach worked better than if O'Neill remained cautious and withheld his troops.

In conclusion the two leaders of the Gaelic confederacy had very different personalities. O'Neill was cautious and patient, while O'Donnell was more impulsive and eager to fight. Their personalities and opinions regarding how to best prosecute their rebellion would have been profoundly shaped by their backgrounds. O'Neill had been brought up in the Pale and had received much assistance from the government in his early years. It was down to this state help that he was able to secure and expand his power in Ulster. O'Donnell on the other hand was imprisoned by the English government at the age of fifteen and while imprisoned Tír Chonaill had been plundered and subjected to repression by government officials. These different mind-sets and backgrounds heavily influenced the way each of them behaved during the war and the strategy they choose to pursue. For instances, O'Donnell was more uncompromising and aggressive towards the English and often preferred a military solution while O'Neill, aware of the benefits of cooperating with the English and the punishment for rebelling was more cautious and more likely to negotiate. Their dissimilar personalities and approach to war often led to clashes over tactics like at Kinsale when they argued about whether they should attack or continuing besieging the English. O'Donnell bellicosity was both detrimental and beneficial. At Kinsale it proved disastrous, yet at the battle of the Ford of the Biscuits his more aggressive nature was needed instead of O'Neill's caution.

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<sup>32</sup> *CSPI Vol. V* p.279

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