

casting a careful eye on east Ulster and the links with Scotland at the end of the sixteenth century, this essay is as valuable as Nicholas Canny's work in emphasising this regional dimension to O'Neill's survival strategy post-1603.

The 'British' aspirations of James I (James VI of Scotland) is a recurring and fascinating theme in the volume; apposite, too, in the context of modern political developments in which Scottish (British) 'interlopers' in London have sat (uneasily, in the most recent example) on the 'political throne'. Raymond Gillespie, in exploring the British identity of the settlers in seventeenth-century Ulster, notes that 'it was only a subset of a wider set of multiple identities' (p. 89). Remarking on the 'ambiguity in status' of the Scots in Ulster, Michael Perceval-Maxwell attributes this in part to the fact that they 'occupied a position on the periphery of all three kingdoms ... near aliens in Ireland ... they were half encouraged to survive by England as a counterweight to the Roman Catholic Irish, and yet were also deeply distrusted as a threat to Ireland's established Church and therefore, by implication, to England's government of Ireland' (p. 123) Little wonder that identity has been such a pressing issue for their descendants either in Ulster or the U.S. Described variously as Scots Irish, Scotch Irish and Ulster Scots, this volume features references to 'Irish-Scots' (p. 115) and 'Irish-Scotch' (p. 116). Thus, the experience of the Scots in Ulster has been a unique and often far from happy experience. Against this background, one might wonder why so many Scots crossed the Irish Sea. That the 'people of that kingdom [Scotland] are so accustomed to hunger and want that Ireland seems to them a paradise of temperate climate and fertile soil' (p. 115) may provide part of the answer.

An excellent compilation of essays, this volume also makes clear that many Scots in Ulster, like the Catholics in the province and elsewhere in Ireland, suffered religious persecution and suppression of cultural identity. An 'alarmist' English memorandum of 1659, for instance, noted that the 'Scots wore bonnets and ought to be made to wear hats' (p. 123). And while Irish Catholics will for ever more associate Cromwell with the policy of 'to hell or Connacht', it could have been a long way to Tipperary for a significant number of Ulster Scots had a proposed transplantation scheme been implemented.

JOHN McCAVITT

THE COUNCIL BOOK FOR THE PROVINCE OF MUNSTER c.1599–1649. Edited by Margaret Curtis Clayton. Pp xii, 498. Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission. 2008. €65.

A system of local administration was established for the provinces of Munster and Connacht during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in an effort to increase the power of the government in areas controlled and dominated by local magnates who frequently acted in their own interests rather than those of the Crown. It was modelled on similar administrative structures in the north of England and in Wales, and promoted by the lord deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, as part of his plans for the completion of the conquest of Ireland. Each lord president was both a military leader and a civil administrator. While he was empowered to exercise martial law if necessary, his main duty was to expand and administer the common law through a prerogative jurisdiction. He had commissions to hear and determine both civil and criminal cases.

The proposal for the presidency in Munster was a factor in the revolt of James Fitzmaurice Fitzgerald in 1569, and its introduction in 1570 contributed to the subsequent Desmond rebellion of 1579–83. The subsequent plantation scheme led, in turn, to further revolt in the later 1590s. This prolonged period of intense warfare, conquest and plantation placed undue emphasis from the beginning on the military and repressive character of the presidency that lasted until the end of the Tudor period. It was only in the early seventeenth century that the presidency of Munster finally began to function as the administrative and legal entity that had originally been intended. Very few records of these administrations have survived. The

registrars of the councils in Connacht and the north of England have all been lost, while only two for Wales are extant. The existence of the Munster Council book covering the first quarter of the seventeenth century is therefore particularly valuable.

The manuscript, which consists of 207 folios, was originally a blank, ready-bound book, probably produced in London. Based on internal evidence, the editor dates the earliest entry to May 1599 – though due to rebinding in the nineteenth century this is now folio 139 – while the final entry was made in June 1649. However, most of the documents date to the period 1601–24. It was presumably taken to England when the presidency was abolished during the Cromwellian era, as, by 1685, it had come into the possession of the bishop of Worcester, being listed in a catalogue of his library compiled that year. After his death, it was bought for the Robert Harley library, and came, with that collection, to the British Museum in 1753, where it is now catalogued as BL Harleian MS 697.

The documents meticulously transcribed here are varied, reflecting the different aspects of the council's role in this period. There are valuable records of the judicial functions of the council – mostly in English, though material relating to the assizes and sessions of gaol delivery was always in Latin. Significant information is provided on the personnel, organisation and functioning of the provincial administration. The councillors, who were appointed by the lord deputy, were – not surprisingly – almost all New English, with the bishops apparently playing a significant role. There are many proclamations, legal instructions, agreements and protections. The formal instructions given to the successive lords president shed much light both on the problems of the province as perceived by central government and how it was hoped the system might remedy them. Such insights are further illuminated by the correspondence between the council and both the government in Dublin and the Privy Council in London. There is frequent mention, for example, of Irish interpreters in the court, and the lack of Irish-speaking Church of Ireland clergy is regularly lamented.

Apart from its direct relevance to the working of the council, the material provides many and multifaceted insights into the wider world of early seventeenth-century Munster. It is clear, for example, that there was particular concern about the administration of the towns of the province, while the problem of piracy on the south-west coast was a perennial source of worry. There were attempts to lessen the large number of ale houses and regulate their operation, while the necessity for the erection of strong hedges and ditches in the countryside is emphasised. While there were frequent proclamations issued against Catholic priests and friars – with orders to close Mass houses and prevent large gatherings at holy wells or in remote areas, where money was collected for the clergy – evidence from other sources suggests that these were not generally implemented.

The availability in printed form – through the exemplary scholarly skills of the editor and the support of the Irish Manuscripts Commission – of this varied and revealing source material will be of great value not just for those interested in legal and administrative subjects but for all historians of the period.

LIAM IRWIN

*Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick*

FRANCO-IRISH MILITARY CONNECTIONS, 1590–1945. Edited by Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac and David Murphy. Pp 304. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2009. €55.

The connections of Ireland with continental Europe have long been the poor relation of Irish historiography. Thus, this collection of essays, which traces Franco-Irish connections from early modern times to the Second World War, is in itself a commendable initiative. Spanning five centuries, the essays trace the evolution and persistence of military connections between Ireland and France. A central theme to emerge is the creation of a tradition,