

especially the contested issue of the numbers massacred) in a less polemical fashion. Chapter 3 offers a detailed examination of attempts during the mid-nineteenth century to provide scholarly accounts of the rebellion and of the rancorous rows between ‘eminent Victorians’ (J. P. Prendergast, J. A. Froude, W. E. H. Lecky and Mary Hickson). Gibney completes his historiographical narrative with a review of the pioneering studies written over the last fifty years by Walter Love, Aidan Clarke, Nicholas Canny and others.

In short, this volume represents an excellent and accessible introduction to the historical literature surrounding 1641. It also reflects the renewed scholarly interest that the online publication of the depositions has helped to kindle. For example, a new generation of scholars offer fresh perspectives on the insurrection in *The 1641 depositions and the Irish rebellion* (London, 2012), which has been edited by Eamon Darcy, Annaleigh Margey and Elaine Murphy, who were researchers on the depositions project. Another volume – *Ireland, 1641: contexts and reactions* (Manchester, 2013), edited by Micheál Ó Siochrú and myself – offers some broader chronological comparisons and situates the events of 1641 in wider British, European and Atlantic contexts. Other recent research, such as Eamon Darcy’s *The Irish rebellion of 1641 and the wars of the three kingdoms* (London, 2013), complements Gibney’s volume by recovering the construction of the initial memory of the rebellion.

Throughout his book Gibney explores the importance of 1641 to contemporary Ireland and teases out the sensitivities surrounding memory and commemoration. The book opens with an account of the 2010 launch in the Long Room at Trinity of an exhibition about the Irish rebellion by Mary McAleese, then president of Ireland, and Ian Paisley, ‘the epitome of an unyielding Protestant loyalism’ (p. 3). McAleese spoke passionately of the importance of acknowledging our shared and contested past without being bound by it. Paisley did likewise. It was heartening, as Gibney notes, to see our political leaders embrace with such enthusiasm a period in our history that until relatively recently polarised communities along sectarian lines. As the events of 1641 now pass from memory into history, we are provided with an opportunity to approach the past differently, to ask new questions and offer fresh interpretations. *The shadow of a year* forms part of this dialogue.

JANE OHYLMMEYER

*School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin*

THE MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM MINISTERS’ MEETING 1654–8. Edited by Mark S. Sweetnam. Pp 190. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2012. €50.

This volume contains a full transcription of the manuscript minutes of the Antrim Meeting from January 1654 to May 1658, albeit with unavoidable gaps between November 1654 and January 1655, and also between April and November 1657. It is not only the oldest record of the business conducted at the Ulster Meetings but one of the oldest extant sources relating to ‘the history of Irish Presbyterianism’ (p. 9).

Held in a period of relative stability for the Presbyterian community in Ireland, the Antrim Meeting was attended by elders and ministers who formed the core of its leadership at the time. Sweetnam argues that the Meeting was ‘a sort of halfway house, an intermediate body between the local ministers and sessions, and the presbytery that covered all of Ulster’ (p. 14). The minutes show that the Meeting dealt with moral issues in its capacity as a church court, such as sexual sin (predominantly in the form of fornication and adultery), slander, and drunkenness, which collectively provide us with a snapshot of the lives and experiences of ‘ordinary’ Presbyterians, namely ‘eavesdropping servants, adulterous couples, scolding women, and slanderous men’ (p. 38). Moreover, by virtue of their discussion of ministerial supply and training, pastoral care and preaching,

the minutes provide 'a coherent and stable identity for the Presbyterians of the north-east of Ireland', who were in essence 'strangers in a strange land' (p. 38). The book also provides insight into the Church's broader external relations with their confessional counterparts in Scotland and with the indigenous Catholic-Irish population. Furthermore, the Presbyterian church's wariness of the Cromwellian administration in Dublin is hinted at by the fact that it is barely mentioned in the minutes and by the Meeting's handling of certain controversial issues such as the observance of state fasts.

The editorial decisions taken have been on balance both sensible and warranted. First of all, a well-written, lengthy introduction discusses the significance of the main themes of the minutes (see above), as well as providing a concise overview of the early years of the Presbyterian church in Ireland. Furthermore, apart from silently expanded contractions to a few words, the spelling and punctuation of the original manuscript have been retained, and thus the integrity of the source preserved. Furthermore, where damage has made it difficult or impossible to read the text this has been clearly indicated by the editor. Although the inclusion of some images of the original manuscript (apart from those on the dust cover) would have been welcome, in order to give those who have not used it before at least some indication of its 'look and feel', though this would, presumably, have raised publication costs. There is also an excellent glossary of archaic terms and place-names to aid the non-specialist. The main index however would have benefited from the inclusion of subjects and place-names as well as personal names, but these omissions are to a certain extent mitigated by the inclusion of the manuscript's original marginal notes. A map giving the location of a few of the places mentioned in the minutes has also been provided but this could have been more detailed and perhaps more aesthetically pleasing.

The minutes of the Antrim Meeting are an extremely rare and important document and provide a fascinating insight into the religious, social and cultural life of the Ulster-Scots diaspora in the north of Ireland in the 1650s. Furthermore, given the genealogical and geographical data they contain, this book will not only be of use and interest to academics and students but to family and local historians. The fact that the survival of documents such as these, even in institutional settings, is not always guaranteed for the use of future generations makes their publications all the more necessary and valuable.

ANDREW SNEDDON

*School of English and History, University of Ulster*

GENDER AND MEDICINE IN IRELAND, 1700–1950. Edited by Margaret H. Preston and Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh. Pp I, xviii, 315. New York: Syracuse University Press. 2012. £33.95, €39.95.

*Gender and medicine in Ireland* is an ambitious collection of thirteen articles exploring Irish medical and social history over a broad 250-year period. Two of the articles, Pauline Prior's 'Gender and criminal lunacy in nineteenth-century Ireland' and Oonagh Walsh's 'Cure or custody' consider attitudes towards, and treatment of, mental health. Women's experiences of disease and ill-health are explored by Greta Jones in 'Women and tuberculosis in Ireland' and Elizabeth Malcolm's 'Between habitual drunkards and alcoholics'. Issues surrounding the emergence and development of coherent medical services is considered by James Kelly in 'I was glad to be rid of it', Philomena Gorey's 'Managing midwifery in Dublin' and Ciara Breathnach's 'Lady Dudley's district nursing scheme'. There are three chapters on venereal disease: 'Prophylactics and prejudice' by Leanne McCormick, 'The wages of sin is death' by Laurence Geary and 'A probable source of infection' by Susannah Riordan. Cormac Ó Gráda looks at infant and child mortality in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century and Mel Cousins considers