

in Walter's attitude to his Norman and Irish lands. During the early years of the minority of Henry III, Walter was able to compensate himself for the attacks on his Irish estates carried out by the justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Marisco, by exploiting his position as sheriff of Herefordshire to defraud the crown and rebuild his castles on the Welsh march.

There are a few loose ends. Hugh de Lacy II, first earl of Ulster, comes in and out of focus, and there is scope for a separate account of Anglo–Irish–French relations in the first half of the thirteenth century built around the career and ambitions of this fascinating man. Dr Veach argues convincingly that kings depended for their power on lords such as the de Lacys, but does not pursue the logic of this case to the next level. He mentions more than once the independent character of the settler community of Meath, but greater attention might have been paid to the nature of the relationship between the lords of the liberty of Meath and their greatest tenants. More might also have been said about the economic condition of the liberty, since it was their wealth which ultimately bestowed power upon the Lacys.

This is Dr Veach's first book, and he cannot be expected to have covered in it everything that might be said about his subject. *Lordship in four realms* is a notable debut, and it is not only historians of medieval Ireland who will look forward to the work that is to follow.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SIR FREDERICK HAMILTON, 1590–1647: 'THE BRAGGER'. By Dominic Rooney. Pp xviii, 267, illus. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2013. €55 hardback; €24.95 paperback.

Sir Frederick Hamilton, known during his own life as 'The Bragger', whilst never dominating events other than in his own locality, played a part, sometimes even an important part, in many of the events that shaped Irish, British, and indeed even European history in the seventeenth century. Coming from a historically prestigious noble family in Scotland, Sir Frederick spent time at court in London, before raising a regiment to serve in the Swedish forces of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany. During this time, he experienced soldiering in the most advanced theatre of operations and appears to have absorbed the religious bitterness associated with that conflict. Both before and after this time abroad, he worked hard to expand his estates and did more than most settlers in both moving his family to Ireland and in making significant improvements to the estates, as well as to the industrial and urban development of Manorhamilton. The military experience garnered in Germany meant that his enlarged holding in north Leitrim was to become a Protestant stronghold in north Connaught in the wars of the 1640s. This experience also meant that his behaviour was regarded by many as vicious, even by the standards of the times. Certainly the folk memory, as described in the final chapter, would suggest that his actions in the 1640s were amongst the worst excesses of the times. Like many, Hamilton was ultimately left embittered and disappointed by the failure of political authorities to acknowledge his efforts and to reward them properly.

As the title indicates, this work is, in many respects, about the times as much as it is about the man. Many of the chapters, dealing with the various phases of Hamilton's life, set a scene in which he played a part, and so for example we get thorough details of the theatres of German warfare in which he operated in addition to the specific rôle that he undertook. The book skilfully weaves these two threads together so we are left with a strong understanding of Hamilton and the world in which he operated. It largely follows a chronological timeline taking the reader from a Scotland before Hamilton's birth, to London where he served in the royal household. Because of his relative importance to the various episodes he found himself involved in, chapters on Hamilton in Ireland are

amongst the most insightful. Chapters dealing with Hamilton's development of his estates and the increase in his acreage along with his relations with civil and military authority before the outbreak of hostilities in Ireland are most interesting. Detailed chapters covering his war record and his subsequent disappointments in Germany and in Ireland are impressive in their detail. A final chapter dealing with his death and what became of his family and estates, along with his posthumous reputation is a neat epilogue. In addition to the reproductions of the usual royal portraits, this book has some excellent colour photographs of relevant locations and portraits of the main protagonists, along with some reasonably useful maps.

There are minor, yet avoidable, aspects of this book that reduce its appeal. In addition to minor errors such the origins and privileges of the baronets (p. 47), there are no lists of contents of illustrations or of maps, in one of which both Inverness and Auldearn appear to be placed twenty miles too far to the east (p. 202). The map of Irish counties and plantations also leaves a little to be desired (p. 17). Of greater concern is the source material for the central chapters (cc. 6, 7), where the author is overly reliant on Hamilton's (an acknowledged bragger) own reflections on his rôle in the war in the northwest and archaic histories, such as Carte's. At the same time, for example, Sir Anthony Hart's essay on Mervin is ignored, as are several excellent, if still unpublished, Ph.D. theses on the region in the 1640s by Kevin Forkan, Aoife Duignan, and Charlene McCoy.

Nevertheless, Rooney's contribution is a worthwhile and welcome building block to a more complete understanding of Sir Frederick Hamilton, but also to the wars and planter society in the northwest. He has an understanding of the man and his times and does an admirable job in encapsulating these.

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SPORT IN IRELAND, 1600–1840. By James Kelly. Pp 384. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2014. €39.95.

Through a spate of publications over the past couple of decades, James Kelly has contributed massively to the political, legal and administrative histories of what he calls, 'late early modern Ireland' (roughly between 1660 and 1850). Alongside these pioneering pieces, he has been lighting up shadowy areas of the cultural, medical, linguistic and social landscapes. It is the latter endeavour that he now continues. In tackling organised sport, he concentrates on horse-racing, hunting, hurling and other games with stick and ball, cock-fighting, pugilism, and a number of less popular or more elusive activities.

Using methods that have yielded handsome dividends in his earlier studies, he utilizes the reports and advertisements printed in the newspapers. These are supplemented from correspondence and commentaries, both printed and in manuscript. The result is the fullest account available of the selected activities. Their varying fortunes are charted, with some such as throwing at cocks and cock-fighting declining into extinction. Others, notably the equestrian sports, flourished. In addition to invaluable information about the locations, spread and evolution of the sundry diversions, Professor Kelly advances several explanations for the divergent histories. In particular, he argues that public attitudes determined success or failure. He postulates an increasing influence of respectability amongst those who formed opinion and exercised authority, which turned them against sports that were deemed unruly, uncivilized and inhuman. The press, those entrusted with civic responsibilities, eager to police their towns and clear them of disorderly elements, and the clergy from all denominations, condemned the pastimes.

Why this shift should have occurred and gained momentum will be pondered by others. Alarm at events within and beyond Ireland, in which innocuous pleasure-seekers could be