

THE IRISH REBELLION OF 1641 AND THE WARS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS. By Eamon Darcy. Pp xiii, 212. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Royal Historical Society, Studies in History; published by the Boydell Press. 2013. £50.

IRELAND AND THE WAR AT SEA, 1641–1653. By Elaine Murphy. Pp xiii, 253. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Royal Historical Society, Studies in History; published by the Boydell Press. 2012. £50.

The political and military analysis of the 1640s provided a decade or more ago by Robert Armstrong, Pádraig Lenihan, Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, Micheál Ó Siochrú and others is now being complemented, expanded, and on occasion significantly modified, by a new generation of scholars. These two books demonstrate how intensive archival research can still reveal new and important insights into this important period.

The starting point of Eamon Darcy's study of the use and abuse of the 'depositions' (made by Protestant settlers evicted and often injured in the immediate aftermath of the 1641 rebellion) is the innate polarisation of Irish society before 1641. Despite the outward appearance of peaceful, if not exactly harmonious, coexistence between the different groups in Ireland, there was in reality only 'an uneasy equilibrium' (p. 7), with both ethnic and religious tensions lying just beneath the surface of what was an intrinsically violent and deeply divided society. Having set the scene, Darcy then examines the depositions themselves in a number of different contexts, each with its own chapter. The first of these is how violence was mediated and understood within a colonial society, in which settlers adopted a 'rhetoric of civility' (p. 24) to justify their own response to native resistance, as in Jamestown in 1622. The depositions can be read in a similar way, with the atrocities of the Irish rebels coming in stark contrast with the civility of English rule in the previous decades, and thus providing a justification for violent revenge by the colonial authorities.

The next chapter focuses on the intentions of the 1641 rebels themselves. Rejecting the notion of a 'two-tier' rising, made up of a legitimate political protest by the upper classes and a violent social upheaval by the lower orders, Darcy demonstrates how violence was encouraged, even managed, to ensure widespread support throughout Ireland and to dissuade the settlers from retaliating in kind. The success of this 'strategic and tactical' (p. 64) approach can be seen in the deposition evidence, which 'captures the trauma of the settler population and the effectiveness of these gruesome displays of violence' (p. 68). The third chapter assesses the use of the deposition material by the authorities in Ireland and England. While the rebels were keen to play down the religious motives behind the rising (in public, at least), the lords justices in Dublin immediately sought to portray it as a Catholic rebellion, which aimed to extirpate Protestantism as well as Protestants. This was the approach followed by Dr Henry Jones's printed edition of the edited highlights of the depositions, and by Sir John Temple's notorious *Irish rebellion* of 1646.

Although the emphasis of these and other publications varied according to the political situation in England, the theme of anti-Protestantism continued, in part because it imposed a moral duty on the English parliament to reconquer Ireland as soon as possible. In chapter four, Darcy returns to the theme of rebellion and violence: he compares the reported events in 1641 with those in Germany during the Thirty Years War, the Savoy massacre of 1655 and the American atrocities of 1656. Similar patterns emerge in each case. He concludes that 'reports on the 1641 rebellion were only exceptional in the scale of what was published, not in their context' (p. 130). The final chapter explores how the different sides contested the Irish rebellion. For the Protestants, the depositions were used to create the myth of an appalling sectarian atrocity that must be revenged, and in turn this justified the wholesale confiscation of Catholic estates in later decades and the establishment of the Ascendancy. The Catholic version was naturally rather different, as the leaders of the Confederation at Kilkenny sought to play down talk of a massacre, to discredit the depositions as evidence and to emphasise that they were the victims of brutality at the hands of the Dublin authorities. They also tended to downplay the religious motives behind the uprising. This latter view, Darcy argues, is curiously similar to that of modern

historians, who, 'in a desire to move away from a sectarian interpretation of the rebellion' have 'stressed the social, economic and political grievances of the Irish rebels' (p. 173).

In general, this is a dense and closely argued book that subjects the 1641 rebellion, and the depositions in particular, to a new level of scrutiny. The nuanced reading of different aspects of print culture, the judicious comparison with other atrocities in Europe and the Americas, and the sensitivity towards the victims – whose trauma was not necessarily dependent on direct experience of violence – provide important correctives to earlier accounts of the period. The book is not, however, without its flaws. That the 1630s was a period of endemic violence is taken as read, rather than supported by evidence. The account of events that preceded the rebellion in 1641 is thin, and the 'two-tier' theory of the rising is dismissed out of hand rather than disproved. A section dealing with the extensive historiography would have been useful in this respect. Equally problematic is the structure of the book, which reads like a series of individual essays, rather than a coherent argument – and at times appears to be trying to answer too many questions at once. Perhaps a longer conclusion, returning to the depositions themselves, would have overcome this problem.

Elaine Murphy's study of Irish naval history between 1641 and 1653 may not have the ambition of Darcy's book, but it also avoids its drawbacks. This is a tight, concise, and very satisfying book that explores the naval aspect of the Irish wars in the minutest of detail, and more than fulfils the stated aim, to 'examine the naval situation in Ireland in its entirety' (p. 8). Murphy's use of the voluminous, and largely uncatalogued, papers of the High Court of Admiralty at Kew, is particularly impressive. Much of this information is provided for other researches in the form of extensive appendices, identifying naval ships and prizes, owners and losses. The main part of the book divides in two. The first four chapters form a narrative account of different stages in the war at sea. At the outbreak of the rebellion the naval forces on both sides were insignificant, and although the English authorities used ships to relieve besieged Drogheda, Duncannon and Limerick Castle, they failed to prevent the Catholic Irish from establishing strong naval centres, especially at Wexford. The civil war in England forced the redeployment of parliamentary ships from the Irish Sea, and when the cessation of arms was signed in 1643 there was no opposition to the transport of thousands of Irish royalists to England. The tide began to turn in 1644, with the defection of Lord Inchiquin and the delivery of the Munster ports to parliament, while naval power helped to prevent the capture of Youghal in 1645. The defeat of the king's army at Naseby brought a collapse of the royalist naval effort, and allowed parliament to blockade Dublin and put more pressure on other Irish ports. The end of the English Civil War in 1646 coincided with an upsurge in naval activity in Irish waters, as privateers and parliamentary frigates both increased their operations. The second civil war, with the defection of part of the English fleet to the king, gave the Irish ships an advantage, and a strong Confederate navy had emerged by the end of 1648, working with royalist ships under Prince Rupert. A renewed parliamentary fleet trapped Rupert in Kinsale in 1649, and prevented interference with the Cromwellian invasion. With naval support, Cromwell proceeded to capture Wexford, and other ports soon followed, bringing an effective end to the naval war by the summer of 1650.

The final three chapters are thematic. In her assessment of the parliamentary naval effort, Murphy identifies the number and type of ships used, and explores the deployment of armed merchant vessels, some owned by leading politicians. Involvement in naval warfare could be lucrative, as ships were hired to the government, and prizes brought substantial rewards. The overall impact on Irish trade was slight, however, and it was only the blockading of ports that could disrupt the Confederate economy. The Confederate naval effort is examined in the next chapter. The number and type of the ships available varied widely, but this irregular navy was very effective, especially at taking prizes. These provided considerable wealth for the home ports and 'a substantial, if erratic, source of income' (p. 114) for the Confederate government. The final chapter addresses the problematic question of how naval warfare was actually conducted. There were no set-

piece naval battles, as the sides were ill-matched. In general, the Irish frigates – influenced by the designs of Dunkirk pirates – could outsail English naval vessels, but they could not outgun them, so chases and subterfuge prevailed. Parliament brought the fight to the enemy in 1646–7, when it launched its own frigates. Merchant ships were especially vulnerable to raiders, but again fights were rare, as prizes were more valuable if taken undamaged. Irish tactics encouraged English ships to travel in convoys, but this tactic could backfire, allowing large numbers of ships to be taken at once. Inevitably, in what was essentially a war of seizing and holding territory, naval warfare had a supporting role in Ireland. But it had the potential to be much more. Only a fire in the galley prevented Captain Thomas Plunkett from catching the *San Pietro*, and with it Cardinal Rinuccini, en route to Ireland in 1645. And if Rupert's ships had managed to escape from Kinsale, and join with the strong force of Irish frigates operating out of Wexford and Waterford, the Cromwellian invasion of 1649 might have been disrupted, if not prevented altogether.

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THE MIRACULOUS CONFORMIST: VALENTINE GREATRAKES, THE BODY POLITIC, AND THE POLITICS OF HEALING IN RESTORATION BRITAIN. Peter Elmer. Pp xiii, 279. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2013. £65.

Peter Elmer has written the first book-length biography of Valentine Greatrakes, an Irishman who briefly secured widespread attention in 1666 for his reputation as a healer of the sick. Deserving much more than the dismissive line or two he typically garners, Elmer argues that Greatrakes offered his contemporaries 'a rebuke and a pattern' (p. 95) for post-Restoration life.

Greatrakes began life as the son of a landed gentleman in Ireland but spent part of his youth exiled with members of his mother's family in Devonshire. His lands were alienated and he returned to Ireland in 1647 or 1648 with high hopes and little else. A Royalist by background and sentiment, he might have been expected to resist the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland, but instead he became an active supporter and saw army service. The strategy yielded immediate benefits since it was instrumental in securing the return of his family estates. Prosperity from land deals in the later 1650s, though, was succeeded by uncertainty with the Restoration and the intended land settlement in Ireland: would the family estate be lost again?

The early 1660s saw an additional Greatrakes persona emerge when he began to acquire a reputation as a healer. His practice was to touch or stroke sufferers for a range of ailments, including scrofula (which historically was supposed only to yield to the 'touch' of a monarch). Supporters alluded to his personal physical attributes as much as to his medical record, since they ascribed significance to his demeanour and even to his bodily smell. His activities raised a minor storm in Ireland and an order to desist from church authorities in Dublin. However, instead of withdrawing Greatrakes went on the road: he spent January to May 1666 in England where he generated some 'cures' and enormous public interest.

Greatrakes was not a quack in the classic sense of the term, in that he did not peddle an infallible cure and did not use his supposed healing abilities for financial gain. There were people he refused to treat, who he thought could not be helped by his interventions. He stopped short of claiming, or endorsing the claims of others, that his cures were outright miracles. Instead he developed a nosology that related physical complaints to spiritual malaise and likened healing to exorcism. Greatrakes's notoriety declined with his return to Ireland in 1666 but he continued to stroke in both England and Ireland until the end of his life. The confirmation of his family's estates, also and not entirely coincidentally in