

Ireland. Irish bloodstock came to be valued highly, but logistical obstacles meant that steeds were rarely transported to race in both islands. Ball-games and, to a lesser extent, horse-racing and cock-fights fostered a sense – and perhaps pride – in belonging to a parish, barony, county or region. Women, other than as onlookers, seldom participated, and yet, riding, boating, fishing, archery and sea-bathing were all recommended as appropriate exercise. Similarly, theories about health and morals recognised that physical exertion – other than onanism – benefited children. Inevitably they played, but were the results sports or just games?

Professor Kelly has proposed and documented cultural and behavioural developments with implications which reach far beyond the sporting world. The ripples from the pebbles that he has tossed into the historiographical pond are set to reach unexpected shores.

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GENERAL PERCY KIRKE AND THE LATER STUART ARMY. By John Childs. Pp 272. London & New York: Bloomsbury. 2014. £65.

Childs does not try to fully rehabilitate Lieutenant General Percy Kirke (d.1691) who was widely seen as a corrupt and treacherous thug. He can, however, apply that thorough understanding of late seventeenth century armies and warfare evident in his many publications to set Kirke's reputation firmly in the context of an institution where getting on depended on 'venality, seniority, dead men's shoes, sponsorship and, occasionally, merit' (p. 11).

Charles II's Portuguese queen had endowed him with the beleaguered outpost of Tangier which Kirke commanded as its last governor before the one tasked with evacuating the colony. Pepys, chief-of-staff of the 1683 evacuation expedition took against Kirke for his 'tyranny and vice' but Childs essays some 'hesitant mitigation' (p. 61). Yes, Kirke exploited his position to extort kickbacks and perpetrate frauds and took as a principal mistress the wife of one of his junior officers and imposed this lady's brother, 'who will drink and talk bawdily' (p. 57), on his colony as officiating clergyman. But the author is sceptical of tales that Kirke, variously, got his wife's sister or a 'black wench' with child or had sex with another in the market-place. Much of this hearsay comes from the pen of Pepys who is a 'recently scrubbed pot calling the kettle black' (p. 52). Here as elsewhere, the exposition is enlivened by dryly witty pen portraits.

Kirke commanded the infantry of the left wing at the Battle of Sedgemoor (1685) and afterwards, Kirke was ordered to publicly hang fifty of the 'most notorious rebels'. He obeyed his orders without demur and, characteristically, set up a profitable sideline in selling bogus pardons. Childs convincingly demolishes the caricature of a bloodthirsty monster and uncovers a black legend invented by Whig hacks like Dunton, and floridly perpetuated by Kennet, Burnet, Hume and Macaulay. He scorns as folkloric tropes stories like that of the maiden who slept with Kirke in order to save her brother's life only to find that the brute took both her honour and her brother's life.

So, was Kirke corrupt? Yes, but corruption implies some unambiguous standard of probity. Was he brutal? Not especially. But was he treacherous? Suspicions that Kirke was a half-hearted Williamite clung after he was charged with relieving Derry. In mid-June 1689 he shied away from trying to break the boom across the Foyle and sailed around to Lough Swilly. Childs cuts through the clutter of misinformed speculation to demonstrate that a plaintive letter from the governors of the city five weeks later gave undeniable evidence that their city was hard-pressed and finally spurred him to action. On 28 July the crew of the *Mountjoy's* longboat easily cut through the boom, making Kirke's caution over the previous weeks seem excessive. Childs conveys the difficulties facing Kirke who

brought less than 2,000 men, while the Irish had 6–7,000 dug in around the city. Moreover, he expected reinforcements, his seamen advised that the boom was strong and, crucially, he ‘heard what he wanted to hear’ (p. 151) that the city was not desperately short of provisions. Childs almost convinces the reader that Kirke’s conduct was ‘reasonable, sensible, judicious [and] successful’ (p. 167). I wonder? There were about 7,000 men fit to fight inside Derry when he first sailed into view and a more enterprising commander would have tried harder to co-ordinate action with them against the outnumbered Jacobites.

This was the apogee of his career. In April and May 1691 he and two other British generals were posted out of Ireland. Kirke was ‘not as bad’ (p. 184) as the other two, admitted the lords justices, but he had dragged his feet once too often that winter. Five months later Kirke contracted camp fever at Ninove in the Spanish Netherlands and died. The book ends at that point, as abruptly as his life: conclusions are not drawn or lessons imparted.

After the author has carefully peeled away the layers of vituperation one is left with a portrait that lacks the subject’s voice, such is the paucity of sources. One of the few reported conversations took place in Tangier when Kirke admitted in a matter-of-fact way to his successor that ‘I have a wife too and lie with other women’. The latter cautioned Kirke not to be so brazen. ‘My Lord’, replied Kirke, ‘I don’t pretend to be a saint.’

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VERSE TRAVESTY IN RESTORATION IRELAND: ‘PURGATORIUM HIBERNICUM’ (NLI MS 470) AND ‘THE FINGALLIAN TRAVESTY’ (BL, SLOANE MS 900). Edited by Andrew Carpenter. Pp xvi, 240. Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission. 2013. €30.

Three sets of verses which travestied a Latin original, the sixth book of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, are known from Ireland in the second half of the seventeenth century. Two exist only in manuscripts; the third, and probably latest, was published as *The Irish hudibras* in 1689. A succession of scholars, interested in the hybrid language that borrowed from Irish and English and in the writing and reading of poetry in later seventeenth-century Ireland, have exploited the two, hitherto unpublished, poems. Extracts from the earlier and longer were included in Andrew Carpenter’s pioneering anthology of verse in English from Tudor and Stuart Ireland. Now, Professor Carpenter has edited *Purgatorium Hibernicum* (c.1670) and *The Fingallian travesty* (1686). Following the restrictions imposed by the Irish Manuscripts Commission, his introductions are brief and confined chiefly to textual matters. For more detailed discussion of the works and the numerous problems that they pose, the interested must turn to essays by Carpenter himself and others including Alan Bliss, Raymond Gillespie, Deana Rankin and David Hayton, all of which are included in the helpful bibliography.

Professor Carpenter has inherited and brought to completion a project initiated by two former colleagues of his: Alan Bliss and Alan Harrison. The edition amounts to much more than an act of piety, although it is that as well. Bliss and Harrison had recognised the importance of the two poems, not just because of the luck of their survival. The rarity of Irish examples of a genre which had spread quickly from France to England invests them with value for scholars. On the one hand, the verses suggested the ease and speed with which literary fashions could cross the Irish Sea. At the same time, the works can be quarried by students of the languages spoken and written in early-modern Ireland, particularly in the north-Dublin district of Fingal. Also, the travesties abound in evidence of attitudes and behaviour. The descent of Aeneas into the underworld is transposed into the encounter of an Irish prince (Nees) with a subterranean world below Patrick’s