

contextualisation. Its narrative is punctuated with anecdotal bagatelles, which are individually interesting but contribute to the diffuse feel of the book as a whole. With its stunning colour photographs of wolves (although the black and white figures are for the most part poorly reproduced), the book is aimed more at a general readership, and as a compendium of information it is certain to attract widespread interest. Whilst it frustratingly falls short of significantly furthering our understanding of the rise and fall of the Irish wolf population in the past, it will hopefully provide inspiration for more detailed and integrated studies.

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A EUROPEAN FRONTIER ELITE: THE NOBILITY OF THE ENGLISH PALE IN TUDOR IRELAND, 1496–1566. By Gerald Power. Pp 215. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag. 2012. €29.50.

The period of intensified English conquest in Ireland over the Tudor period saw the medieval colonial community transformed. Newly arriving administrators, soldiers, servitors and settlers heralded increasingly aggressive policies of militarised conquest. The arrival of this increasingly powerful New English colonial grouping, particularly prominent in the Elizabethan period, heralded the decline of the Old English colonial community, identified as such to distinguish these descendants of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman conquest from the newly-arriving colonial class. Often blamed for the medieval conquest's failures, the Old English found themselves displaced from influential administrative, conciliar, judicial and military positions. Struggling against their deteriorating status, many insisted upon their loyalty, even as they engaged in opposition that sometimes led to their imprisonment, as happened when a number of the Old English resisted Sir Henry Sidney's economic policies in the late 1570s, though a few would enter into open rebellion, as James Eustace, Viscount Baltinglass, did in 1580. Not surprisingly, given Old English experience in the Elizabethan period, attention to this community has tended to focus either on the later Tudor period or on individual magnates, such as the earls of Kildare and Ormond. Gerald Power here offers a ground-breaking study of the lesser Old English nobility of the Pale in the early Tudor period, providing essential background to their decline.

Power's study is premised on two critical and, as he argues, intertwined assertions: firstly, the fundamental importance of the nobility as a lens through which to consider developing Tudor imperialism in Ireland as well as the developing Tudor state, no less than the fundamental importance of the nobility as a lens through which to appreciate European developments in this period more broadly. His first chapter therefore provides a helpful comparative overview of the nobility in Poland, the Netherlands and Scotland which demonstrates that Ireland was not unique in witnessing noble–state tension in a period of rapid change across Europe. In Ireland, however, the desire to secure and extend colonial control provided the specific context for state–noble tension. Application of the nobility as a lens through which to view developments comes into play as Power masterfully contextualises the experience of the lesser Old English nobility in the early Tudor period within many of the major milestones familiar to students and scholars, such as the Kildare Rebellion or vacillation between policies of conciliation and conquest in its aftermath. Importantly, Power's consideration of these events by expanding on Old English experience and involvement in them adds substantially to our understanding of this period.

The second premise central to Power's assessment of the early Tudor lesser nobility of the Pale is his assertion of their function as service nobility. This function was the basis for identity and thus critically, Power argues, their importance to the state. This was

particularly so in the transformed political environment following the Kildare rebellion, when the lesser nobility's relationship to the state, rather than this powerful family, became ever more essential to their security. Lord Leonard Grey was sent as viceroy following the rebellion and, as Power's excellently detailed study of Grey's relationship to the lesser nobility demonstrates, Grey not only antagonised Gaelic Ireland, he substantially undermined the lesser peers as well, blaming them for the failures of his administration in the short-term and as a 'hindrance to effective English rule in Ireland' more generally (p. 88).

Power demonstrates, however, that Old English decline was by no means inevitable at this point and carefully outlines the important roles they would continue to play into the early 1560s, in dealings with Shane O'Neill, for instance. Nonetheless, under the earl of Sussex as viceroy it became increasingly difficult to maintain their offices, influence and position as service nobility. Their deteriorating position was becoming apparent as was their emerging opposition to policies such as the cess, a policy over which more strident opposition would emerge in the 1570s. Nobles' dependence on their position as service nobility, Power argues, underscored their vulnerability in the midst of change and rendered the impact of their displacement all the more profound.

Power is well-versed in the relevant primary and secondary sources. His thoughtful and detailed analysis of archival material such as state papers and reform treatises creates a significantly more detailed picture of the Old English Pale nobility in this period than exists to date, as well as a cogent and insightful assessment of early Tudor developments in Ireland. He is equally confident and assertive in using this presentation to challenge standing assessments of developments by senior scholars, challenges that stand to spark renewed debate on key questions such as identity formation and its relationship to national identity in this period.

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THE CASE OF THE CRAUGHWELL PRISONERS DURING THE LAND WAR IN CO. GALWAY, 1879–85. By Pat Finnegan. Pp 152. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2012. € 13.

Studies on the Irish land war have largely dealt with the political and agrarian aspects, while neglecting or overlooking topics such as the role of the Fenian movement, the impact which the agitation had on the urban classes, or the growing levels of agrarian disorder and crime. Agrarian crime and lawlessness, in particular acts against property and people, became increasingly associated with the land war and a major concern for the Land League leadership and the authorities. Assassinations and attacks on property were concentrated on those areas in the Land League's original base in the west of Ireland such as the Lough Mask and south Galway regions which were described as 'murder triangles'. While the Lough Mask area gained worldwide attention because of the Maumtrasna, Huddy and Mountmorres murders, the eight assassinations carried out in the Craughwell, Ardrahan and Loughrea regions between 1881 and 1882 are not as well known. Pat Finnegan's study of the murder of Peter Doherty at Carrigan on 2 November 1881 and the subsequent trials and convictions form the basis of this work. Doherty's family had taken over the farm of an evicted tenant and was initially boycotted by the Land League. The government's response to such murders was to use informers and approvers, transfer trials to more favourable locations and pack the juries in order to secure guilty verdicts. Finnegan highlights the government's desperation to contain crime levels in south Galway and to secure convictions. While Myles Joyce and the Maumtrasna murders is the most notorious miscarriage of justice case during the land agitation, the framing of Patrick Finnegan, the grandfather of the author, and Michael Muldowney, a serving R.I.C.