

registrars of the councils in Connacht and the north of England have all been lost, while only two for Wales are extant. The existence of the Munster Council book covering the first quarter of the seventeenth century is therefore particularly valuable.

The manuscript, which consists of 207 folios, was originally a blank, ready-bound book, probably produced in London. Based on internal evidence, the editor dates the earliest entry to May 1599 – though due to rebinding in the nineteenth century this is now folio 139 – while the final entry was made in June 1649. However, most of the documents date to the period 1601–24. It was presumably taken to England when the presidency was abolished during the Cromwellian era, as, by 1685, it had come into the possession of the bishop of Worcester, being listed in a catalogue of his library compiled that year. After his death, it was bought for the Robert Harley library, and came, with that collection, to the British Museum in 1753, where it is now catalogued as BL Harleian MS 697.

The documents meticulously transcribed here are varied, reflecting the different aspects of the council's role in this period. There are valuable records of the judicial functions of the council – mostly in English, though material relating to the assizes and sessions of gaol delivery was always in Latin. Significant information is provided on the personnel, organisation and functioning of the provincial administration. The councillors, who were appointed by the lord deputy, were – not surprisingly – almost all New English, with the bishops apparently playing a significant role. There are many proclamations, legal instructions, agreements and protections. The formal instructions given to the successive lords president shed much light both on the problems of the province as perceived by central government and how it was hoped the system might remedy them. Such insights are further illuminated by the correspondence between the council and both the government in Dublin and the Privy Council in London. There is frequent mention, for example, of Irish interpreters in the court, and the lack of Irish-speaking Church of Ireland clergy is regularly lamented.

Apart from its direct relevance to the working of the council, the material provides many and multifaceted insights into the wider world of early seventeenth-century Munster. It is clear, for example, that there was particular concern about the administration of the towns of the province, while the problem of piracy on the south-west coast was a perennial source of worry. There were attempts to lessen the large number of ale houses and regulate their operation, while the necessity for the erection of strong hedges and ditches in the countryside is emphasised. While there were frequent proclamations issued against Catholic priests and friars – with orders to close Mass houses and prevent large gatherings at holy wells or in remote areas, where money was collected for the clergy – evidence from other sources suggests that these were not generally implemented.

The availability in printed form – through the exemplary scholarly skills of the editor and the support of the Irish Manuscripts Commission – of this varied and revealing source material will be of great value not just for those interested in legal and administrative subjects but for all historians of the period.

LIAM IRWIN

*Department of History, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick*

FRANCO-IRISH MILITARY CONNECTIONS, 1590–1945. Edited by Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac and David Murphy. Pp 304. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2009. €55.

The connections of Ireland with continental Europe have long been the poor relation of Irish historiography. Thus, this collection of essays, which traces Franco-Irish connections from early modern times to the Second World War, is in itself a commendable initiative. Spanning five centuries, the essays trace the evolution and persistence of military connections between Ireland and France. A central theme to emerge is the creation of a tradition,

or myth, of Irish military achievements abroad. More generally, the essays address the important question of the construction of Irish identity. As Nathalie Genet-Rouffiac and David Murphy assert in their introduction, 'for the Irish, their military identity was based on the concept of military service abroad' (p. 12). Nevertheless, and despite the efforts of the editors, the extent to which this collection succeeds in shedding light on the development of Irish identity more generally can be questioned.

Rightly, Genet-Rouffiac and Murphy choose in their title to use the term 'connections'. The alternative term, 'relations', is avoided as neither of the actors involved considered the Franco-Irish link from the same perspective. Relationships involve a certain degree of reciprocity, whereas this collection demonstrates how France mattered much more to Ireland than the reverse, despite the persistence of some French interest in Irish affairs until the early twentieth century, as the contribution of Jérôme aan de Wiel highlights. However, such interest was not a sustained phenomenon. Most of the essays, in particular those which consider the modern period, demonstrate how the significance of Franco-Irish connections fragmented over time.

The fourteen contributions are organised around three principal chronological periods. The first essays concentrate on the early modern period, with an unsurprising emphasis on the Wild Geese and the formation of the Irish Brigades. The second group of essays focuses on Europe's revolutionary period. The last essays cover the modern period. As one would expect, the first period is particularly well covered, its essays forming half the total number of contributions. Some interesting long-term patterns are identifiable. Genet-Rouffiac outlines the development of an Irish identity within the suffocating context of Saint-Germain's court, where the first generations of Irish, Scottish and English Jacobites found a refuge. 'The life of Thomas Lally', by Lavinia Greacen, explores the integration of those Jacobite soldiers within French society, while Patrick Clarke de Dromantin asserts the persistence of a Jacobite allegiance until the American War of Independence, based on the support of France 'wherever it would oppose English interests' (p. 126). Sylvie Kleinman's essay on Wolfe Tone's life and actions in France as a witness of and, less evidently, an actor in, the revolutionary wars represents one of the strongest contributions in the volume.

Arguably, the most original essays are those concerned with the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, this emerging field of research does not receive the attention it deserves – four essays only, concentrating on the Franco-Prussian War, the French secret services at the start of the twentieth century, and the two world wars. A long-standing imbalance exists in the study of Ireland and Europe. While the romantic appeal of the Wild Geese, and the more recent research of scholars such as Thomas O'Connor and Mary Ann Lyons on early modern Irish migrations, have focused attention on Irish-European relations in the early modern period, less attention is devoted to the wider ideological, cultural and political European context of modern Irish history. This is particularly true of the nineteenth century. The book does not sufficiently address this imbalance, partly as a result of its concentration on military connections but also due to its neglect of the influence and impact of these links on the formation of an Irish national identity. As a consequence, the emergence of an Irish military identity within Ireland itself is unexplored, with the exception of Janick Julienne's essay on Irish involvement in the 1870 Franco-Prussian War.

Overall, this book makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Irish connections with France and Europe, particularly for the early modern times, but provides a less satisfactory treatment of Franco-Irish relations after the revolutionary period. This is, in part, because there were fewer Franco-Irish military connections during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the lack of opportunities for such connections did not prevent the memory and myth of past Franco-Irish battlefields, such as Fontenoy, coming to form an important aspect of Irish nationalist imagery and rhetoric during this period. A history of the latter subject has yet to be written.

PIERRE RANGER

*School of History and Anthropology, Queen's University Belfast*