

Review article: Documenting Ireland in the age of the American and French Revolutions*

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These six handsomely produced volumes in two parts of three contain printed material from this crucial period in Irish history and provide an opportunity for reflection. The first part covers the ‘age’ of the American Revolution, running from 1760 through to 1789, while the second deals with the ramifications of the French Revolution until 1805, when Trafalgar more or less ended the invasion threat of Napoleon. These dates are defensible, though some might argue that mass support for Catholic emancipation in the 1820s and challenges to landlord interest in elections were the real revolution. The themes of the volumes engage with the wider historiographical debate on the period and the material helps illuminate these discussions without being directive. By example, patriotism and volunteering, two of the most important political phenomena of the age, feature substantially in the first volume, while the encroachment of politics out of doors is covered by the inclusion of the Whiteboy Act in the third volume.

Current historical thinking tends to view Volunteer corps as agents of politicization rendering patriot issues meaningful for people in general. Thomas Bartlett, for instance, writing a quarter of a century ago, regarded the process of militarization as being crucial to the spread of political awareness.¹ Following patterns in English historiography,² Padhraig Higgins concludes that Volunteering activities, like associating, petitioning, toasting, attending reviews, celebrating and selective buying drove popular politicization.³

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* IRELAND IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, 1760–1805. Edited by Harry T Dickinson. London and Vermont: Pickering and Chatto. 2012–13. Part I (in 3 vols). Pp 1200. Part II (in 3 vols). Pp 1248. £550 for 6 volume set.

¹ Thomas Bartlett, ‘Militarization and politicization in Ireland, 1780–1820’ in Louis Bergeron and Louis M. Cullen (eds), *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande* (Paris, 1988), pp 125–36; see also Breandán Mac Suibhne, ‘Whiskey, potatoes and paddies: volunteering and the construction of the Irish nation in north-west Ulster, 1778–1782’ in Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis (eds), *Crowds in Ireland, c.1720–1920* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp 45–82.

² Tim Harris (ed.), *The politics of the excluded, c.1500–1850* (New York, 2001).

³ Padhraig Higgins, *A nation of politicians: gender, patriotism and political culture in late eighteenth-century Ireland* (Madison, WN, 2012), p. 6; see also Vincent Morley,

Other recent research, however, challenges the automatic association between radicalism and Volunteering, emphasising that some Volunteers are better seen as part of the Protestant defence tradition and that there were, in places, personal and geographical links between Volunteers and the Irish Yeomanry.⁴

The first volume of part one opens with a crisp general introduction setting the factual context but mainly avoiding interpretations. Beginning in 1760 is a judicious editorial decision as the Seven Years War materially influenced conduct during the American War, highlighting Catholic manpower and, perhaps as one would expect from Dickinson who has written extensively about British loyalism, Catholic loyalty.⁵ Each individual insertion receives a short, informative introductory synopsis of its content and argument. The choice of material is apposite with a wide selection of useful pamphlets and statutes presented.⁶ Patriotism is well represented by five pamphlets by the patriot Charles Lucas, ‘the Wilkes of Ireland’ who had been performing a similar function to Wilkes by widening the constituency of patriotism since the late 1740s.⁷ Several of these pamphlets relate to Lucas’s candidature and victory in the 1760 Dublin election. Patriot issues feature in pamphlets such as that of 1770 which considers how the constitutional principles of parliaments were compromised by the Irish government’s ‘anti-constitutional’ claims over the augmentation of the army and the viceroy Lord Townshend’s

Irish opinion and the American Revolution, 1760–1783 (Cambridge, 2002); Stephen Small, *Political thought in Ireland, 1776–1798: republicanism, patriotism and radicalism* (Oxford, 2002); M. J. Powell, *Britain and Ireland in the eighteenth-century crisis of empire* (Basingstoke, 2003).

⁴ Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, ‘Notes on the Volunteers, militia, Orangemen and yeomanry of County Roscommon’ in *The Irish Sword*, xii (1975–76), pp 15–35; Allan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: the Irish yeomanry, 1796–1834* (Dublin, 1998), pp 75–97.

⁵ Thomas Bartlett, ‘A weapon of war as yet untried: Irish Catholics and the armed forces of the Crown’ in T. G. Fraser and Keith Jeffery (eds), *Men, women and war* (Dublin, 1993), pp 66–85; H. T. Dickinson, ‘Popular conservatism and militant loyalism, 1789–1815’ in H. T. Dickinson (ed.), *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789–1815* (London, 1989).

⁶ For example, Volume 1 contains the following: [Henry Brooke], *The Case of the Roman-Catholics of Ireland* (1760); Charles Lucas, *Seasonable Advice to the Electors of Members of Parliament at the ensuing General Election* (1760); [Charles Lucas], *Address to the Free Electors of the City of Dublin* (1761); Anon., *Enquiry into the riots in Munster, taken from the Dublin Magazine* (1763); Charles Lucas, *To the Right Honorable the Lord-Mayor ... The Address of Charles Lucas, M.D. one of their Representatives in Parliament* (1765); Anon., *To the Right Honourable Lord Mayor ... The Counter Address of a Free Citizen* (1766); Anon., *An Essay on the Use and Necessity of establishing a Militia in Ireland* (1767); *Statutes at Large of Ireland: Octennial Act* (1768); Charles Lucas, *The Rights and Privileges of Parlements asserted upon constitutional principles* (1770); [Robert French], *The Constitution of Ireland, and Poyning’s Laws explained* (1770); *Baratariana: A Select Collection of Fugitive Political Pieces from 1769 to 1772* (1773) [excerpts]; *Statutes at Large of Ireland: Catholic Relief Act* (1774); Anon., *An Appeal to the Understanding of the Electors of Ireland* (1776); *Statutes at Large of Ireland: Catholic Relief Act* (1778); Anon., *Humble Remonstrance for the repeal of the laws against Roman Catholics* (1778); Anon., *A Defence of Great Britain, against a charge of tyranny in the Government of Ireland* (1779).

⁷ Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, p. 28.

interpretation of Poyning's Law.⁸ Lucas's claim that patriots, not the Irish government, acted in the true spirit of the royal prerogative anticipates the non-conservative strand of loyalty seen in the Volunteers. Catholic loyalty is considered in Henry Brooke's pamphlet that spells out the patriot position on amelioration of the penal laws.⁹ Catholic loyalty and relief are also covered by the inclusion of individually printed acts of parliament.

Away from high political issues, parts of Munster were disturbed by Whiteboy protesters, as reflected by the inclusion of the appendix of a report into the causes. Protest has attracted much historiographical debate.¹⁰ For example, can protests from the Whiteboys of the 1760s be seen as anticipating later nationalist movements like the United Irishmen or as mainly agrarian? Vincent Morley and Éamonn Ó Ciardha fit the Whiteboys into an enduring popular Jacobitism, which fed through into later republicanism. Sean Connolly disagrees about the reality of a Jacobite threat and sees the Whiteboys as primarily agrarian.¹¹ The pamphlet reprinted from the *Dublin University Magazine* in volume three allows readers to consider this debate in its contemporary context. Coinciding with the Seven Years War and the possibility of French invasion, some nervous magistrates undoubtedly saw disloyalty. However the appendix notes that assumptions about the protests recalling earlier Catholic rebellions were erroneous and that in fact discontent mainly derived from grievances over rents, enclosure and tithes.

A major editorial strength is the pairing of material relating to subject specifics, allowing readers to make comparisons. Sermons, especially those subsequently printed, interest historians as windows into public opinion, and volume two opens with two sermons on volunteering by Presbyterian ministers, James Crombie and William Steel Dickson.¹² Crombie urges men to defend Ireland against French invasion which would 'annihilate your

⁸ Charles Lucas, *The rights and Privileges of Parlements asserted upon constitutional principles: against the modern anticonstitutional clamours of chief governors* (Dublin, 1770); see also Thomas Bartlett, 'Opposition in late eighteenth-century Ireland: the case of the Townshend Viceroyalty' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 88 (Sept. 1981), pp 313–30.

⁹ Henry Brooke, *The case of the Roman Catholics of Ireland in a course of letters from a member of the Protestant church in that kingdom to his friend in England* (Dublin, 1760).

¹⁰ See Eoin Magennis, 'A Presbyterian insurrection? Reconsidering the Hearts of Oak disturbances of July 1763' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxi, no. 122 (Nov. 1998), pp 165–87; J. S. Donnelly Jnr, 'Hearts of Oak, Hearts of Steel' in *Studia Hibernica*, xxi (1981), pp 7–73; idem, 'Pastorini and Captain Rock' in Samuel Clark and J. S. Donnelly Jnr (eds), *Irish peasants and political unrest, 1790–1914* (Manchester, 1983), pp 102–42.

¹¹ S. J. Connolly, 'Jacobites, Whiteboys and Republicans: varieties of disaffection in eighteenth-century Ireland' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, xviii (2003), pp 63–79; Morley, *Irish opinion and the American Revolution*; Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite cause, 1685–1766: a fatal attachment* (Dublin, 2002).

¹² T. C. Barnard, 'The uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant celebrations' in *E.H.R.*, cvi (1991), pp 889–920; S. J. Connolly, 'The Glorious Revolution in Irish Protestant thinking' in S. J. Connolly (ed.) *Political ideas in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), pp 43–4, 48–9; idem, 'The Church of Ireland and the royal martyr: regicide and revolution in Anglican political thought, c.1660–c.1745' in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, liv, no. 3 (July 2003), pp 484–506; for a general overview on crowds and protest see Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis 'Introduction: crowds in Ireland c.1730–1920', in idem (eds), *Crowds in Ireland*, pp 1–42.

independence ... destroy your liberties and establish despotic monarchy, popery and arbitrary power' designs which had been previously thwarted by 'our great deliverer, KING WILLIAM of glorious memory'. Volunteering, according to Crombie, would also check the 'Popish faction' domestically. Echoing the anti-corruption agenda of British radicals, Crombie reckoned that luxury, extravagance and unwise advice threatened the Empire. People of different political views should unite and Volunteers must train in arms, notwithstanding their private business interests. The future United Irishman, the Reverend William Steel Dickson, in his sermon printed here argues that patriots should not enslave their neighbours, but arm to prevent invasion. Like Crombie, Dickson also laments luxury and degeneracy, corruptions which contrast with the attitudes which 'laid the foundations of our Liberties in blood'. Public spirit is needed to stop the British Empire disintegrating and so jealousies should be laid aside. This matched pair of sermons is interesting because of the trajectory both men took. Crombie was a New Light minister and radical who sometimes wrote under the pseudonym "Charles Lucas". He was principal of Belfast Academy and minister of Belfast's First Presbyterian Church, positions later held by the Reverend William Bruce, another New Light who joined the yeomanry and opposed rebellion.¹³ Steel Dickson, on the other hand, preached 'Scripture Politics' in 1793 and his military leadership of the Down United Irishmen in 1798 was only prevented by his arrest. Yet in the 1770s, as these two sermons show, their similarities were more apparent than differences.¹⁴

The second volume also contains material from 1779 through to the Irish parliament's 'legislative independence' in 1782. Though contemporaneously seen as a triumph, the anomalies of this constitutional settlement soon became apparent, leading one historian to describe it as 'a ramshackle piece of work' that 'raised more questions than it decided'.¹⁵ Patriot grievances before 1782 are well represented. Acts redressing economic problems are printed as is the 1780 repeal of the Sacramental Test against Presbyterians. Yet piecemeal reform failed to meet patriot demands, and the desire for parliamentary independence grew. A collection of Volunteer and Grand Jury resolutions following the Dungannon Resolutions of February 1782 (also printed) reflect public opinion. Other related material includes debates and speeches, including Henry Grattan's utterances leading up to legislative independence, and his rival Henry Flood's efforts to go one step further and obtain a complete renunciation of the British parliament's right to administer laws for Ireland. British and Irish perspectives on 1782 inform excerpts of debates in the *Parliamentary Register* and Cobbett's *Parliamentary History*. As well as the Grattan–Flood rivalry the renunciation dispute symbolised the lack of patriot unity after 1782.¹⁶

The third volume contains material concerning the ambiguities of the '1782 Constitution'. Flood's fears underlie a printed Act of 1783 'removing and

¹³ Allan Blackstock, 'Armed citizens and Christian soldiers: crisis sermons and Ulster Presbyterians, 1715–1803' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, xxii (2007), pp 81–105.

¹⁴ Allan Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789–1829* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 93; Ian McBride, *Scripture politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish radicalism in the late eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1998), p. 175.

¹⁵ J. C. Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish tradition* (London, 1976), pp 50–1; see also S. J. Connolly, *Divided kingdom: Ireland, 1630–1800* (Oxford, 2008), pp 420, 422, 485–7.

¹⁶ See Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 113–15.

preventing all doubt which may have arisen' regarding Ireland's legislative independence.¹⁷ Various stances are discussed in an anonymous pamphlet to Volunteer delegates which historicises the conflicting demands, contrasting Anglo-Saxon precedents with contemporary scholarship. An alarmist proto-loyalist pamphlet – *A reform of the Irish House of Commons considered* – sees the settlement of 1782, itself, as dangerous. Radicals, meanwhile, wanted to reform the electoral system. A representation of these ideals is contained in a Belfast-printed pamphlet – *A letter to Henry Flood* – which calls on Flood to join with Grattan to secure a wider franchise. Some Volunteers stood down after 1782, but the more radical remained. After the French Revolution of 1789, they reconstituted themselves in imitation of the *Gardes Nationale* and eventually, became United Irishmen.¹⁸ The issue of armed men in the political system is addressed in Francis Dobbs's pamphlet which argues that armed volunteers were necessary in an emergency, but otherwise were a threat to the constitution. By comparison other pamphlets support a more equal representation of the people, which allows readers to contrast the various viewpoints. Bishop Woodward's 1787 pamphlet, *The present state of the Church of Ireland*, (not printed), perceived challenges to 'Protestant Ascendancy' in Rightboy protesters. The pamphlet has received considerable attention from historians, notably James Kelly, for exhibiting what have been termed 'neo-conservative' views.¹⁹ Woodward claimed that the phenomenon of armed men determining political questions was very dangerous as it risked anarchy, removed landed men's moderating influence and could possibly inaugurate an American-type republic, giving power to untrustworthy Roman Catholics.

The broader Catholic Question has generated much historical scholarship. Thomas Bartlett covers its seventeenth-century origins through to emancipation in 1829, giving the views from Irish Catholics and Protestants plus parliamentary perspectives in Ireland and Westminster.²⁰ Kevin Whelan has drawn attention to the 'underground gentry', descendants of old Catholic landowning families reduced to the level of middlemen but who gave leadership as 'an underground gentry' which passed to Catholic 'big farmers' who, in turn, provided the cultural basis for nineteenth-century nationalism by claiming inheritance to an uncorrupted past.²¹ Ulster was different, with fewer landed Catholics but a heavier Protestant population, as Marianne Elliott and Oliver Rafferty note.²² Elliott emphasises the intertwining of religion and

¹⁷ Dickinson (ed.) *Ireland in the age of revolution*, vol. 3.

¹⁸ For discussion of Charles Sheridan see Higgins, *A nation of politicians: gender, patriotism and political culture*, pp 3–4, and Small, *Political thought in Ireland*.

¹⁹ James Kelly, 'The genesis of the "Protestant Ascendancy": the Rightboy disturbances of the 1780s and their impact on Protestant opinion' in Gerard O'Brien (ed.) *Parliament, politics and people: essays in eighteenth-century Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), pp 93–127.

²⁰ Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation: the Catholic question, 1690–1830* (Dublin, 1992).

²¹ Kevin Whelan, *The tree of liberty: radicalism, Catholicism and the constriction of Irish identity* (Cork, 1996), pp 3, 54–5.

²² Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster* (London and New York, 2000); Oliver Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603–1983* (Dublin, 1994); see also Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic experience* (Dublin, 1985); S. J. Connolly, *Religion and society in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985).

nationalism but notes that Catholics were not naturally rebellious.²³ The complexity of Catholic loyalty has been examined by Patrick Fagan's research on the formulation of satisfactory oaths for Catholics.²⁴ The material in this set contains radically different contemporary perspectives on Catholic loyalty and political rights as appear in a matched pair of pamphlets. One of a matched pair of pamphlets, by Patrick Duigenan, an outspoken loyalist in the 1790s and 'a very odd man',²⁵ deals with the threat to 'the established constitution in church and state' in 1783. The pamphlet *The alarm* represents the danger as emanating from Volunteers composed of 'your antient and irreconcilable enemies, the Puritans and the Roman Catholics'. With Presbyterians prominent amongst the United Irishmen, the association with Cromwellian puritans and republicans²⁶ was common in the later 1790s, making this early statement particularly interesting. Not all Anglican Protestants were alarmists and *All's well: a reply to the author of the alarm* accuses Duigenan of exaggeration, claiming Catholic penal oppression was unjustified.²⁷ The 'liberal Protestant' case is strongly stated in a pamphlet by the lawyer and later United Irishman, Peter Burrowes, who vindicates the Volunteers by arguing for emancipation and radical reform. Burrowes takes the Paineite view that sovereignty rests with the people; but, though Paine comes close to advocating a universal franchise, women are not included. The Volunteers linked with English reformers and the English radical, John Jebb, published a series of letters. Jebb supported Catholic enfranchisement on similar terms to Protestants and urged the Volunteers to compile their own reform plans rather than petition the Irish Commons. The economic benefits of radical reform are extolled by Capel Molyneux and inform several pamphlets sparked by Pitt's 1784–5 Commercial Propositions. Richard Brinsley Sheridan's brother Charles advocates acceptance of some propositions and argues that those which aroused patriot ire were not hostile in intent but merely poorly drafted. Less equivocal support for Pitt is expressed in John Hely-Hutchinson's *Letter from the secretary of state to the mayor of Cork*. Charles Sheridan's pamphlet has historiographical importance as it is cited in Padhraig Higgins's discussion of the political turmoil of 1784. The pamphlet contains Sheridan's view that Protestants had lost ancestral fears of Catholics and saw England as their enemy.²⁸ The 1782 constitution was severely tested by the 1789 regency crisis. Whigs wanted the Prince of Wales as regent and Irish Whigs used the Dublin parliament's 'independence' to produce a

²³ See Richard English, 'Directions in historiography: history and Irish nationalism' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvii, no. 147 (May 2011), pp 447–60; and Joseph Bergin, Eoin Magennis, Lesa Ní Mhúinghaile, Patrick Walsh (eds), *New perspectives on the penal laws, Eighteenth-century Ireland*, special issue, no. 1 (2011).

²⁴ Patrick Fagan, *Divided loyalties: the question of an oath for Irish Catholics in the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1997); see also Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland*, pp 77–8.

²⁵ Peter Jupp, 'Dr Duigenan reconsidered' in Sabine Wichert (ed.), *From the United Irishmen to twentieth-century Unionism* (Dublin, 2004).

²⁶ Francis Kirkpatrick, *Loyalty and the times* (Dublin, 1804).

²⁷ See volume 3 [Patrick Duigenan], *The alarm: or, an address to the nobility, gentry, and clergy, of the Church of Ireland, as by law established* (1783); Anon, *All's well: a reply to the author of The alarm* (1783).

²⁸ Higgins, *A nation of politicians*, pp 3–5.

Regency Bill. The situation changed on George III's recovery of health, exposing dangers in the Anglo-Irish relationship. A 1785 pamphlet, *Thoughts on the Kingdom of Ireland*, anticipates this but naively foresees no risk in George III as British monarch, with his son as virtual king of Ireland. A prophetic English-authored pamphlet of 1787 argues that the Anglo-Irish relationship was dangerously weak and could only be secured by a legislative union that would also guarantee Catholic loyalty. Popular protest again cut across high politics. The inclusion of the 1787 'Whiteboy Act' reflects growing unrest as it comprehended not just the Whiteboys, but also Ulster's Oakboy and Steelboy protesters and those who engaged in sectarian conflict in Armagh.

The second part covers 1791 to 1805 and contains another helpful introduction discussing Irish politics in this period. Like the previous general introduction this draws on recent scholarship to lay down the context of sectarian tensions, the ongoing Catholic issue, the United Irishmen's political phases, the 1798 rebellion and legislative Union. However, the pattern of providing a chronological and factual context is briefly departed from in the short section on the 1798 rebellion, which outlines a historiographical debate about whether the rebellion was an agrarian revolt, a large-scale sectarian conflict or an attempted political revolution. The focus on the historical contestation of 1798 and not other themes which divide historian's opinions is not really explained. The 1798 discussion outlines key elements of the debate but fails, however, to do justice to the substantial scholarship generated by the rebellion's bi-centenary. (Thomas Pakenham's, *The year of liberty*, which saw the rebellion as agrarian, is described as a 'substantial modern study of the rebellion'. Many scholars would now see it as superseded by more recent work, though it remains one of the few attempts to encompass the entire country and year.) While the introduction does draw on some of this work, notably the essays in *The mighty wave*,²⁹ one glaring lacuna in the discussion is the lack of reference to Ian McBride's substantial review article.³⁰ The omission of this important review, which considers 1798 scholarship before and during the bi-centenary, is puzzling as the issues McBride raises provide considerable contextualisation to the primary material in the fourth and particularly the fifth volume. McBride considers how the rebellion should be categorised, noting the dominance of 'post-revisionist' studies by Kevin Whelan, Louis Cullen and others, which tend to downplay the sectarian and agrarian aspects of the rebellion. McBride also attempts to point out gaps in the historiography: the relative paucity of work on the United Irishmen's French connection, apart from Marianne Elliott's classic *Partners in revolution* as well as growth areas in 1798 scholarship such as gender, the United Irishmen overseas and 'the other side' (i.e. loyalism). Loyalism is now being examined in similar ways to British historians of the 1790s such as Dickinson; including his concerns with popular loyalism.³¹

The fourth volume's contents comprise documents on various groups, including those drawn towards the United Irishmen. The Catholic Committee,

²⁹ Dáire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong, *The mighty wave: the 1798 rebellion in Wexford* (Dublin, 1996).

³⁰ Ian McBride, 'Reclaiming the Rebellion: 1798 in 1998' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxi, no. 123 (May 1999), pp 395–410.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp 402–9.

formed to achieve relief from the penal laws, contained moderates like Lord Kenmare, but also radicals like John Keogh. He would break from the Catholic Committee to form the Catholic Society. The Irish executive wanted to promote moderation and the lawyer, Theobald McKenna, fearing the Catholic Society was too radical issued a declaration emphasising that the Society's demands were primarily concerned with further relief from the penal laws. Reaction against Catholic relief is also featured – a subsequent pamphlet contains strictures against the Catholic Society arguing that Catholics enjoyed many civil liberties and that the Society's demands masked a desire for Catholic Ascendancy. Also included is the content of a general meeting of Dublin Catholics in 1792 to debate the General Catholic Committee's Declaration. This meeting denied that Catholics were dangerous to the state or aimed at confiscated lands; but as loyal subjects they merely wanted franchise admission under the same property qualification as Protestants. Catholic entitlement to full civil rights is the subject of a Burkean pamphlet of 1792 (*A candid enquiry*) which contrasts the Catholic religion with dangerous French free thinking. A 1793 pamphlet defends Catholics from ultra-Protestant charges that they were intimidating the government and had associated with the Defenders. It is believed that this pamphlet is authored by Wolfe Tone, Theobald McKenna's replacement as Catholic Committee secretary in 1792.

The United Irishmen's legal phase is represented by the inclusion of their Dublin society's resolutions in 1793 calling for parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. Also included is the landmark 1793 Relief Act, which admitted Catholics with freehold property worth forty shillings annually to the franchise and entitled them to certain military offices providing oaths were taken. This has been seen as giving rise to anti-militia riots as the legislation gave the vote with one hand but the military stipulations effectively brought about a form of conscription as Catholics were selected for militia service by ballot.³² War with France looms large in this fourth volume and the next. Ireland's unsettled domestic situation and the government's desire to control public opinion is reflected in the Unlawful Assemblies Act of 1793. The printing of excerpts from Henry Joy and William Bruce's *Belfast politics* indicate northern radicalism as early as 1792. Several pamphlets and supportive speeches of Henry Grattan address the 'Catholic Question' and the 'Fitzwilliam Episode'. The persistence of Catholic loyalty emerges from two pamphlets appealing to Catholics not to heed their leaders who were United Irishmen in disguise, but return to their allegiance. The Insurrection Act is printed, as is a response to official repression urging unity on the 'People of Ireland', as are speeches of the United Irishmen, Arthur O'Connor, including an address to Antrim voters in 1797 attacking repression. General Lake's notorious proclamation of March 1797 is also reproduced. This permitted brutal disarmament and the United Irishmen's riposte – The Appeal to the People of Ulster – urges Irishmen in the militia and yeomanry not to brutalise fellow countrymen and appeals to British reformers that using military force on civilians infringed the constitution. Propaganda was a prominent feature though United Irish variety decreased as the organisation

³² Thomas Bartlett, 'An end to moral economy: the Irish militia disturbances of 1793' in *Past and Present*, no. 94 (May 1983), pp 41–64.

militarised. Late attempts appear in the *Address to the inhabitants of County Armagh* driven out by persecutions of Catholics following the formation of Orange societies.

Volume five covers 1797 to 1800 and includes much material from the 1798 rebellion. Those interested in the debates surrounding 1798 will find in the material here many of the key documents that have shaped scholars views on that year. These include loyalist material from the Orange societies (unsurprisingly) but also from the Catholic hierarchy. Although some Wexford priests participated in rebellion, giving ultra-Protestants like Richard Musgrave ammunition,³³ Catholic loyalty was a feature. A letter from a Catholic landowner inculcates loyalty and a pastoral letter by Archbishop John Troy to Dublin Catholics emphasises hierarchical opposition to organisations with power over people, the United Irishmen, Defenders and Whiteboys. With atheistic French revolutionaries in mind, Troy stresses the loyalty of most Catholics. Government proclamations against rebellion are included as are several documents relating to the aftermath, including the reports of parliamentary committees of secrecy and correspondence from the Castlereagh papers about state prisoners like Arthur O'Connor. The Orange societies were becoming prominent, offering military service and joining the yeomanry. They attracted United Irish propaganda pointing up sectarianism. Armagh Orange resolutions of May 1797 deny that they wish to extirpate Catholics. The Whig peer Lord Moira's 1797 speech in the British House of Lords blamed the bad state of the country on government repression but in June 1798, when the rebels occupied Moira's estate after the Battle of Ballynahinch, a satirical loyalist ballad recalled his earlier protestations.³⁴ A pamphlet by 'Civis' (identified as Sir George Dallas an English M.P.) is a riposte to Moira and points to atrocities against magistrates and yeomen as evidence of revolutionary intent. Moira initiated a parliamentary debate in 1798 which is also printed. Another form of liberality informs Sir John Moore's diary. Moore, a professional soldier, disarmed people but hated this practice and believed that pikes would appear again unless Irish gentlemen changed their conduct. A pamphlet by 'An Irish emigrant' also attributes the rebellion to corruption and denial of reform. Loyalists were divided. An 'Orangeman's' letter to the Catholic unionist, Theobald McKenna, refutes his attacks on Orangeism and gives an account of the spread of the Orange movement. More counter-propaganda is contained in a sermon by Snowden Cupples, rector of Lisburn, defending the Orangemen from United Irish allegations and contains various declarations as proof.

The events of the 1780s and 1790s, in parliament and beyond it, led to legislative union, an issue which exercises historians interested in its passage, support and opposition and its implications. The sixth volume contains a selection from writers on both sides of the question. One of the main fault lines in the historiography concern nationalist and unionist interpretations. The liberal unionist W. E. H. Lecky's *Ireland in the eighteenth century* saw union as mistaken as it removed Grattan's parliament. Nationalist critiques often

³³ James Kelly, *Sir Richard Musgrave, 1746–1818: ultra-Protestant ideologue* (Dublin, 2009), p. 103.

³⁴ Horace Reid, 'The Battle of Ballynahinch: an anthology of the documents' in Myrtle Hill, Brian Turner and Kenneth Dawson (eds), *The 1798 rebellion in County Down* (Newtownards, 1998).

centre on bribery, drawing on romanticised accounts like Jonah Barrington's.³⁵ However in 1966, G. C. Bolton's revisionist classic *The passing of the Irish Act of Union* argued from a close reading of the primary sources that the patronage expended was normative.³⁶ Roy Foster, however, points out that no contemporary benchmark exists by which to assess whether compensation levels were excessive or not.³⁷ Though Bolton's interpretation dominated for decades, recent research, utilising previously unavailable 'secret service' documents, suggests the government went to extreme lengths to force passage of the Act of Union through the legislature on College Green.³⁸ Papers presented at conferences marking the bicentenary noted the European and Imperial contexts as well as examining the responses of Presbyterians and ultra-Protestants, and discussed the union's legacy.³⁹ Earlier union proposals have now drawn scholarly attention and these provide a deeper context for the 1800 measure. This set usefully contains extracts from the *Castlereagh correspondence* of discussions between the Duke of Portland and Cornwallis. There were winners and losers from the union: Patrick Geoghegan's high political perspective shows how disputes around the union and Catholic emancipation culminated in Pitt's resignation while John Bew sees Castlereagh's efforts in securing the union's passage as his springboard to the centre of British politics.⁴⁰ The complex response of ultra-Protestants and Orangemen have been analysed by Jacqueline Hill and Hereward Senior.⁴¹ That Orangemen opposed the union may surprise modern unionists, but the original proposals envisaged emancipation. Catholic unionism and Catholic loyalism remain, with the exception of portions of Geoghegan's study of the union, a relatively neglected area.⁴² This aspect can also be explored in Theobald McKenna's pamphlet summing up the various arguments and emphasizing that loyalty entitled Catholics to full citizenship. Though Bolton considered public opinion, it certainly merits further investigation as pamphleteering played a major role in the campaigns for and against the union as is shown in the sixth volume here. The selection which complements a the work of W.J. McCormack which set out the context of the pamphlet war over the union.⁴³

Some criticisms might be raised regarding content. There is nothing, for example, on improvement and economic patriotism, both of which informed political issues. Moreover public opinion was also mediated through ballad poetry, which is frequently printed in newspapers, as well as pamphlets.

³⁵ See James Kelly, 'The historiography of the Act of union' in Michael Brown, Patrick Geoghegan and James Kelly (eds), *The Irish Act of Union* (Dublin, 2003), p. 17.

³⁶ Kelly, 'Historiography of the Act of Union', pp 1, 6, 34–5.

³⁷ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600–1972* (London, 1988), p. 284.

³⁸ David Wilkinson, 'How did they pass the union: secret service expenditure in Ireland', *History*, lxxxii (1997), pp 223–51; Geoghegan, *Irish Act of Union*, pp vii–ix.

³⁹ See Brown, Geoghegan & Kelly (eds), *Irish Act of Union: bicentennial essays*.

⁴⁰ Geoghegan, *Irish Act of Union*, p. vii; John Bew, *Castlereagh: Enlightenment, war and tyranny* (London, 2011), p. 165.

⁴¹ Jacqueline Hill, 'Dublin after the Union: the age of the ultra-Protestants' in Brown, Geoghegan & Kelly (eds), *Irish Act of Union*, pp 144–56; Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain* (London and Toronto, 1966), pp 118–37.

⁴² Geoghegan, *Irish Act of Union*, pp 192–9.

⁴³ W. J. McCormack (ed.) *The pamphlet debate on the union between Great Britain and Ireland, 1797–1800* (Dublin, 1996).

However the period was undoubtedly an age of pamphleteering. It would be impossible to cover everything. There are also occasional typographical errors. Overall, these are minor quibbles. The real strength for the postgraduate or dissertation student, or indeed teacher, is that Dickinson's selection has a number of decided advantages over online resources. Yes, this is an old-fashioned way of producing documents and, yes, many of which can be accessed electronically via ECCO or JSTOR Ireland. However, it does some things which electronic compilations cannot do. Utilising pamphlets and other printed material is difficult and time-consuming. Context is necessary and terms or concepts can be obscure for the modern reader. The logical ordering of the material across the volumes allows the reader to assess the origins and progress of revolutionary activity and politicisation and also the responses these developments generated. The general introductions are of immense help, setting the context in an informed way, yet usually not imposing any interpretation. Similarly the short individual introductions give the gist of the source's argument enabling it to be read in an informed way. The editorial notes at the end of each volume clarify any obscure terms and, finally, the subject index at the close of volume six enables readers to select individuals or themes for their study. For those wishing to delve further, either via databases or in libraries, these beautifully-produced volumes are a perfect starting point. They take the researcher some considerable way into the primary sources of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Ireland, thus making them an invaluable asset for libraries.