

James Eadie Todd and the school of history at the Queen's University of Belfast

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ABSTRACT. *James Eadie Todd was appointed to the chair of modern history in Queen's University, Belfast in 1919, aged thirty-four, having previously held academic posts in Edinburgh, Montreal and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Todd published almost nothing but spent his career as a teacher, and his carefully prepared formal lectures guided generations of Queen's students to a pass degree. But he also had the ability to inspire a minority of students to the further study of history and several of his pupils went on to occupy chairs of history in Ireland and Great Britain. During the 1930s, with his former pupil T. W. Moody, he created an honours and graduate school with a strong emphasis on Irish history. Todd stressed the importance of the objective study of the sources. Behind the scenes he was instrumental, with others, in founding the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies and establishing Irish Historical Studies. His later years were plagued by ill health and personal bereavement. He retired in 1945 and died four years later. The article concludes with an assessment of Todd's importance to the professionalisation of Irish historical scholarship.*

James Eadie Todd, professor of modern history in Queen's University, Belfast between 1919 and 1945, is scarcely remembered today, even in the university where he spent most of his professional life. He deserves to be better known. Section one of this essay outlines the reasons why. Section two discusses the sources that make it possible. The third summarises Todd's career in the years before he came to Queen's. The fourth reviews the practice of history in the United Kingdom during the first half of the twentieth century that provided the context in which Todd plied his craft. This leads, fifthly, to a consideration of Todd's contribution to Irish historical scholarship and to his role in the Irish 'historiographical revolution'. The essay concludes with a discussion of Todd's effectiveness as a teacher and touches on changes in universities that have rendered scholars like Todd an extinct species.

I

James Eadie Todd was appointed to the Queen's chair in 1919 aged thirty-four. He retired in 1945 in poor health and died in Edinburgh in October 1949.

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He was dean of the faculty of arts on three occasions and advisor of studies for several years during the 1930s.¹ During his long tenure of the chair he published nothing. His part in founding the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies in 1936, and in securing a grant from the university to support the publication of *Irish Historical Studies* two years later, has gone almost unnoticed and his wider importance in the development of Irish historical studies has not been explored in detail.²

Todd was, in the words of H. A. Cronne, a student in Queen's and later a colleague, 'one of the most inspiring historical teachers in any British university'.³ He established an important honours and graduate school in Belfast during the 1930s with a strong emphasis on Irish history. From 1921 he served as chief examiner in history for the Northern Ireland Department of Education; as his pupils were appointed to teaching posts in local schools his influence spread beyond the university.⁴ Todd's reputation extended beyond Northern Ireland. When a Festschrift edited by three former pupils was published posthumously in 1949, a reviewer commented that it testified to 'the remarkable success of the late Professor J. E. Todd as an inspirer of historical research, which made the Queen's University of Belfast a centre of historical inquiry out of all proportion to its resources'.⁵

Five of Todd's pupils at Queen's went on to occupy chairs in Britain or Ireland.⁶ H. A. Cronne was a student between 1922 and 1925. Following studies in Oxford and London he returned to Belfast as Todd's assistant in 1928. He moved to King's College, London in 1931 and was appointed to a chair of medieval history in Birmingham in 1946. Cronne did not publish in Irish history but did so extensively in his own field.⁷ T. W. Moody was an

¹ The dean was elected by his fellow professors and served for periods of three years (renewable). His main duties were to chair faculty meetings, oversee changes in regulations and advise students on their programme of studies. The post of adviser of studies was established in 1937.

² When Sir David Keir, a former vice-chancellor of Queen's University, addressed the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies in 1966 to commemorate its thirtieth anniversary, he paid tribute to the roles of R. M. Henry, David Chart and Samuel Simms in founding the society and, 'less directly', to James Eadie Todd (David Keir, 'Old ways and new in history' in *I.H.S.*, xv, no. 59 (Mar. 1967), p. 214). See also: F. S. L. Lyons, "'T.W.M.'" in idem & R. A. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension. Essays in honour of T. W. Moody* (Oxford, 1980), pp 4–6; R. D. Edwards, 'An agenda for Irish history, 1978–2018' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history: the debate on historical revisionism* (Dublin, 1994), pp 56–7 (first published in *I.H.S.*, xxi, no. 81 (Mar. 1978), pp 3–19).

³ H. A. Cronne to T. W. Moody, 7 Aug. 1944 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J1/20/ Professor J.E. Todd). For further detail on this source, see note 14.

⁴ H. A. Cronne, T. W. Moody & D. B. Quinn, 'Introduction: James Eadie Todd as historian and teacher' in idem (eds), *Essays in British and Irish history in honour of James Eadie Todd* (London, 1949), p. xiv.

⁵ *E.H.R.*, lxx, no. 257 (Oct. 1950), p. 563. The review was signed 'R.P.'. It was probably written by Richard Pares, joint-editor of the *E.H.R.*, professor of history at Edinburgh University.

⁶ In addition, C. M. MacInnes, a pupil of Todd's at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, became professor of imperial history at the University of Bristol.

⁷ Cronne spent two years at Oxford working with V. H. Galbraith and a year at the Institute of Historical Research, studying with Claude Jenkins, librarian at Lambeth Palace (Cronne to Jenkins, 22 Jan. 1931 (Lambeth Palace Library, Claude Jenkins

undergraduate between 1926 and 1930 and after working for his Ph.D. in London at the Institute of Historical Research became Todd's assistant in 1932.⁸ He was appointed to a lectureship in Irish history in 1935.⁹ In 1939 Moody moved to a fellowship at Trinity College, Dublin where, within a few months, he was elected to the chair of modern history. For more than three decades Moody was the most formidable figure in Irish historical scholarship. David Beers Quinn had an outstanding undergraduate career between 1927 and 1931, followed by graduate studies in London. After a spell as lecturer at Southampton University College, he succeeded Moody in 1939 as lecturer in Irish history at Queen's. He was appointed to the chair of history at Swansea in 1944 and in 1957 moved to Liverpool. He did important work on Tudor Ireland, but made a wider reputation as an historian of European exploration of the Atlantic world. In the words of Nicholas Canny, 'his achievements render him the only historian from Ireland of his generation to have gained international distinction in an area other than Irish history'.¹⁰ Quinn's successor was J. C. Beckett. He graduated in 1935 and took his M.A. in 1941; for a decade he worked as a schoolmaster. He was promoted to a personal chair of Irish history in 1958 and became a leading figure among the 'second generation' of Irish historians.¹¹ Beckett's fellow student, Leslie McCracken, graduated in 1936 (M.A. 1941, Ph.D. 1948) and, like Beckett, was a schoolmaster until 1946 when he became a lecturer in history at the University of Witwatersrand. He returned to Ireland in 1950 to take up a research post at Trinity College, Dublin. Two years later he was appointed senior lecturer at Magee University College and to the chair in 1957. He moved to the New University of Ulster in 1968. When he retired, in 1979, he returned to South Africa as a research fellow at Rhodes University.¹²

Todd had a knack of appointing assistants who progressed to chairs elsewhere. Edward Hughes, a Manchester graduate and lecturer at Stranmillis Training College, Belfast, served as Todd's assistant between 1922 and 1925; he eventually became professor of history at Durham. G. R. Potter was

papers, MS 1634, ff 41–5); I owe this reference to Professor David Hayton). Cronne's publications include *The reign of Stephen, 1135–54: anarchy in England* (London, 1970); (ed.), *Bristol charters 1378–1499* (Bristol Records Society, Bristol, 1946); (ed. with Charles Johnson), *Regesta regum: Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154* (Oxford, 1956).

⁸ Moody's thesis was nominally supervised by Todd but his director of studies was Miss E. Jeffries Davies, reader in the history and records of London. It was published as *The Londonderry plantation, 1609–14: the City of London and the plantation in Ulster* (Belfast, 1939). The book is dedicated to Todd.

⁹ Cronne, Moody & Quinn, 'Introduction: James Eadie Todd', pp xiv–xv.

¹⁰ Nicholas Canny, 'Quinn, David Beers (1909–2002)', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

¹¹ His importance to Irish historical studies is discussed by Alvin Jackson, 'J. C. Beckett and the making of modern Irish historiography' in Alvin Jackson and David N. Livingstone (eds), *Queen's thinkers: essays on the intellectual heritage of a university* (Belfast, 2008), pp 149–58. See also, idem, 'J. C. Beckett: politics, faith, scholarship' in *I.H.S.*, xxxiii, no. 130 (Nov. 2002), pp 129–50.

¹² J. Brown, 'J. L. McCracken – an appreciation' in Peter Roebeck (ed.), *Plantation to partition: essays in honour of J. L. McCracken* (Belfast, 1981), pp 1–13; Nicholas Southey, 'J. L. McCracken, 1914–2008' in *South African Historical Journal*, lx, no. 4 (2008), pp 687–9.

assistant lecturer in medieval history between 1927 and 1931, when he was appointed to the chair of history at Sheffield. His successor was R. R. Betts who moved to Southampton in 1935 and then briefly to Birmingham, before being elected Masaryk Professor of Slavonic Studies in the University of London. Finally J. W. Blake, a London graduate, was from 1935 successively assistant lecturer, lecturer and senior lecturer until his appointment to the chair of history at the University College of North Staffordshire (later the University of Keele) in 1950.¹³

II

A brief outline of Todd's career can be found in the introduction to his *Festschrift*. However, a fuller exploration is possible because of the survival of a file containing almost 200 letters relating to the preparation of the *Festschrift*. The first was written in July 1944 by Quinn to Moody in Dublin mooted the idea. The last was dated 8 December 1947, also by Quinn, to Cronne in Birmingham discussing publication delays. The book was not published for another two years, so the surviving correspondence is probably incomplete. Two-thirds of the letters were written either by Cronne or Quinn to Moody or to each other. Twenty were from contributors to the editors. Another twenty were from Blake who acted as secretary to the project or R. J. Dickson, a teacher in Methodist College, Belfast, who looked after the finances. A dozen letters passed between the editors and possible publishers and printers. Ten were from Queen's administrators or academic colleagues. Two letters were from would-be (but uninvited) contributors. The collection contains a couple of letters drafted by Moody and occasionally he scribbled drafts of a reply in the margins of the letters he received.¹⁴ The file also contains a typed memoir written by Todd outlining his career up to his

¹³ Todd had two other assistants. D. W. Hunter Marshall (1925–8), a Glasgow graduate, went to Canada as an assistant professor of history at Winnipeg. D. M. Ketelbey was Todd's assistant in 1931–2. Her appointment was noted in the academic council but not her academic credentials. She published *A history of modern times from 1789 to the present day* (London, 1929). It was reviewed favourably in *History* in 1930 (xv, no. 58 (July 1930), p. 138) and was a recommended text for pass students in the early 1930s. The title page describes her as 'D. M. Ketelbey, M.A., Editor of "*European History from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Eve of the French Revolution*", etc.' When the editors of Todd's *Festschrift* wondered who might contribute Cronne remarked, 'I don't think it is either necessary or desirable to ask her.' (Cronne to Moody, 24 July 1944 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd)). An anonymous referee tells me that Miss Ketelbey became an assistant at St Andrew's in 1935.

¹⁴ The file once belonged to Professor Moody. It contains (a) letters sent by Cronne or Quinn to Moody; (b) letters sent to Cronne or Quinn and forwarded to Moody; (c) letters from third parties (publishers etc.) sent to Moody; (d) a typescript memoir written by Todd and discussed in the text. I can only guess how the file found its way to Queen's. Moody possibly gave it to Beckett during the 1950s when they were writing their history of Queen's and it remained in Beckett's office after he retired. At some point it was handed to Mr Alf McCreary, formerly the university's information officer, probably when he was writing *Degrees of excellence* (Belfast, 1994) with Professor Brian Walker. From Mr McCreary's office the file was sent to me when the Information Office was being relocated. The file is now in the Q.U.B. Archive: QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd.

appointment to Queen's. In 1959, Cronne published an edited version in *History*.¹⁵ Cronne omitted some personal details, but they have been referred to here since they help to explain shifts in Todd's early career. From Cronne's editorial notes it is clear that Todd wrote the memoir shortly before his death.

Among other material in Belfast are tributes to Todd published in the *Q.U.B. Annual Record* when he retired and after his death.¹⁶ Cronne provided an account of Todd in a memoir written in 1977.¹⁷ The geographer E. Estyn Evans, who came to Queen's in 1928, discussed Todd in a memoir written probably in 1978.¹⁸ References to Todd appear in two autobiographical volumes by the Belfast playwright John Boyd. And Todd, thinly disguised as 'Professor McAlinden', is a character in a novel written by a former history student, Hugh Shearman.¹⁹ Complementing the Belfast sources are eighty documents held by Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Todd occupied the chair of history and economics between 1913 and 1919. They relate to his initial appointment, to the leave of absence he was granted in 1916, and to his move to Queen's in 1919. Particularly useful are references written in support of Todd when he applied for his first appointment in Edinburgh in 1910, which he used to support his Dalhousie application.²⁰ Apart from those in the Dalhousie archive, there are a few surviving letters written by Todd.²¹ One, dated May 1941, was written to Beckett congratulating him on his M.A. thesis, which Todd described as 'an outstanding piece of work'. He told Beckett the university had commissioned Moody to write its centenary history and Moody wanted Beckett to assist him: 'Happy as I am to have this important commission put into the hand of the most distinguished of my former pupils, my pleasure would be enhanced if the services of another distinguished former pupil could be enlisted in an auxiliary capacity.'²²

¹⁵ J. E. Todd, 'The apprenticeship of a professor, 1903–1919' in *History*, xlv, no. 151 (June 1959), pp 124–33 (with introductory notes by H. A. Cronne).

¹⁶ *Annual Record of the Queen's University Association* (1945), p. 22; (1950), pp 44–5.

¹⁷ A paper of reminiscences about Queen's by Professor H. A. Cronne, undated, but received by the university in September 1977 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/2/Cronne, Henry Alfred (Professor)).

¹⁸ E. Estyn Evans, 'Geography at QUB' (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/2/E Estyn Evans). Professor Evans probably wrote it for a publication edited by J. A. Campbell to mark the department of geography's jubilee in 1978 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/4/2/43). The memoir includes pen portraits of colleagues omitted from the jubilee publication.

¹⁹ John Boyd, *Out of my class* (Belfast, 1985); idem, *The middle of my journey* (Dundonald, 1990); Hugh Shearman, *A bomb and a girl* (London, 1944).

²⁰ Dalhousie University Archives and Special Collections (hereafter D.U.A.). I am grateful to Ms Dianne Landry, archivist at Dalhousie, for supplying me with copies of the correspondence. The archive also contains correspondence between the president of Dalhousie and Mrs Margaret Todd in Scotland in 1917–18, and newspaper cuttings reporting Todd's war service.

²¹ These include four letters in the London School of Economics archives written in 1934 to Professor Sir Charles Webster who acted as external examiner for the D.Litt. thesis on Lord Castlereagh written by one of Todd's pupils, H. Montgomery Hyde. (I am grateful to Professor Hayton for bringing these to my attention.) Possibly there are Todd letters among the papers of T. W. Moody in Trinity College, but these have not been available to me.

²² Todd to Beckett, May 1941 (P.R.O.N.I., Beckett papers, D41256/B/1/79). The thesis was published as *Protestant dissent in Ireland, 1687–1780* (London, 1948). When the university history was published in 1959 it was as a joint authorship (T. W. Moody

III

J. E. Todd was born in 1885, the eldest son of a minister of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.²³ He entered Edinburgh University in 1903 to read English, intending to follow his father into the church. A timetable clash forced him to switch to history where, in his own words, '[I] met my fate'.²⁴ He came under the influence of Professor Richard Lodge; his undergraduate experience became 'utterly and arrestingly different'. Later in life Todd told Lodge's daughter that her father's classes opened up a 'new world of entrancing interest, which engaged the devotion of hitherto dormant intellectual energies ... I went to my history lectures with an eager anticipation which today I would give almost anything to recapture. Nor was it merely that the subject-matter of the lectures was a powerful stimulant to thought. There was also the perfection of form and the charm of the delivery.'²⁵ Todd recalled that 'Lodge's inexorable unfolding of the sequences of cause and effect shattered my easy belief in the providential ordering of human affairs'. He abandoned the notion of the ministry and began to prepare for the Indian Civil Service examinations, remaining at Edinburgh for a fifth year to take additional subjects, including economic theory and economic history.²⁶

At this point Todd's life took an unexpected turn. In his own words, 'I, who in later years counselled several of my distinguished pupils to hasten slowly in matters matrimonial, set them a bad example by getting engaged before my 21st birthday! The sequel was to be tragic. Within a little more than a year, my fiancée developed consumption, and since life in India was not to be thought of for one of such a tendency, I cast about me for an alternative career.' He lighted on the academic: 'a doubtful but delectable prospect'. With much trepidation he approached Lodge to tell him of his intention of competing for an Open Exhibition at Pembroke College, Oxford: 'His reply was favourable, but characteristically brief and to the point. "Yes, I think you carry the guns, but I can't have you going to a second-rate College like Pembroke. I shall write to the Balliol dons and suggest they offer you an Exhibition. You should hear from them within a few days".'²⁷ Three weeks later, 'the irregularly elected Exhibitioner presented himself at Balliol College gate'.²⁸

and J. C. Beckett, *Queen's, Belfast, 1845–1949: the history of a university* (2 vols, London, 1959)).

²³ A breakaway evangelical church within the Presbyterian tradition, established in 1847 by the merger of two earlier schisms.

²⁴ J. E. Todd, unpublished memoir (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd).

²⁵ The letter is quoted in full in Margaret Lodge, *Sir Richard Lodge: a biography* (Edinburgh, 1946), p. 113, where it is attributed to 'another of these early students' (Lodge came to Edinburgh in 1899). The writer was identified as Todd by D. B. Horn, 'Sir Richard Lodge and historical studies at the University of Edinburgh' in *Scottish Historical Review*, xxvii, no 103 (Apr. 1948), p. 77.

²⁶ I am grateful to Mr Grant Buttars, deputy archivist of Edinburgh University, for this information.

²⁷ The incident is recounted also in Lodge, *Sir Richard Lodge*, p. 114, where Pembroke is not named, but is described as 'one of the minor Oxford colleges'.

²⁸ Todd, unpublished memoir.

Todd joined a group of brilliant young men taught by A. L. Smith. One of them, Lewis Namier, described Smith as ‘perhaps the best history teacher of our time’.²⁹ Todd agreed: ‘For Smith lecturing was only a subsidiary method of instruction, primarily adapted to the needs of the low-brows. Where he excelled, though naturally not with uniform brilliance, was in the critical tutorial method. For able pupils, prepared to work for him and who understood his method, Smith was for decades the finest History Tutor in Oxford.’ Smith introduced Todd to a style of teaching diametrically different from that of the lofty Lodge. He also initiated him into the research seminar conducted by Sir Paul Vinogradoff, the Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence. The seminar was based on the study of original documents and was an innovation in the Oxford of the time.³⁰ It was a singular honour for an undergraduate to be invited to attend and it resulted in the only publication coming from Todd’s pen when he contributed to an edition of a Welsh manorial survey in the fourteenth century.³¹

Todd was active in college life. In 1910 he was awarded a prize of £10 ‘for good work in collections’.³² He rubbed shoulders with scholars who were destined to stand among the giants of the historical profession, including Namier, Arnold J. Toynbee, G. N. Clark, Philip Guedalla, C. H. Firth and H. W. C. Davis. Smith took Todd on country walks ‘during which he drew me out and teased me by attacking my cherished convictions or Scottish prejudices’. He introduced Todd to some of the less exalted pupils of the college. He sent him to the Bull Inn, Oxford, for ten days in the company of the ‘able, charming but incurably dissolute son of a South African millionaire ... to segregate him from the delights of Oxford, and induce him to do a little work before Schools’. On another occasion Smith placed an idle rugby international, who was in danger of being sent down, into Todd’s care: ‘If you want to have much success with him you will have to take a mild part in his dissipation, which incidentally will be thoroughly good for you.’³³ Smith described Todd as ‘full of friendliness and help to others, and [he] has won the admiration of his contemporaries, even the least bookish’.³⁴

After two years at Balliol, Todd gained an outstanding first to add to his Edinburgh M.A., had engaged in his only experience of original research, and shared the company of young historians who shaped the study of history in

²⁹ R. L. Patterson, ‘Smith, Arthur Lionel (1850–1924)’, in *O.D.N.B.*

³⁰ [Todd, Unpublished memoir.] Vinogradoff was a Russian-born historian and jurist. His *Villainage in England* (Oxford, 1892) was described by his biographer as ‘perhaps the most important book written on the peasantry of the feudal age and the village community in England’. See: Peter Stein, ‘Vinogradoff, Sir Paul Gavrilovitch [Pavel Gavriilovich Vinogradov] (1854–1925)’, in *O.D.N.B.*

³¹ P. Vinogradoff and E. Morgan, *Survey of the honour of Denbigh, 1334* (British Academy Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales, i, London, 1914). This was a transcript of the *Survey* prefaced by nine introductory chapters written by members of the seminar. Todd contributed an eight-page chapter entitled ‘Agriculture’ (pp xlv–liii).

³² ‘English Register’ [minutes of Balliol College governing body], 1908–24 (unfol.), 15 Mar. 1910; ‘Papers of the History Club, 1907–09’, Minute Book (unfol.), 12, 24 Feb., 9 May 1909 (Balliol College Archives). (I owe these references to Professor Hayton.)

³³ Todd, unpublished memoir.

³⁴ Smith to Edinburgh University, 1 July 1910 (D.U.A.).

Britain for years to come.³⁵ Lodge offered him an assistantship at £100 a year. But despite Todd's veneration for his old professor, he declined it. Lodge's assistants, he observed, all wrote books, 'but not one of them ever got a Chair, from which one might conclude that the position was not a very good jumping-off ground'. There was also a pressing personal reason for declining the offer: 'My fiancée was an orphan, and her little store of capital had by this time almost vanished in sanatorium fees. Though her condition was much improved, it was essential that I should be able to marry and support her with the least possible delay.' The Edinburgh lectureship in economic history held by George Unwin was vacant as he was moving to a chair at Manchester. The salary was £250 a year. 'With an effrontery, the very thought of which sends shivers up my aged spine, I decided to apply.'³⁶

It was a bold move. Unwin in Edinburgh, William Cunningham in Cambridge, and William Ashley in Birmingham were the most influential economic historians of their age. Unwin had two major books to his name and the Manchester chair had been created for him.³⁷ Todd had no publications (the Denbigh Survey was not published until 1914). On the other hand he had been a member of Vinogradoff's seminar, 'then, a magical name'.³⁸ He also had outstanding references from Smith and H. W. C. Davis in Balliol, as well as from his Edinburgh tutors including Lodge, Hume Brown (Scottish history) and J. S. Nicholson (political economy).³⁹ Nicholson was particularly impressed that Todd had ploughed through his three-volume work on political economy, a task few readers apart from the author had attempted.⁴⁰ Thus armed, Todd applied and to his surprise he 'was appointed over the heads of men very much more learned in the subject than I was, and many years my senior'.⁴¹

³⁵ On the influence of Oxbridge-trained scholars on historical studies in Britain, see John Kenyon, *The history men: the historical profession in England since the Renaissance* (2nd ed., London, 1993), pp 206–7.

³⁶ Todd, unpublished memoir.

³⁷ George Unwin (1870–1925) was the son of a Stockport publican and grocer. After leaving school he worked for a firm of hat makers before winning a scholarship to University College, Cardiff at the age of twenty. Three years later he won a second scholarship to Lincoln College, Oxford where he gained a first. Another scholarship from Oriel College took him to Berlin where he met German scholars who were pioneering the study of historical economics. He returned to the London School of Economics and undertook research leading to the publication of: *Industrial organization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Oxford, 1904) and *The guilds and companies of London* (London, 1908). He was appointed to Edinburgh in 1908. See Leslie Clarkson, 'Unwin, George (1870–1925)' in Donald Rutherford (ed.), *The biographical dictionary of British economists* (2 vols, Bristol, 2004), ii, 1238–9. For Ashley, see Barbara M. D. Smith, 'Ashley, William James (1860–1927)', in *ibid.*, i, 21–8. For Cunningham, see Clarkson, 'Cunningham, William (1849–1919)', in *ibid.*, i, 289–94.

³⁸ Todd, unpublished memoir.

³⁹ Copies of the references, first used by Todd to support his application for the Edinburgh lectureship, are contained in the Dalhousie University Archives.

⁴⁰ Nicholson held the Edinburgh chair from 1880 to 1925. See Donald Rutherford, 'Nicholson, Joseph Shield (1850–1927)' in *idem*, *The biographical dictionary*, ii, 854–8. Nicholson's *Principles* ran to 1200 pages.

⁴¹ Todd, unpublished memoir. There were fourteen applicants. Apart from Todd, the name of only the runner-up is known: Norman B. Deale, M.A. (Oxon.)

Todd entered a frenzy of writing lectures for large classes. He also needed to prepare an inaugural lecture to be delivered before the university senate. At the end of the first session he married his fiancée, Frances Hannah Jagger. Then came tragedy: 'Within six months my poor young wife was dead, slain by the fell disease with which she had battled for several years.'⁴² Smith advised Todd to leave Edinburgh. Smith had been asked to recommend someone for a lectureship at McGill University in Montreal and he urged Todd to go for it.⁴³

Todd resigned his Edinburgh post and departed for McGill, only to discover that the appointment was for one year only. Fortunately, Dalhousie was looking for someone to fill its chair of history and economics; as a result of inquiries in Edinburgh it approached Todd.⁴⁴ Dalhousie offered him the post, which he accepted, although the thought of professing economics, 'was a bit of a facer'; economics remained a 'thorn in my flesh' throughout his time in Dalhousie. Todd returned to Scotland in the summer of 1913 to prepare his lectures and to bolster his command of economics. Back in Canada he embarked on a heavy diet of teaching. Many of his students were of Scottish descent; he enjoyed their company and his contacts with local Burns clubs.⁴⁵

Todd was back in Scotland in the spring of 1914. On 1 June he married for the second time; his bride was Margaret Simpson Johnstone Maybin of Elderslie, Renfrewshire.⁴⁶ The two of them returned to Nova Scotia just at the outbreak of war and Todd resumed teaching. But the shadow of the conflict in Europe lay heavily upon him. 'I was the only able-bodied male of our family connection not in khaki', he recalled, and he was continually saddened by news of the deaths of Edinburgh and Oxford contemporaries.⁴⁷ In March 1916 he told Dalhousie he intended to resign his chair and return to Scotland to work in a munitions factory. The college suggested instead he take unpaid leave of absence.⁴⁸ Todd and his wife sold their possessions to pay the fare and the family, now including an infant son, crossed the Atlantic from New York, hoping to avoid submarine attack.

(Information from Mr Grant Butters). Deale is not a name that today resonates with economic historians.

⁴² Todd, unpublished memoir. Frances Hannah Jagger of Leadhills, Lanarkshire, daughter of John Jagger, deceased, a Methodist minister. The marriage took place in Edinburgh on 8 July 1911. She was twenty-nine and Todd was twenty-five. She died on 20 January 1912 of pulmonary phthisis (Extracts from the Register of Marriages and Register of Deaths in Scotland, accessed via www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration). Copies of the extracts are now among the Todd papers (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/ Professor J.E. Todd). This marriage was seemingly not known beyond a tight circle of Todd's friends. The *Dictionary of Irish Biography* lists only Todd's marriage in 1914 to Margaret Maybin (Timothy Bowman, 'Todd, James Eadie (1885–1949)', in *D.I.B.*).

⁴³ Todd, unpublished memoir.

⁴⁴ The inquiries were through James Seth, professor of philosophy at Edinburgh and one time professor of philosophy at Dalhousie. Seth had had Todd in his sights as early as 1912 when Todd had no intention of leaving Edinburgh. Seth, Edinburgh, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 30 Jan. 1913 (D.U.A.).

⁴⁵ Todd, unpublished memoir.

⁴⁶ She was the daughter of William Maybin, a schoolmaster, and his wife Catherine. Both parents were dead. Margaret Maybin was twenty-nine (Extract from the Register of Marriages in Scotland, accessed via www.nrscotland.gov.uk/registration)

⁴⁷ Todd, unpublished memoir.

⁴⁸ Todd to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 13 Mar. 1916 (D.U.A.).

In Scotland the idea of a munitions factory was abandoned; instead Todd became a second lieutenant in the Scottish Fusiliers. In April 1917 a false report reached Canada that he had been killed at Vimy Ridge.⁴⁹ In fact he had been posted to Mesopotamia where he avoided bullets but not mosquitos. He contracted malaria, an illness that plagued him for the rest of his life and changed his personality. Whereas early accounts tell of a friendly, outgoing young man, the Todd of post-war years was known for his uneven temper and dark moods. Cronne remembered ‘times when recurrent bouts of malaria ... made him deeply depressed and prone to be hypercritical. ... Just before these bouts members of his staff, and more especially his Assistant ... were likely to receive severe wiggings for faults that were largely imaginary’. Estyn Evans remarked on ‘Todd’s saturnine face and his bouts of ill-temper [which] were attributed to the recurrence of fever’.⁵⁰

Todd was repatriated to Scotland at the beginning of 1919, still seriously ill, and was not discharged from the army until his health improved in June. He began to think about returning to Dalhousie.⁵¹ The prospect was unappealing on family and financial grounds.⁵² But a failed application for a fellowship at Balliol left the Todds with no alternative but to book passages for their return to Canada where Dalhousie had offered him a resettlement grant. Their sailing date was already set when Mrs Todd saw an advertisement for the vacant chair at Queen’s. Todd applied and was called for interview at a date ten days after their planned departure. There were nine candidates, including Todd. On 24 September 1919 the university senate noted the appointment of Professor J. E. Todd M.A. to the chair of modern history at an annual salary of £600. A. L. Smith, now master of Balliol, described Todd as ‘certainly one of the very ablest students of History who ever attended Balliol, and that he possessed a great degree of strength and a wide and cosmopolitan experience’.⁵³ Todd cabled the news to his wife in Scotland. Another cable went to Dalhousie informing the president of his non-return.⁵⁴ ‘My wandering days were over’, he noted, ‘and this was to be my home and sphere for the rest of my working life’.⁵⁵

IV

On 14 October 1919 Todd wrote to President Mackenzie, ‘I begin my work at Queen’s today’.⁵⁶ Todd’s predecessor was F. M. Powicke (later Sir Maurice

⁴⁹ On 12 April a Halifax newspaper carried the headline, ‘Dalhousie Professor makes the supreme sacrifice’, relying on a report from an army chaplain, ‘somewhere in France’. A letter from Mrs Todd eventually told the president of Dalhousie of her husband’s whereabouts (*Evening Mail*, 12 Apr. 1917; Mrs Margaret Todd, Elderslie, Scotland, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 10 May 1917 (D.U.A.)).

⁵⁰ Cronne, ‘Reminiscences’; Estyn Evans, ‘Geography at QUB’.

⁵¹ Todd, Edinburgh, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 29 June 1919 (D.U.A.).

⁵² Todd sets these out in a letter of 4 August explaining his decision to apply for the Queen’s chair (Todd, Elderslie, Scotland to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 4 Aug. 1919 (D.U.A.)).

⁵³ Minutes of Senate of Queen’s University, Belfast (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/3/2/1/1/6, 1919), pp 185–6

⁵⁴ Todd, Edinburgh, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 9 Sept. 1919 (D.U.A.).

⁵⁵ Todd, unpublished memoir.

⁵⁶ Todd, Belfast, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 14 Oct. 1919 (D.U.A.).

Powicke) who had been appointed in 1909 as the foundation professor. In 1915 he was seconded to the War Trade Intelligence Department and for three years Maude Clarke, an outstanding Queen's history graduate, returned from Oxford to act as his substitute.⁵⁷ As late as February 1919, Queen's expected Powicke to be back.⁵⁸ Instead he was elected to the chair of history at Manchester. There was no time for the university to name a successor in the calendar for 1919–20; instead it repeated brief details of Powicke's courses, together with a statement that lectures on Ireland would be given and that book lists would be issued at the beginning of the session.⁵⁹

In 1920–1 Todd set out his own stall. There was a pass course on European history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and an honours course consisting of a 'special subject', together with studies of the 'Great Rebellion', and the political and constitutional history of Great Britain and Ireland, 449–1603. There was also a class devoted to the study of documents based on Stubbs's *Charters* and Prothero's *Statutes*.⁶⁰ Todd's teaching concentrated on modern European history and particularly seventeenth-century English history, which had 'an enduring fascination'.⁶¹ The presence of Stubbs and Prothero on the reading lists testified to his belief in the importance of documentary studies for advanced students. In this, he fitted readily into the mainstream of history teaching in British universities as it had developed in the later-nineteenth century. Stubbs had established the centrality of English medieval and constitutional history following his appointment to the regius chair at Oxford in 1866. For Stubbs and his many successors the emergence of political communities and self-governing institutions advanced in triumphal strides from Anglo-Saxon times, via Stephen Langton and Magna Carta, the Civil War, the Glorious Revolution, to the flowering of parliamentary democracy in the nineteenth century.⁶²

It was an enduring interpretation. As Kenyon puts it: 'up to the Second World War, at least, most provincial universities were remarkably loyal to the traditions of late Victorian Oxford: whatever the cost English history must be taught in its entirety, wherever possible with the aid of original documents, and

⁵⁷ For an account of Powicke's time at Queen's see, Maurice Keen, 'Maurice Powicke: medieval historical scholarship at Queen's' in Jackson and Livingstone (eds), *Queen's thinkers*, pp 83–92.

⁵⁸ In December 1918 Powicke told the university that he hoped to be back in March 1919. In February he reported that his return had been delayed 'until the end of the session' (Academic council minutes, vol. iii (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/1/5/A/1/1918–1921)).

⁵⁹ University Calendars, 1917–20 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/2/1/9/1917–18; QUB/E/2/1/10/1918–19; QUB/E/2/1/11/1919–20). Powicke's teaching was influenced by his time in Manchester where he had studied and taught under Tait and Tout. His courses in Belfast included a special subject, 'The History of Great Britain and Ireland 1625–1660'. See Jennifer FitzGerald, *Helen Waddell and Maude Clarke. Irish women, friends and scholars* (Berne, 2012), pp 31–3.

⁶⁰ University Calendar, 1920–1 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/2/1/12/1920–21); William Stubbs, *Select charters and other illustrations of English constitutional history: from the earliest times to the reign of Edward the First* (9th ed., rev. by H. W. C. Davis, Oxford, 1913); G. W. Prothero (ed.), *Select statutes and other constitutional documents illustrative of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I* (Oxford, 1913).

⁶¹ Cronne, Moody & Quinn, 'Introduction: James Eadie Todd', p. xii.

⁶² For an introduction, see J. G. Edwards, *William Stubbs* (London, 1952).

overseas history, including European history, must find a place where it could. Sir Richard Lodge and George Prothero even imposed early English constitutional history, complete with Stubbs, on the hapless Scots at Glasgow and Edinburgh.⁶³ What Lodge and Prothero did to the Scots, Todd did in Northern Ireland.⁶⁴ The only substantial change for the rest of the decade was the introduction in 1927 of medieval courses in English and European history following the appointment of G. R. Potter as assistant lecturer in medieval history.⁶⁵

V

Major changes in the syllabus were introduced in 1935, designed to give greater importance to Irish history. Todd had then been in post for a decade and a half, which was a long time for someone who, in the words of a colleague, 'felt strongly the need to study Irish History in an Irish university of the British Commonwealth'.⁶⁶ His *Festschrift's* editors suggested the delay was because Todd's resources were limited; and it is true that he had to cope with rising numbers of students without assistance until 1922.⁶⁷ This cannot be the whole story. In 1927, when Todd was able to hire an additional lecturer, he chose a medievalist and split his department into departments of medieval and modern history.⁶⁸ When Potter resigned three years later he was succeeded by another medievalist, R. R. Betts. The Stubbsian tradition remained strong.

Political events may have contributed to the delay. Todd's early years at Queen's coincided with partition and the immediate task for the university was to meet the needs of Northern Ireland. If anything, partition strengthened the case for teaching British constitutional history and to ignore Irish history except in the limited sphere of the political links between Ireland and Britain. In a related area of study, economic history – the responsibility of the

⁶³ Kenyon, *The history men*, pp 207–8. Lodge and Prothero built on the Stubbsian tradition already present in the teaching of constitutional history in the law faculties. See Robert Anderson, 'University teaching, national identity and unionism in Scotland, 1862–1914' in *Scottish Historical Review*, xci, no. 1 (Apr. 2012), pp 1–41; idem, 'The development of history teaching in the Scottish universities, 1894–1939' in *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, xxxii, no. 1 (May 2012), pp 50–73.

⁶⁴ And what R. F. Treharne imposed on Welsh students in University College, Aberystwyth according to my former colleague Dr Alun Davies, who was an undergraduate there.

⁶⁵ University Calendar, 1928–9 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/2/1/20/1928–29).

⁶⁶ J. W. B[lake], 'J. E. Todd. An appreciation' in *Annual Record of the Queen's University Association* (Belfast, 1950), pp 44–5.

⁶⁷ In 1921–2 Todd delivered 225 lectures to thirty-one students (Vice-Chancellor's annual report, 1921–22 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/3/2/1/1/9)). Two years later there were sixty-four students and Todd gave 239 lectures, with his assistant conducting tutorials (Annual report, 1923–24 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/3/2/1/1/10)). In 1928–9 there were sixty-five students in modern history and thirty-seven education students reading history. Todd gave 298 lectures and tutorials and Cronne, his assistant, fifty-four. G. R. Potter had twenty-nine students in medieval history and gave 317 lectures (Annual report, 1928–29 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/3/2/1/1/12)).

⁶⁸ Todd's chair was in modern history, following the then usual practice of dividing history into ancient and modern periods, the division being the collapse of the Roman empire.

department of economics – before the war there had been two courses covering both England and Ireland. Conrad Gill, well known for his book on the Irish linen industry, had delivered these. Following Gill's departure in 1919 there was a single shared survey course on Britain and Ireland given by Joseph Lemburger who held a joint appointment in economic history and political science. In 1926 Irish economic history disappeared from the syllabus; thereafter there was nothing until the appointment of K. H. Connell in 1953.⁶⁹

But the most important reason for the delay was that for years there was no one properly qualified to teach Irish history. Most of Todd's early students read for the pass degree and did not proceed to honours; an early exception was Cronne, but he went on to become a historian of medieval England. It was only at the end of the 1920s that two outstanding graduates, Moody and Quinn, were sent to London to write doctorates on Irish history. There was not much help to be had south of the border. Historians in University College, Dublin had, in the words of Dudley Edwards, 'little connexion with historical research'. Trinity College contributed little to the study of modern Irish history. Edmund Curtis, an Oxford-trained historian, held the Lecky Chair of History. He was 'a devoted student of medieval Irish history', but 'drifted helplessly in the cross-currents of Trinity academic life'. He was assisted by Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, newly returned from Cambridge, who eventually became a distinguished medievalist; and, for the modern period, by Constantia Maxwell. She wrote what has been described as 'G. M. Trevelyan's kind of social history' and was appointed to a chair of economic history in 1939.⁷⁰ W. Alison Phillips was the Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History. His interests were in European history. He was an 'undisguised and unashamed Englishman doing a job in a foreign land, and spending in Dublin only the minimum time needed for his lectures and examinations'.⁷¹ It was only when Moody moved to Trinity in 1939 that the serious study of modern Irish history based on archival work was introduced.

In Belfast the planning for Irish courses started in 1932 with the return of Moody to the assistantship.⁷² Todd probably had this development in mind ever since Moody had left for London in 1930. When Betts resigned the medieval lectureship in 1935 the post was converted into a lectureship in Irish history to which Moody was appointed. Todd took over the medieval teaching in addition to his existing commitments. Under the new arrangements pass students continued to receive hefty doses of English and European history.⁷³

⁶⁹ L. A. Clarkson, 'Introduction: K. H. Connell and economic and social history at Queen's University, Belfast' in J. M. Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (eds), *Irish population, economy, and society: essays in honour of the late K. H. Connell* (Oxford, 1981), p. 3.

⁷⁰ Lyons, "'T.W.M.'", pp 8–9. Her best-known book is probably *Dublin under the Georges, 1714–1830* (London, 1936).

⁷¹ R. W. Dudley Edwards, 'T. W. Moody and the origins of *Irish Historical Studies*: a biographical memoir' in *I.H.S.*, xxvi, no. 101 (May 1988), pp 1–2; R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin 1592–1952: an academic history* (Dublin, 1982), pp 412, 458.

⁷² The assistantship had been vacated by Cronne in 1931. Ketelbey's appointment (1931–2) was almost certainly intended as a stopgap until Moody was ready to return.

⁷³ The details are taken from Q.U.B., Minutes of the faculty of arts, vol. iv (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/E/4/1/B/1933–37).

Honours students were offered two courses on English constitutional history, with Stubbs and Prothero still figuring prominently, and yet more European history. But there was also a survey course on Ireland 1485–1800, and a special subject, ‘the policy of the early Stuarts in England and Ireland 1603–1641’, as well as a ‘special study of books and documents’ on Ireland.⁷⁴ Enthusiastic graduates could proceed to an M.A. by examination composed of six papers: an essay, two papers on European history, two more on the American Revolution, and one on the Tudor conquest of Ireland based on a study of prescribed books.⁷⁵ The Irish courses concentrated on the political relations between the three kingdoms. The detailed study of Gaelic society had to await a future generation of scholars.⁷⁶

More important than the number of papers was the approach Moody brought to the subject. His historical philosophy had been imbibed from Todd; and as Cronne put it, ‘if James stood for one thing more than any other in the teaching and study of History that thing was “disinterested interest” – the Greek – and the Stubbsian – attitude of mind’.⁷⁷ Moody honed his Stubbsian skills at the Institute by immersing himself in the archives of the London companies involved in the Ulster plantation. Just as important were his contacts ‘with many of the best minds outside Oxford and Cambridge who were then advancing the frontiers of British historical scholarship’. These included R. H. Tawney, A. P. Newton, J. E. Neale and Wallace Notestein.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ These included Edward Hyde, earl of Clarendon, *History of the rebellion and civil wars in Ireland* (London, 1720); ‘Project for the plantation of the escheated lands in Ulster’ in *Cal. Carew MSS, 1515–74*, vi, 13–22; T. W. Moody (ed.), ‘The revised articles of the Ulster plantation, 1610’ in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xii, no. 36 (Feb. 1935), pp 178–83; excerpts from *The earl of Strafford’s letters and dispatches, with an essay towards his life, by Sir George Radcliffe* (2 vols, London, 1739).

⁷⁵ These included Richard Bagwell, *Ireland under the Tudors: with a succinct account of the earlier history* (3 vols, London, 1885–90); Agnes Conway, *Henry VII’s relations with Scotland and Ireland, 1485–1498* (Cambridge, 1932); Philip Wilson, *The beginnings of modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1914); W. F. T. Butler, *Confiscation in Irish history* (London, 1918), chapter one; idem, ‘The policy of surrender and regrant’ in idem, *Gleanings from Irish history* (London, 1925); Edmund Spenser, ‘A view of Irish history in 1596’ in Constantia Maxwell (ed.), *Irish history from contemporary sources* (London, 1923).

⁷⁶ See Michelle O’Riordan, ‘Ireland, 1600–1780: new approaches’ in Mary McAuliffe, Katherine O’Donnell & Leeann Lane (eds), *Palgrave advances in Irish history* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp 49–94.

⁷⁷ This comment was prompted by a letter from a schoolteacher, Daniel Liddy, in Waterford in February 1946. When Liddy heard of the Festschrift he contacted Moody claiming to be a ‘personal friend of Mr Todd’s’ and noting that the name of Dr Patrick Rogers of St Malachy’s College (‘one of Professor Todd’s most brilliant students’) was not on the list of contributors and there was no plan to include an article written in Irish. Liddy offered to write a paper himself. When Cronne saw the letter he told Moody: ‘I quite see the type he [Liddy] represents – and I feel that any reflection of the opinions of such people in the Todd volume would be most undesirable.’ He continued, ‘any sort of party statement, whether in English or in Irish, would be not only out of place, but positively harmful’. (Liddy to Moody, 22 Feb. 1946; Cronne to Moody, 28 Feb. 1946). Rogers, in fact, became a contributor. These and subsequent quotations are from the letters contained in Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd.

⁷⁸ Lyons, “‘T.W.M.’”, p. 4.

Moody is the link between Todd and the future development of Irish historical studies. Moody has sometimes been described as writing ‘value-free’ history although he preferred to speak of demythologising the Irish past.⁷⁹ His aims were shared by Dudley Edwards, back in Dublin after his own studies at the Institute where he had become friends with Moody, by Quinn, and later by younger colleagues in Belfast, Dublin and elsewhere. They discussed their work at meetings of the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies and its sister society in Dublin and through the auspices of the Irish Committee for Historical Sciences established in 1938, and they published their findings in *Irish Historical Studies*.⁸⁰

By the 1980s the achievements of Moody, Edwards, their contemporaries and successors, had become almost a new orthodoxy. Their work even began to be denounced as ‘revisionism’, an odd charge to be directed against any historian. But revisionism had been given a particular meaning in Ireland. It had become a challenge to ‘the “Irish-Ireland” tradition of history, which claimed the Irish people are a unified Celtic nation viciously oppressed throughout their history by English/British imperialism’.⁸¹ Its most trenchant critic, Brendan Bradshaw, described the whole approach as ‘vitiated by a faulty methodological procedure’.⁸² It is not the purpose of this essay to revisit the debate on revisionism, but to point to the part played by Todd in its birth. He cannot be described as a revisionist since he neither published in nor taught Irish history. But he was a powerful influence on the young Moody who acknowledged his debt ‘to Todd’s inspiration and friendship [and] I owe more [to him] than I can ever express’.⁸³ Todd has a good claim to be regarded as the godfather of revisionism.

With his Irish lectureship secured, and an additional assistant lecturer appointed in 1935 (J. W. Blake), Todd was able to lay ‘the foundations in Queen’s of a School of History that was to contribute greatly to the renaissance and development of Irish historical studies in Ireland’.⁸⁴ The school became the busiest in the faculty of arts. In 1944, Quinn compiled a list of former graduate students as possible contributors to Todd’s *Festschrift*.⁸⁵ Cronne, Moody and Quinn were from the 1920s; but an inspection of the

⁷⁹ See the discussion in Ciaran Brady, “‘Constructive and instrumental’”: the dilemma of Ireland’s first “new historians” in idem (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history*, pp 3–31, and especially Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland’ in *ibid.*, pp 191–216 (first published in *I.H.S.*, xxvi, no. 97 (Nov. 1989), pp 329–51). On mythology see T. W. Moody, ‘Irish history and Irish mythology’ in *ibid.*, pp 71–86 (first published in *Hermathena*, cxxiv (1978), pp 7–24). Patrick Maume has pointed out that whatever Moody and Edwards were aiming for was not ‘value-free’ history. ‘On the contrary it could be argued that it reflects an ethical commitment to civic peace through mutual recognition of the Other based on a common ground of scholarly technique’ (Patrick Maume, ‘Irish political history’ in McAuliffe, O’Donnell & Lane (eds), *Palgrave advances in Irish history*, p. 3).

⁸⁰ Brady, “‘Constructive and instrumental’”, pp 3–6.

⁸¹ Maume, ‘Irish political history’, p. 2. For the extensive debate on revisionism see Brady (ed.), *Interpreting Irish history*, *passim*.

⁸² See Bradshaw, ‘Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland’, p. 191.

⁸³ Quoted in Lyons, “‘T.W.M.’”, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Cronne, ‘Reminiscences’.

⁸⁵ Quinn to Moody, 11 July 1944 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/JJ/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd).

minutes of the faculty and academic council reveals twenty graduate students from the 1930s and early 1940s. All but two worked on Irish topics from the mid-seventeenth to the late nineteenth century; and only one chose to leave Belfast to study.⁸⁶ Fourteen former pupils, including Cronne, Moody and Quinn, were invited to contribute to the *Festschrift*; two contributions were eventually rejected as unsatisfactory.⁸⁷

VI

Sir David Keir, vice-chancellor during Todd's final years, described him as 'that great teacher, [and] the kindly guide to so many'.⁸⁸ The judgement carries weight; but vice-chancellors do not enjoy the perspective of undergraduates. Estyn Evans, as a young lecturer, was closer to their experience; he sometimes heard Todd's lectures through the wall of the wooden building they shared. He recalled 'some of the more remarkable of Professor Todd's phrases, repeated at dictation speed ... The Poles were "nothing more and nothing less than a pack of licentious, narrow-minded corrupt backwoodsmen – licentious – corrupt – backwoodsmen".' Todd, according to Evans, was among several Queen's professors who 'had long ceased to do original work, published little and spent their time polishing phrases in their set lectures to Pass students which were delivered in the oratorical style of the old Sorbonne'. Evans acknowledged, though, that Todd's 'abler students were devoted to him and he ... encouraged them to take up the study of Irish history as he understood it'.⁸⁹

H.A. Cronne remembered Todd's lectures fifty years after he first heard them:

Every lecture was a carefully prepared oratorical masterpiece, to which Todd's Scottish voice added a distinctive tone, and each was a superb piece of historical exposition and, in its particular course, a vital constituent of an impressive historical synthesis. He lectured slowly, repeating his elegant phrases, so that every member of his audience had an opportunity of making copious notes. It was a practice that had its dangers, since so many students were tempted to rely upon their notes to an undesirable extent, and many accepted them quite uncritically, regurgitating them at examinations. ... Those, on the other hand, who took Todd's lectures as a guide, were provided with a splendid basis for further study, as was intended.⁹⁰

The introduction to the *Festschrift*, possibly written by Cronne, claimed that every one of Todd's lectures was 'a work of art, the product of a superb historical interpreter who was also a master-craftsman in the English

⁸⁶ Isabel Megaw went to the Institute of Historical Research to work on medieval ecclesiastical history with Cronne.

⁸⁷ Three former colleagues, Betts, Blake and Hughes, contributed essays. G. R. Potter was unable to prepare something in time. The final essay was by C. M. McInnes, a former pupil from Dalhousie.

⁸⁸ Keir, 'Old ways and new in history', p. 214.

⁸⁹ Estyn Evans, 'Geography at QUB'.

⁹⁰ Cronne, 'Reminiscences'.

language'. It recalled how 'a large pass-degree class was, on one occasion, so enthralled as to remain without protest a full twenty minutes beyond the allotted time of a lecture; and when Todd closed with a reference to the "stopping" of Mazzini's watch in 1848 and consulted his own timepiece, the laughter on both sides was spontaneous, and the applause from the benches a tribute such as on normal occasions the class would not have ventured to offer'.⁹¹

Humour was an emotion not usually evident in Todd's classes. Nevertheless, Teresa O'Connor, an undergraduate in the 1930s, claimed that students 'thought the world of Professor Todd'.⁹² John Boyd, later well known as a playwright and B.B.C. producer, did not agree.

In the modern history class the professor, a tall urbane Scot, paced to and fro, armed with a long pointer and reading out his lecture at a pedestrian pace *twice*, so that we could write down his every word in our notebooks. As I'd been told the lectures didn't change from year to year, and as the task of writing them out to dictation was tedious in the extreme, I jumped at the offer of a second-year undergraduate – a set of written lectures for half a crown. As a result I was even more bored, having to listen for an hour to a discourse delivered in a melodious sleep-inducing Scottish accent, the ornate prose obviously providing the professor himself with a great deal of satisfaction. To pass the degree exam it was enough to regurgitate these lectures, thereby qualifying yourself to teach history. Absurd of course; for this dull academic political history, full of incomprehensible treaties and diplomatic entanglements, taught in isolation from social and economic history was useless.⁹³

A quasi-fictional description of Todd's lectures by Hugh Shearman, a student in the late 1930s (and a contributor to the *Festschrift*) largely accords with Boyd's description. Shearman's novel, *A bomb and a girl*, is set in the Queen's of the 1930s. The central character is a malevolent student, Stanislas McOstrich, who constructs a bomb to kill the professor of Latin who repeatedly fails his essays. The assassination is successful and McOstrich reflects on his achievement during a lecture delivered by a 'Professor McAlinden'.

He dealt with Bismarck and the wars of Schleswig-Holstein and Königgratz and all the history of the North German Confederation and the events that led up to the founding of the German Empire. Stanislas

⁹¹ Cronne, Moody & Quinn, 'Introduction: James Eadie Todd', pp xi–xii. The Mazzini reference is to an incident said to have occurred in Milan when Giuseppe Mazzini was leading the revolt against Austrian rule in 1848.

⁹² Teresa M. O'Connor, Dungiven, Co. Londonderry, to Moody, T.C.D., 18 Sept. 1944 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd).

⁹³ Boyd, *Out of my class*, p. 110. Boyd also recalled a conversation with E. R. R. (Rodney) Green, later director of the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's. Green spent a year at Q.U.B. in the early 1940s before transferring to Trinity College. Boyd asked Green what he studied. 'History, mostly. At least that's what they called the garbage.' (Boyd, *The middle of my journey*, p. 10).

scribbled down the lecture in his notebook, and, as Professor McAlinden uttered it word for word in his slow, metronomic enunciation, it seemed to form a background and a solemn triumphal chorus to his own massive feeling of elation and triumph.⁹⁴

Two conclusions may be drawn from these conflicting accounts. The first is that Todd did not enthuse his listeners in equal measure. This is not surprising; students possess varying degrees of scholarly commitment. The second is that the passing years left their mark. Todd's final years were a continual worry to his friends. Margaret, his wife, died in 1940; his son was missing somewhere in the Far East; arthritis and a duodenal ulcer added to the malaria that had tortured him since 1919. He had become acutely sensitive to hurts, even when none were intended. Todd was irrationally upset when the vice-chancellor insisted on keeping him distant from the appointment of his successor. Cronne reported that Todd's 'many sorrows may have changed him somewhat' and students had grown afraid of him.⁹⁵ Gone was the young teacher who 'took such endless trouble' with his pupils, 'collectively and individually exhorting and encouraging them and striving for the development not merely of historical abilities but of the whole man, safeguarding their interests and furthering their careers'.⁹⁶ In his place was a man burdened by ill health, sorrow, and perhaps a sense of failure.

In retirement Todd lamented his failure to publish: 'I got no *systematic* training in research, and was to feel the effects of this all through my career. Indeed, this was one of the reasons why I have no literary works to my name; the other being that far too many years elapsed before I was given adequate leisure from the teaching grind.'⁹⁷ As a young man A. L. Smith remarked on Todd's 'keen love of research' and his skilful use of books and manuscripts. In 1912 he accepted a contract with Geo. Bell and Sons, publishers, to write a textbook on economic history; it was never completed.⁹⁸

In today's academic world Todd would not survive. But it was different then. Universities accommodated dedicated teachers together with pioneering researchers, dull plodders and even dilettante scholars. Todd's critical colleague, Estyn Evans, was a pioneer, the 'first professor of geography in

⁹⁴ Shearman, *A bomb and a girl*, quotation at p. 54. Shearman's claim that no character in his novel resembled staff or students is unconvincing. Shearman later became a 'moderate apologist' for Ulster unionism. See Gillian McIntosh, *The forces of culture: unionist identity in contemporary Ireland* (Cork 1999), pp 190–4.

⁹⁵ Cronne to Moody, 7 Aug. 1944; Blake to Moody, 10 Dec. 1944; Cronne to Moody, 10 Jan. 1945; Blake to Moody, 26 Jan. 1945; Blake to Moody, 18 Feb. 1945; Cronne to Moody, 17 May 1945; Blake to Moody, 22 May 1945; Quinn to Moody, 29 May 1945; Cronne to Moody, 19 Dec. 1945 (Q.U.B., Archive, QUB/J1/20/Professor J.E. Todd).

⁹⁶ Cronne, 'Reminiscences'.

⁹⁷ Todd, unpublished memoir.

⁹⁸ A. L. Smith, Balliol, to Edinburgh University, 1 July 1910; Todd, McGill, to President Mackenzie, Dalhousie, 17 Jan. 1913 (D.U.A.). There is no record of the Todd volume in the archives of Geo. Bell and Sons which are deposited at the University of Reading (I am grateful to the archivist for this information), but Bell and Sons were advertising it as forthcoming during the 1920s.

Ireland, archaeologist and folklorist, writer, artist and broadcaster'.⁹⁹ H. O. Meredith, professor of economics between 1911 and 1945, author, before he came to Queen's, of a textbook on British economic history and another on protectionism in France, as well as a slim volume of poems, had lapsed into the dilettante class. His consuming passion was not economics but drama. Meredith published his own translations of plays of Euripides and in 1933 directed unemployed shipyard workers in performances of Sophocles and Marlow. He was president of the Queen's Dramatic Society, and co-founder of the Northern Drama League.¹⁰⁰ Todd and Meredith did not get on. As Cronne reported to Moody, Todd, 'had found M[eredith] at Queen's and would leave him there, and that in the course of an association lasting over a quarter of a century they had never been in agreement on a single point'.¹⁰¹

After Todd's death, John Blake recalled, 'his formalism made access to the inner man slow, and those who knew him ... inside his family circle, sometimes found it hard to credit that this was also the professor who delivered formal lectures to his pass students. It took time to break down the barriers; once they were gone one found an infinitely kind, amazingly understanding and self-effacing person.'¹⁰² Moody said of Todd that he 'professed history as a high and holy calling'.¹⁰³ For some of his students Todd was a tedious bore; for others – perhaps a majority – his carefully constructed lectures were the safe pathway to a pass mark. But there were also those for whom Todd was the spark that kindled their historical curiosity, setting them on a journey leading to a fruitful flowering of Irish historical scholarship. Moody, Quinn, Beckett and the others were inspired by Todd, and they went on to inspire pupils of their own. The present generation of historians owes much to Todd, even though they may never have heard of him.

⁹⁹ Ronald Buchanan, Noel Mitchell, *et al.* *Mourne country revisited: a tribute to Estyn Evans* (Belfast, 2000), quotation from the title page. See also Henry Glassie, 'E. Estyn Evans and the interpretation of the Irish landscape' in Jackson & Livingstone (eds), *Queen's thinkers*, pp 131–40.

¹⁰⁰ For Meredith, see Wesley McCann, "'Apostles" in Belfast: H. O. Meredith & E. M. Forster' in *Linen Hall Review*, i, no. 4 (Winter 1984), pp 11–13; *idem*, 'H. O. Meredith (1878–1964), professor of economics, 1911–1945' in *The Queen's University Association Annual Review* (1984 & 1985), pp 130–4; S. Gourley Putt, 'A packet of Bloomsbury letters: the forgotten H. O. Meredith' in *Encounter*, lxxix (Nov. 1982), pp 77–84.

¹⁰¹ Cronne to Moody, 7 Aug. 1944 (Q.U.B. Archive, QUB/J/1/20/Professor J.E. Todd). In June 1945 Professor Macbeath (professor of philosophy) was worried that Moody might not be able to preside at Todd's retirement dinner. It would then become the responsibility for the senior professor to take the chair 'and the senior professor is Meredith & I needn't say more' (Macbeath to Moody, 16 June 1945 (*ibid.*)).

¹⁰² B[lake], 'J. E. Todd. An appreciation', pp 44–5. Blake was Todd's colleague for ten years. Blake kept in touch with him after he retired and visited him in Edinburgh.

¹⁰³ The phrase quoted in Lyons, "'T.W.M.'", p. 2. I am grateful to Professor David Hayton, Dr Alun Davies and the late Dr Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh for comments on an earlier draft; and to Dr Margaret Crawford and Ms Ursula Mitchel, the Q.U.B. archivist, for assistance with the references.