

a surfeit of administrative and evangelical energy. Its capacities, like its finances, may have been diminished by its intermittently difficult relationship with the Guild of St Anne, select extracts from whose records are also helpfully reproduced. Yet it continued to function, it seems fair to conclude, as most parishes largely did, as an exemplar neither of hyper-efficiency nor of lamentable in-efficiency. It was, in other words representative in many ways of a Church of which more was asked than it had the capacity fully to deliver, and whose history, as revealed by this useful series, continues to offer telling insights into the city and society in which it was located.

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THE SHADOW OF A YEAR: THE 1641 REBELLION IN IRISH HISTORY AND MEMORY. By John Gibney. Pp xii, 244. Madison, Wisc: University of Wisconsin Press. \$29.95.

On 22 October 1641 government forces thwarted an attempt to seize Dublin castle but could not prevent Catholic insurgents from capturing strategic strongholds in Ulster. Over the winter of 1641 and spring of 1642 the rebellion spread to engulf the rest of the country. The rising was accompanied by incidents of extreme violence as Catholics attacked, robbed and murdered their Protestant neighbours. The Protestants retaliated with equal force in what became one of the most brutal periods of sectarian violence in Irish history. The total number of men, women and children who lost their lives in the aftermath of the rebellion or subsequent war has been debated for centuries. Though the figure will never be known, it is likely that more people died during the course of the 1640s than in the rebellion of 1798 or in the 'Troubles' and civil wars of the twentieth century. The '1641 depositions', which provide a unique insight into this particularly traumatic period of Irish history, record the events that surrounded the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion primarily from the perspective of the Protestant community. In all about 8,000 depositions or witness statements, examinations and associated materials, by thousands of men and women of all social classes, amounting to 19,010 pages and bound in thirty-one volumes, are extant in Trinity College Dublin. They are, as Gibney notes, amongst the most controversial documents in Irish history.

In *The shadow of a year* Gibney examines how the traumatic events associated with 1641 were remembered, where, by whom and for what purpose. The absence of a folklore or oral tradition around 1641 is striking, especially when compared to the rich tradition associated with the events of 1798. This has forced Gibney to focus on the printed word, especially the bad-tempered historical debate around what actually happened in 1641. That debate began in the immediate wake of the insurrection and so does Gibney's account. Chapter 1 relates the Protestant version of 1641, beginning in the 1640s until the mid-nineteenth century. Gibney quite rightly focuses on the lasting influence of Sir John Temple's *The Irish rebellion*, first published in London in 1646 and numerous times thereafter, but also surveys how 1641 was treated by other writers and propagandists – John Milton, the earl of Clarendon, Edmund Borlase, William King, Sir Richard Musgrave and David Hume – as well as in pamphlets, sermons, commemorative editions and fictional works.

The second chapter provides a fascinating account of the construction of the Catholic counter-argument, beginning with the anonymous contemporary work, *An aphorismical discovery of treasonable faction*. Others followed. Another anonymous pamphlet by 'R. S.' appeared in 1662, Sir Richard Bellings and the earl of Castlehaven wrote histories and from the 1740s the influential works of John Curry formed part of a wider debate around Catholic dissent. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, attempts, most notably by Ferdinando Warner, an Anglican clergyman, were made to analyse the rebellion (and

especially the contested issue of the numbers massacred) in a less polemical fashion. Chapter 3 offers a detailed examination of attempts during the mid-nineteenth century to provide scholarly accounts of the rebellion and of the rancorous rows between 'eminent Victorians' (J. P. Prendergast, J. A. Froude, W. E. H. Lecky and Mary Hickson). Gibney completes his historiographical narrative with a review of the pioneering studies written over the last fifty years by Walter Love, Aidan Clarke, Nicholas Canny and others.

In short, this volume represents an excellent and accessible introduction to the historical literature surrounding 1641. It also reflects the renewed scholarly interest that the online publication of the depositions has helped to kindle. For example, a new generation of scholars offer fresh perspectives on the insurrection in *The 1641 depositions and the Irish rebellion* (London, 2012), which has been edited by Eamon Darcy, Annaleigh Margey and Elaine Murphy, who were researchers on the depositions project. Another volume – *Ireland, 1641: contexts and reactions* (Manchester, 2013), edited by Micheál Ó Siochrú and myself – offers some broader chronological comparisons and situates the events of 1641 in wider British, European and Atlantic contexts. Other recent research, such as Eamon Darcy's *The Irish rebellion of 1641 and the wars of the three kingdoms* (London, 2013), complements Gibney's volume by recovering the construction of the initial memory of the rebellion.

Throughout his book Gibney explores the importance of 1641 to contemporary Ireland and teases out the sensitivities surrounding memory and commemoration. The book opens with an account of the 2010 launch in the Long Room at Trinity of an exhibition about the Irish rebellion by Mary McAleese, then president of Ireland, and Ian Paisley, 'the epitome of an unyielding Protestant loyalism' (p. 3). McAleese spoke passionately of the importance of acknowledging our shared and contested past without being bound by it. Paisley did likewise. It was heartening, as Gibney notes, to see our political leaders embrace with such enthusiasm a period in our history that until relatively recently polarised communities along sectarian lines. As the events of 1641 now pass from memory into history, we are provided with an opportunity to approach the past differently, to ask new questions and offer fresh interpretations. *The shadow of a year* forms part of this dialogue.

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THE MINUTES OF THE ANTRIM MINISTERS' MEETING 1654–8. Edited by Mark S. Sweetnam. Pp 190. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2012. €50.

This volume contains a full transcription of the manuscript minutes of the Antrim Meeting from January 1654 to May 1658, albeit with unavoidable gaps between November 1654 and January 1655, and also between April and November 1657. It is not only the oldest record of the business conducted at the Ulster Meetings but one of the oldest extant sources relating to 'the history of Irish Presbyterianism' (p. 9).

Held in a period of relative stability for the Presbyterian community in Ireland, the Antrim Meeting was attended by elders and ministers who formed the core of its leadership at the time. Sweetnam argues that the Meeting was 'a sort of halfway house, an intermediate body between the local ministers and sessions, and the presbytery that covered all of Ulster' (p. 14). The minutes show that the Meeting dealt with moral issues in its capacity as a church court, such as sexual sin (predominantly in the form of fornication and adultery), slander, and drunkenness, which collectively provide us with a snapshot of the lives and experiences of 'ordinary' Presbyterians, namely 'eavesdropping servants, adulterous couples, scolding women, and slanderous men' (p. 38). Moreover, by virtue of their discussion of ministerial supply and training, pastoral care and preaching,