

in the North of Ireland, is beyond all others the religion of reason' (p. xviii). But if he was a Dissenter partisan, Gamble was an idiosyncratic one whose beliefs are hard to pin down: he cared little for theological disputation, disliked Presbyterian psalmody, believed the Catholic religion – 'solemn in music, fragrant in incense' – to be 'delightful' and appears to have been unsure regarding the existence of an afterlife (p. 250). This is, however, a minor quibble. Mac Suibhne's opening essay remains a fitting introduction to a highly impressive publication, which will be of interest to many. Although coming in at a hefty 716 pages (excluding the lengthy introductory essay), it is also an attractive publication: *Field Day* are to be applauded for producing such an elegantly designed and laid out volume.

JONATHAN WRIGHT

*School of Histories and Humanities, Trinity College, Dublin*

FUNDING THE NATION: MONEY AND NATIONALIST POLITICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND.

By Michael Keyes. Pp viii, 268. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan. 2011. €24.99.

Most historians are notoriously more comfortable with ideas and narratives than figures and accounts. Anyone who researches nineteenth-century Irish nationalist politics will come across the issue of politicians' personal and party finances – published subscription lists in newspapers, the image of Daniel O'Connell as 'the Big Beggarman' extorting pennies from paupers, the political tensions caused by O'Connell's shaky personal finances, the perpetual conflict between condemning government patronage in theory and seeking it on behalf of supporters, the role of American contributions in financing Parnell's political movement and the accusations of thievery flung at him after that movement split in 1890 – but it is rare to find systematic expositions of how such considerations shaped political developments. This admirably clear and well-organised study, based on original research – whose challenges will only be apparent to those who have read early nineteenth-century newspapers on microfilm or navigated the undercatalogued manuscript collections of the National Library of Ireland – thus meets an important need.

Keyes's account centres on O'Connell and Parnell. He argues that while some elements of the O'Connellite strategy of building agitation around the collection of 'Catholic Rent' from small subscribers were first suggested by others (e.g. the Waterford M.P. Thomas Wyse, with his lifelong interest in popular education, first grasped how the structures used to collect the 'Rent' could be deployed for political mobilisation) O'Connell's achievement lay in exploiting them to create a new style of populist politics, to a certain extent independent of aristocratic wealth and government patronage. Not only was the agitation sustained by the 'Rent', to a considerable extent the 'Rent' – with its associated processes of collection and publicity (and the clientelism involved in its expenditure) – was the agitation. Keyes relates O'Connell's changing political strategies to the need to secure funding through popular enthusiasm (O'Connell having access to government patronage only during his informal coalition with the Whigs in the late 1830s).

O'Connell's financial resources did not allow him to maintain nationwide political ascendancy; his aristocratic opponents drained the 'Rent' by using their wealth to force him into expensive electoral contests where, in addition to the usual costs, he had to compensate tenants financially penalised by their landlords for supporting him. Parnell overcame these restraints because of reforms which created a larger and less deferential electorate, but also through securing American financial support on a scale not available to O'Connell. This involved its own balancing act. Keyes's Parnell is the Parnell of Paul Bew; a politician strategically manipulating land agitation to secure his own, essentially parliamentary, objectives. American money held together Parnell's support coalition, with

distribution of American-raised relief funds encouraging Land League organisation (and winning support from Catholic priests put in charge of the distribution). American funds underpinned the ‘rent at the point of a bayonet’ strategy, allowing more prosperous farmers to resist landlords up to a point without actually being evicted. American funding, however, could be disrupted by internal American disputes and ebbed and flowed unpredictably in response to political excitement; it was best stimulated by language which alienated the British opinion Parnell required to secure Home Rule, and agitation which potentially dissipated money faster than any effort could raise it. Parnell’s principal objective was to hold back sufficient financial reserves to secure an effective political organisation under his own control – ‘the leitmotif of his entire political career [was] the constant struggle to secure political funding that would not be consumed by agrarian agitation’ (p. 162) – and the illusion that Parnell possessed limitless financial reserves contributed to his downfall by alienating colleagues who could not understand his reluctance to subsidise the ‘money-pit’ Plan of Campaign.

Even such an admirable study cannot completely cover its subject. The view that as a semi-clandestine movement the United Irishmen could not produce popular political mobilisation as O’Connellism did (pp 13–14) might be challenged by scholars such as Jim Smyth. The contrast between conservative elitism and O’Connellite populism may also be overdrawn. For example, both Ireland and Britain had a well-recognised tradition of aristocratic radicals or Tory-radicals presenting themselves as proudly self-funding champions of the people, and criticism of O’Connell sometimes invokes this older image of the ‘friend of the people’. (Tom Steele, the eccentric Clare Protestant landowner who was one of O’Connell’s principal lieutenants, embodied this tradition despite severe financial hardship; in the 1870s the small Co. Down landlord William Johnston of Ballykilbeg failed to create a lasting Orange-populist movement because his refusal to seek money from supporters soon forced him back to seeking patronage from the official Tory leadership.) Early nineteenth-century newspapers often satirised opponents by publishing fictitious reports of ridiculous meetings, and the August 1841 report in the (Whig-O’Connellite) *Freeman’s Journal* of Tory organisers at the Carlton Club voting ‘a new coat, waistcoat and breeches ... to Mr Bonham [Peel’s Chief Whip and election organiser] as a reward for his active and daily abuse of the Whigs’ (pp 85–6) seems to be an example, though Keyes treats it as genuine.

Nonetheless, subsequent researchers will stand in the same debt to Keyes as he argues Parnell did to O’Connell. He has created a template; and no short review can do justice to the wealth of detail and range of comparisons and contrasts employed in its construction.

PATRICK MAUME

*Dictionary of Irish Biography, Royal Irish Academy*

IRISH JOURNALISM BEFORE INDEPENDENCE: MORE A DISEASE THAN A PROFESSION. Edited by Kevin Rafter. Pp xv, 240. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2011. £65 hardback; £14.99 paperback.

Newspapers and journalists have played a hugely important role in the evolution of Irish political culture, particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Despite this, scholarship on the history of the Irish press has been relatively scant, especially when compared to the robust state of British media studies. In recent years some excellent books and articles from publishers and journals on both sides of the Atlantic have begun to address this lacuna. Equally encouraging has been the founding of the multidisciplinary Newspaper and Periodical History Forum Ireland (N.P.H.F.I.). Edited by Kevin Rafter, this collection features a number of essays that were presented at the 2008 inaugural meeting of the N.P.H.F.I. at N.U.I. Galway. As Rafter rightly notes in