

Holdenby, Northampton, and Puddletown, Dorset, scripture words were painted on church walls. The statue of St Margaret found in the 1960s at Fingringhoe, Essex, had been turned face to wall ‘against the day’ (a recurrent phrase) when it would be needed again. ‘Mr Brokelsbie ... bought all such superstitious monuments and made them awaie’ at Scotter, Lincs, where a pond dredged in about 1676 revealed ‘three or four score little pretty images ... delicately cutt of alabaster’.

Individual acts of deliberate iconoclasm, such as Henry Sherfield’s glass-breaking at Salisbury in 1630, were often undertaken under cover of darkness; the psychology of the breakers, superficially simple, is often more complex. Aesthetic sense of age or beauty was rare, neither defence against idolatry nor pretext for preservation. Even to Laud, new building or glass made a place of worship seemly rather than beautiful. In 1643 Evelyn ‘saw the furious and zealous people demolish that stately Crosse in Cheapeside ... with no little regret’; to others it was ‘The Downefall of Dagon’; Hollar engraved the scene.

Elsewhere in Europe, religious revolution, if episodic, was short and sharp. The English Reformation lasted over a century, doctrinal issues turning political; like the Black Death, it affected rich and poor alike. Its cost in works of art is immeasurable, but it transformed the English language. It now has its history, amply documented by wide reading, of ‘Buildings of England’ as well as contemporary and modern historical texts, a lifetime’s work well spent.

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doi:10.1017/S0003581516000160

*Ireland in the Virginian Sea: colonialism in the British Atlantic*. By AUDREY HORNING. 250mm. Pp xxiii + 385, ills, maps, plans. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2013. ISBN 9781469610726. £40 (hbk).

Opening with a forceful statement of the entangled nature of our perceptions of past histories, in *Ireland in the Virginian Sea* Horning sets out to examine the nature of English expansion into Ireland and the New World, from the later sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. In Ireland, her focus is mainly, but not exclusively, on Ulster, and in North America on the Chesapeake and Albemarle regions and notably Jamestown. It may seem odd for a prehistorian to be reviewing such a work, and I trust that specialists in the fields covered by Horning will be reviewing it for other journals. As a non-specialist who once had some familiarity with the North American material, I have found Horning’s study to be relevant well beyond its immediate field and likely to interest many within the broad membership of the Society of Antiquaries.

The title of the book derives from an early seventeenth-century chronicler’s description of Ireland as ‘this famous Island in the Virginian Sea’. It is slightly misleading, but appropriate in that the association of Ireland and Virginia was popular at the time, and biased now just as it was then. After an Introduction that outlines the character of earlier research, and the author’s approach and subject matter, the first chapter covers English colonial activity in the Chesapeake–Roanoke area and in Ireland in the sixteenth century, and from the outset Horning questions some long-held perceptions of what went on. Chapter Two is devoted to the detail of Native and English activity in the New World study area, while Chapter Three examines the seventeenth-century situation in Ulster and, to a lesser extent, in other parts of Ireland. Chapter Four focuses in on the main Chesapeake colonial settlement of Jamestown, with some reference to other areas of recent research.

When Horning sets out to demonstrate the value of using both historical and archaeological evidence to study the nature of early colonial settlement in Virginia and Ulster, she brings to hand a wealth of material, from documents and potsherds to architecture, inscriptions, paintings, maps, clothing, pollen and postholes. All are critically evaluated – an inscription may prove to be as misleading as a house plan is informative – and all sorts of curiosities emerge, as with the building of some late medieval-type earth-fast houses by the seventeenth-century Virginian colonists when their contemporaries back home were building on timber sills; Horning explores the reasons behind this, noting the possibility that, as a way of building shared by colonists of English, Scottish, Irish and African origin, as well as the indigenous Powhatan peoples, it brought together

their own pasts alongside their present circumstances. Of course, it may also be that, given the shortage of skilled craftsmen, it was an easier way for colonists with scarce resources to put up adequate shelters.

At times, the insights that emerge from the combination of historical and archaeological sources hint at what the archaeology of non-literate societies is missing. I will take only two examples here, the first being the detail provided by documentary sources for the individuals who took part in both the North American and the Irish ventures, such as the Gookin brothers who emigrated from Kent to Munster, the elder moving to Virginia some seventeen years later. His sons remained in Virginia despite the turmoils of the 1620s, but he returned, much impoverished, to Munster. Meanwhile his brother prospered in Munster despite refusing to associate with the Gaelic Irish, whereas his son, also living in Munster, took the opposite view, arguing that association would ensure the stability of the Plantation settlements. It is interesting that the second-generation cousins were in each case far more open to positive association with their neighbours than their migrant fathers had been, although their fathers were the ones who took the major step of leaving home. Without the documents, such a story would at present barely be revealed, but perhaps it is that lack which drives innovation in archaeological research, particularly in archaeological science. Isotope and DNA analyses will not reveal surnames, but they can show family relationships and where individuals grew up.

Warfare and violence also emerge differently from the two disciplines. The documentary record indicates that both were significant either side of the Atlantic, but archaeological evidence is lacking, particularly for warfare. Horning points to the absence, so far, for the mass graves that one might expect following the fierce fighting of the 1640s in Ireland. In this case, we need perhaps to ask what other evidence there might be, and to question the accuracy of the interpretations of the documents. In the New World, Native palisaded enclosures are well known from the archaeology, but they are not necessarily defensive, or not only defensive against human enemies, but are also to keep out or to contain dangerous forces, be they natural or supernatural. Thus, our questioning of the origins of warfare and enclosure in prehistoric Europe, for example, is both validated and expanded by this study. Likewise, Horning touches on the psychology of headhunting in her account of Ralph Lane's use of violence as a means of subduing people in America and in

Ireland, 'Removing the head of an enemy was the ultimate assertion of power, as the head was believed to be the locus of power, consciousness and the soul' (p 83). Writing this as the news comes through of the beheading of Khaled al-Asaad in Palmyra, the resonance is as much with today's world as with the Iron Age.

Various aspects of the colonial ventures, when explored by Horning through both historical and archaeological routes, emerge as more plausible and usually more complex than previously understood. The early reports from Elizabethan New World colonists Hariot and White are confirmed as exaggerated in some respects in order to encourage European settlement, but accurate in others such as the descriptions and depictions of Native palisaded enclosures and mortuary practices. Alongside this, while the contemporary reports from colonists suggested they were making their own choices about where to settle, Horning argues from the archaeological evidence for a strong Native influence throughout the early decades on where the incomers actually attempted to put down roots. For Ireland, she highlights the physical evidence for the continuity of Gaelic and Old English (descendants of the Normans) traditions, as with the Irish-style houses found within English plantation settlements such as Movanager on the Antrim coast, evident both from a map of the period (illustrated in pl 16) and from excavation. Documents reveal a similar continuity, sometimes buried deep within a tangle of allegiances and influences and ignored by subsequent historians.

A textbook example of the fruits of combining historical and archaeological sources comes from Horning's own work with Wehner on a particular house from Jamestown, dating to the 1620s, where the wealth of evidence allows the linking of documented individuals to the house. The inhabitants were John Jackson and his family, and the excavated material confirms his trade as a gunsmith, while the extensive catalogue of artefacts shows that he was relatively well off. It is an impressive piece of work. Other material from Jamestown shows a different picture a decade earlier, with contemporary reports of hunger, starvation, disease, unrest and apathy. Archaeological evidence likewise suggests the colonists were short of food, with the butchered bones of horses along with cats, dogs, snakes and turtles showing that people were eating foods beyond the normal range. A report of cannibalism is validated by the discovery of bones of a young woman who had been butchered after her death. The discovery of a wealth of valuable and usable material objects

in a Jamestown well, and many other personal goods in what look to have been storage pits dating to the same period, is interpreted by Horning as deliberate dumping by the remaining colonists, an extreme response to extreme stress, possibly an act of cleansing by those who remained alive. She also shows that towards the end of this hard period, some of the Jamestown settlers were reliant upon Native groups for their survival, moving to live with them. One wonders if, perhaps, there was some Native influence on the deposition of so much alien material.

In terms of presentation, for an archaeologist the historical tradition seems to prevail. There are copious footnotes, informative, appropriate and providing enough material to develop several articles, but while they give full details of the sources used, a traditional (for archaeology) end-of-text bibliography would have been welcome. For a study that makes such good use of the evidence available from material things, be they plaster ceilings or tobacco pipes, the level of illustration is disappointing. It is, however, decidedly better than the picture-free texts of thirty years ago. The nine figures and twenty-four plates are in general over-reduced, confined by the page size; yet they do repay careful study, with a magnifying glass if necessary. It would help, too, to have consistently informative captions and illustration references in the text; the caption for Figure 9, for example, does not indicate that the site plan shown is from Jamestown. Plate 14 is better captioned than plate 16, while the detail of the latter is elucidated in the text some four pages on from where it has been placed. In a second edition, it should not be too difficult to deal with these aspects, and to give the illustrations greater prominence and better integration with the text, thereby realising their undoubted potential.

*Ireland in the Virginian Sea* is a meticulous, detailed study providing ample evidence for the character and course of the early colonising ventures in the two main study areas. From it, there emerge many insights into the nature of migration and colonisation at other times and in other regions of the world. The North American chapters in particular demonstrate the rewards of integrating archaeology and history, leading to a convincing argument for the need to develop the same in Ireland; in fact, it is clear from this book that the process is already underway. It is not always an easy read, and occasionally the comparisons between the two study areas break rather abruptly into the narrative, but in the course of the book the argument strengthens, and in the Conclusion Horning digs deep to

expose trends of wider significance, something that could not have been done so convincingly had there not been the meticulous deployment and discussion of the evidence in the foregoing pages. She argues in particular that the connections between Ireland and America date more to the eighteenth century and later, not to the time of the early colonial ventures, and thus the relevance of the Plantation period for subsequent Irish history has become distorted or misunderstood. The overall result is an exciting and thought-provoking book that shakes up ideas about a particular past and the past in general. There is much here for all the different disciplines concerned with our human past, in whatever period or region and, as the author writes in her closing sentence (p 367), 'the greatest relevance of comparative study of Ireland and America from 1550 to 1650 may not be what it tells of the past, but what it means in the present – and where it may lead in the future'.

BRYONY COLES

doi:10.1017/S0003581516000640

*Benjamin West and the Struggle to be Modern*. By LOYD GROSSMAN. 260mm. Pp 256, 125 col ills. Merrell Publishers, London, 2015. ISBN 9781858946412. £35 (hbk).

Lloyd Grossman makes a valuable contribution to British art studies with his book about Benjamin West's 'game-changer', *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770). By placing the painting in the contexts of West's career, academic theory, philosophical history, empire, social change and new attitudes to war, Grossman makes a convincing case for the picture as a 'modern' work of art in the Foucauldian sense of 'heroizing the present'.

Following an introductory chapter that sets out the argument and considers West's gamble in choosing his subject, Grossman investigates the background to the painting with chapters on the artist's early education in Pennsylvania (Chapter Two) and his development in Italy (Chapter Three). Chapters Four and Five place *Wolfe* in the contexts of various intellectual developments to show how the artist developed a new, more democratic form of *exemplum virtutis* (p 128). West's turn to contemporary subject matter is seen as a symptom of the new 'historical