

certain that these staples of popular perceptions of the Crusades will persist. A short but intriguing study by Catherine Swift of the appearance of the surname ‘Palmer’ in early thirteenth-century Dublin records could be usefully developed into a more substantial project. Paul Duffy’s analysis of the possible existence of a cult of Simon de Montfort in medieval Meath is stimulating, while Ciarán McDonnell traces Geoffrey de Genenville’s crusader credentials.

Was the crusade preached in Ireland with the same frequency as it was in England? Can any useful comparisons with respect to Irish attitudes to the Crusades be made from consideration of Archbishop Baldwin’s successful crusade precaching tour in Wales in the late 1180s, as detailed by Gerald of Wales? Was the Irish financial system altered by the need to raise cash for Richard I’s ransom in the early 1190s as he returned from crusade? What sums were raised for crusading in medieval Ireland? These rather obvious questions are not raised in a volume which advances understanding of its subject incrementally but which eschews setting a new and much needed agenda for research.

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IRELAND’S ENGLISH PALE, 1470–1550. By Steven G. Ellis. Pp 200. Woodbridge: Boydell Press. 2021. £75.

This is a fascinating book, a study of the English Pale in Ireland by a great doyen of the history of Tudor Ireland and other Tudor borderlands. It is based on almost half a century of study of the records of the time, deep reflection and engagement with scholars with different perspectives. It is an indispensable read for anyone with an interest in Tudor Ireland. The core of the book is the analysis of the emergence of the English Pale in Ireland late in the fifteenth century, the close study of English lordship in each of the ‘four obedient shires’ around Dublin that constituted the Pale, and the demonstration that the Pale expanded westwards and south-westwards in the reigns of the first two Tudor monarchs. Ellis’s starting point is the ‘inspirational work’ of James Lydon. However, he deploys a wealth of new evidence to challenge Lydon’s contentions that the Pale was the ultimate outcome of the decline of English power in late medieval Ireland, and that the English crown’s frontier policy in Ireland ‘was, on the whole, a complete failure’ (p. 3).

Ellis is highly critical of historians who regard the Pale as synonymous with the Maghery whose boundaries were repeatedly defined by statute in the second half of the fifteenth century and given physical manifestation in the form of earthworks, fortalices and tower houses. He puts great emphasis on the marchlands beyond the Pale ditch as being an integral part of the Pale, for which he makes an indisputable case. On the other hand, the Pale ditch and its associated defensive structures marked a significant boundary within the area subject to English authority, significant enough to justify the considerable investment of resources needed to create and maintain it, and contemporaries certainly regarded it as such. Its significance is open to justifiably varying interpretations by historians.

Nonetheless, the great strength of this book is its focus on the strengthening of English authority in the marches after a nadir in the second half of the fifteenth century that coincided with the later stages of the War of the Roses. Ellis delineates the fluctuating outer boundaries of the marches of the Pale with unprecedented precision, and shows that they were expanded westwards and south-westwards by marcher lords of English descent. He explains how the marches were defended, and how efforts were made to extend English law in the marches. Yet one might point out that the act for the division of Meath in 1542 shows that there continued to be severe limits to the effectiveness of royal control and the administration of royal justice beyond the Pale ditch even at that date.

For Ellis the Pale was an English border region that was ‘set apart from the surrounding Irishry by the population’s English identity’ (p. 38). Palesmen remained highly sensitive to

their English identity. English common law conveyed certain rights and privileges on English subjects, and in the Pale discriminatory legislation against ‘the king’s Irish enemies’ was systematically enforced. There were differences (and there were walls) separating these two worlds. They were captured, too, in the pervading rhetoric of difference used in English governing circles. This insisted that to be English was to be free and civilised; that to fall short of accepted English standards, adopting instead Irish customs and culture, was to ‘degenerate’ (not ‘gaelicize’); and that Irish identity was synonymous with servitude and savagery. Tudor terminology may seem offensive to modern ears, but it underpinned the Pale’s status as an English frontier. As its new description — ‘the English Pale’ — implied, acculturation and the influx of Irish had not undermined the English identity of the king’s subjects there ‘whatever ... about modern aspirations to [Irish] unity’ (p. 10).

Ellis is unhappy that some historians are ‘almost fixated’ with the idea that some English settlers became assimilated with the Irish to varying degrees, but have ‘much less to say about the latter’s assimilation of English culture and identity’ (p. 9). Cultural exchange, he points out, was ‘an entirely normal feature of early modern frontiers ... but studies of Irish immigration and customs’ have focused on what has been misleadingly termed ‘gaelicisation’ while marginalising what one might no less misleadingly term ‘anglicisation’ (p. 171). I would make two observations on that score. First, the emphasis on ‘gaelicisation’ reflects the historical records: Anglophone writers regularly expressed their concerns about the Irish character of the people of the Pale, and the ‘systematic’ enforcement of ‘discriminatory legislation’ which Ellis refers to would hardly have been necessary if no problem was perceived to exist.

Second, the repeated use of the term ‘immigrants’ to characterise the indigenous Irish who moved into the Pale strikes a discordant note: it brings to mind the Afrikaners’ use of the term to characterise the indigenous Africans in South Africa. In fact, most of the people who lived in the Pale were Irish, just as most of the people under English rule in Wales were Welsh. The English who settled in Ireland from the late twelfth century had not exterminated the indigenous Irish population from the region that came to be called the Pale: there had been no genocide, though the indigenous population had suffered dispossession, degradation and discrimination at the hands of a colonial community which considered itself to be superior to the indigenous community.

In fact, this study of English colonialism in early Tudor Ireland is rich in implications for wider studies of English/British colonialism because it was the same colonialist mindset of supposed superiority and entitlement that was subsequently visited by the English on the indigenous peoples of North America, southern Asia, Africa and Oceania. In many ways Ireland’s experiences in the Tudor era pre-figured the experiences of other indigenous peoples who came under English/British control around the globe: maltreatment justified by the English conviction of their inherent superiority compared with the indigenous peoples whose lands and resources they acquired/stole, whose cultures they denigrated and set out to destroy, and whose lives they terminated with impunity if they stood in the way of English ambitions. The repeated use of the term ‘chief’ to denote Irish leaders — they are called ‘lords’ only once in the book — echoes the common use of the same term for the leaders of victims of English colonialism in North America and Africa. Ironically, following the re-definition of Englishness to include Protestantism in the reign of Elizabeth Tudor the ‘New English’ Protestants came to regard the ‘Old English’ Catholics in Ireland as being as Irish as the Irish themselves, and in the seventeenth century treated them accordingly.

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BRITISH AND IRISH RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN EUROPE, 1560–1800: CONVENTUALS, MENDICANTS AND MONASTICS IN MOTION. Edited by Cormac Begadon and James E. Kelly. Pp 276. Woodbridge: Boydell Press. 2022. £75.

There is burgeoning historiographical attention to the early modern Catholic experience. Noteworthy is the adoption of a three-kingdom approach in the case of the Tudor and