

The Cromwellian Catastrophe in Ireland: an Historiographical Analysis

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Despite the 'relevance' of its constituent motifs to the twentieth century,¹ Cromwellian Ireland has traditionally been an unfashionable topic for historical research. This is primarily due to the fact that source material is scant, fragmented, and has always been a formidable impediment in research efforts. Nonetheless, study of this topic is rewarding in its own right, but also because one can encounter several interesting works, and these works are often representative of the prevailing historical models in their time of composition. Moreover, the topic that had formerly received only two major bouts of attention—around the turn of twentieth century, and in the late-1960s and early-1970s—has been the subject of considerable interest in the past twenty-five years. While this article discusses many works, it focuses on three specifically, and the remainder to provide a better general historiography and for contextualizing purposes: John P. Prendergast's classic *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (1865), the first and seminal work in this area; Karl S. Bottigheimer's sober and quantitative *English Money and Irish Land: The 'Adventurers' in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (1971); and Peter Berresford Ellis' *Hell or Connaught! The Cromwellian Colonization of Ireland, 1652-1660* (1975).

The availability and unavailability of sources has had a profound and limiting effect on scholarly undertakings in this area. Private papers and the overt or oblique correspondence of those directly involved in Interregnum Ireland were destroyed accidentally, or deliberately, in the nervous months preceding and proceeding the Restoration. The scarcity of material means concerned historians must utilize fragmentary and incomplete evidence. This scarcity is most apparent in attempting to gauge the reactions and writings of lower class Irishmen, although Ellis' *Hell or*

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¹These topics include questions about the necessarily violent and brutal natures of authoritarian régimes, the motives and results of imperialism and withdrawal from empire, and perhaps most important, historical-based blame, guilt, and their admissibility in contemporary debate and policy in the ever-active relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom and between Ireland's various regional, religious, and cultural identities.

Connaught! attempted to redress this problem. Furthermore, it is difficult to assess Irish trade during the Interregnum as no port books were kept for the limited shipping traffic at Dublin and the port books from Bristol deal only with Ulster linen. There is also a distinct lack of records describing Irish economic interactions with America and Europe.² Indeed, the historiography of Cromwellian Ireland makes for an interesting narrative in its own right: it is a subject of two major paroxysms of scholarly interest and production. Prendergast's classic and its unearthing of source material was succeeded by many books and articles, but most notably S. R. Gardiner's *History of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate* (1903), and Robert Dunlop's similarly voluminous *Ireland Under the Commonwealth* (1913).³ Sadly, the most valuable source, *The Books of the Commonwealth*, were mostly destroyed in a fire in the opening moments of the Irish Civil War in 1922, although extracts remain available in the aforementioned works of Prendergast, Gardiner, Dunlop, and the Maynooth Journal *Archivium Hibernicum* (1917).⁴ The second paroxysm occurred in the late-1960s and early-1970s. Much of the reinvigorated interest can be attributed to the 'statistical turn' of the time. The surveys and censuses conducted under the Commonwealth, especially Petty's Down Survey that earned Ireland the uncomfortable distinction of being Europe's most well known country, are conducive to quantitative analysis as they contain massive amounts of information.⁵ This sort of study could answer pertinent questions about land tenure in the period. What group gained the most from the Cromwellian revolution in land tenure?⁶ What

²T. C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland, 1649-1660*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41-46. This article is also much indebted to Aidan Clarke, "Ireland, 1534-1660" in Joseph Lee, Ed. *Irish Historiography, 1970-1979*. (Cork: Cork University Press, 1981), 34-55.

³Many other works dealing wholly or partly with Ireland in the Interregnum were produced in this period including, J. A. Froude's, *The English in Ireland* (1881), J. O'Hart's, *Irish Landed Gentry when Cromwell Came to Ireland* (1883), Richard Bagwell's, *Ireland Under the Stuarts and During the Interregnum* (1909), many articles, several articles by Dunlop, and a great many works on the plantation of Ulster.

⁴*The Books of the Commonwealth* were fifty-six manuscript volumes kept by the administration in Ireland from 1650 to 1660. There were nearly totally destroyed in a fire after Free State artillery hit Republican positions at Dublin's Four Courts, the home of the Public Records Office of Ireland. Peter Berresford Ellis, *Hell or Connaught! The Cromwellian Colonization of Ireland, 1652-1660*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 250.

⁵These sources are numerous: Books of Survey and Distribution, the Civil Survey, the Down Survey, the 1659 Census, and the 1660 Pender Census. Kevin McKenny, "The Seventeenth-Century Land Settlement in Ireland: Towards a Statistical Interpretation" in Jane H. Ohlmeyer, Ed. *Ireland from Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 183-185.

⁶For Ulster, Philip S. Robinson claimed that Cromwellian settlers only became dominant in exceptionally fertile areas with ready access to the sea and thus external markets. Philip S. Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster*. (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1994), 98-105.

affiliation or alignment was most likely to result in the loss or gain of land? Race? Religion? Nationality? Or, perhaps, those with experience in Ireland, as opposed to adventuring newcomers, had better chances of attaining or retaining land? Notable contributions in this area belong to Bottigheimer, Kevin McKenny, and R. C. Simington.⁷ New and novel qualitative approaches also produced important works. T. C. Barnard's *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland, 1649-1660* (1975) innovatively and comprehensively examined the constructive side of the Cromwellian programme in Ireland, dealing with policy on finance, education, and religious and legal reform. The third Volume of the landmark compilation *A New History of Ireland* (1976) dealt extensively with many untouched areas including Irish language, the development of the English language in Ireland, Irish Literature, and the Irish Diaspora in the age of the counter-reformation. Ellis' *Hell or Connaught!* travelled mostly on well-trodden paths, but did make incursions into the realm of Irish poetry in a valid attempt to discover the reactions and mindsets of the lower class and underground clergy during the Interregnum. The literary and cultural aspects of the period were given considerable treatment in the 1993 collection *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534-1660*.

With the end of the heyday of quantitative history and the exhausting of qualitative sources, Cromwellian Ireland has remained a subject of scholarly debate. The surge of interest in military history has recently produced books and articles addressing Cromwell's Celtic campaigns.⁸

These include Brendan Fitzpatrick's *Seventeenth-Century Ireland: The War of Religions* (1988), Marcus Tanner's *Ireland's Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation's Soul, 1500-2000* and Tom Reilly's controversial, *Cromwell: An Honourable Enemy: The Untold Story of the Cromwellian Invasion of Ireland* (1999). The latter attracted much criticism over its controversial claim that Cromwellian rule benefited Ireland and its attempts to acquit Cromwell of the charges levelled by past historians. Indeed, Reilly felt his project rescued Cromwell from the prejudiced and enormous condemnation of past historiography: "the focus of this book is to exculpate Cromwell from the charges of wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter of the ordinary and unarmed people of Ireland. The question of Cromwell's guilt preoccupied many of the last century's historians. Their verdict was a resounding cry of guilty! Cromwell is once again in the dock here, but this time the evidence of the

⁷In addition to the Bottigheimer and McKenny works discussed in this article, see R. C. Simington, *The Transplantation to Connaught, 1654-1658* (1970).

⁸These works include T. Bartlett and K. Jeffrey, Eds. *A Military History of Ireland* (1996), J. S. Wheeler's *Cromwell in Ireland*, Jane H. Ohlmeyer's article "The Wars of Religion, 1603-1660" (1999), and Aidan Clarke's *Prelude to Restoration in Ireland: The End of the Commonwealth, 1659-1660* (1999). Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland*, xvii-xviii.

day is assessed in the legal sense ‘without prejudice’.”⁹ Reilly’s work was criticised as a Goldhagen-like ‘ground breaking book’, which merely dressed up old arguments in the new clothes of self-proclaimed revolutionary revisionism, as Barnard put it in *Cromwellian Ireland*:

Tom Reilly has trenchantly defended Cromwell’s conduct, along lines which, if long familiar, have never before been so thoroughly (and sometimes repetitively) rehearsed. The conventions of contemporary European warfare, the imperatives of money and terrain, the threat from Scotland, and the weight of English and Protestant ideology combined to produce a short but notably sharp campaign. Mr. Reilly has reminded of the tainted nature of the sources from which any analysis or narrative has to be fashioned... the resuscitation of an ‘honourable’ Cromwell in Ireland attests to the perennial search for arresting reinterpretations.¹⁰

The model of integrated ‘British’ history has also been applied to Cromwellian Ireland. David Stevenson’s article “Cromwell, Scotland, and Ireland” in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (1990) showed how the problem of multiple kingdoms that plagued Charles I also contributed to the untenable nature and the subsequent demise of the Protectorate. Nicholas Canny’s *Making Ireland British: 1580-1650* was a detailed examination of plantations under the ‘multiple kingdoms’ approach.

What other sources are commonly available? Fortunately for scholars, the Commonwealth was an entity particularly obsessed with counting and compiling information, as evident in the aforementioned surveys and censuses. There is also the conventional score of government and government-related sources, including transplantation certificates, parliamentary proceedings, and petitions. In the foreword to the 2000 Edition of *Cromwellian Ireland*, Barnard mentioned the value of three sources that became available after the flurry of the 1970s: Petty’s complete archive housed at the Bodleian Library, the Christ Church muniments, and the papers of the Earls of Cork. In *English Money and Irish Land*, Bottigheimer made use of two newly discovered censuses, not available to, or unknown by, Prendergast. The trend in the 1990s towards integrated ‘British’ history did not yield any results in this area, but as Ellis suggested in the waning lines of *Hell or Connaught!*, any further exploration needed to be conducted in continental archives, especially those in the Netherlands and Spain.

Despite the great disparity in methods, foci, objectives, and sources, there are some common questions addressed in most works on Cromwellian Ireland: What

⁹Tom Reilly, *Cromwell: An Honourable Enemy: The Untold Story of the Cromwellian Invasion of Ireland*. (London: Phoenix, 1999), xi.

¹⁰Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland*, xvii-xviii.

were the major hindrances to the implementation of policy and the resettling of confiscated land? How is localism used as a model in the three works? Who benefited most when the dust settled with the Restoration? What sort of motivation was the most important in spurring on government, soldier, and adventurer? How did Cromwellian policy affect the Irish economy? How do the authors' loyalty to or deconstruction of convenient superficialities like 'Irish-Catholic' and 'English-Protestant' hurt or help the validity of their greater contentions?¹¹ Was Cromwellian Ireland a case of continuity in Anglo-Irish relations or an anomaly?¹² In the seventeenth century? In the medieval and early modern periods? How much did international concerns, specifically Ireland as a potential staging point for an invasion of Britain, figure in English policy? What does this period say about the nature and motivations of English imperialism and hence the British Empire? What does it say, if anything, about Imperialism in general? How the three authors approach these critical issues will comprise the remainder of the article.

Prendergast's *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, remains the seminal book in this area: it was the first comprehensive work on policy and the proceedings of the plantation;¹³ it uncovered the appropriate sources and the difficulties that ask perseverance, detective work, and creativity from concerned historians; it revealed the major themes, actors, and events of the period and attested to the utter devastation in Ireland; and, perhaps most important, its twin theses, the 'economic motivation thesis' and the 'existing-English thesis' remain the explanatory pillars of Cromwellian policy and plantation in Ireland.

Fiercely pro-Irish and writing in the high years of the Home Rule movement, Prendergast's Cromwellian Ireland was the foundation of the nineteenth century

¹¹Although his analysis was confined to Ulster, Philip S. Robinson made valuable points about the fallacies that are convenient superficialities, which should be discarded in the interests of deeper historical investigation and historical accuracy: "perceptions of cultural difference are based on cultural identification rather than on reality... With more tangible cultural traits (such as traditional house types or English dialects) there are clearly elements which can claim ancestry from different source areas. But the end product of cultural contact in Ulster cannot be explained simply in terms of assimilation of one form by another. Cultural fusion, the mutual adoption of traits, interdependent development and subsequent evolution have given rise to patterns of cultural phenomena that are neither 'Irish' and 'Catholic' nor 'British' and 'Protestant' in type." Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster*, 193-194.

¹²The existence of the continuity debate manifests itself in that the introductions of every work examined in this article provide a brief background history of Ireland. Prendergast's extends back to Roman times, while Ellis begins in 1172 when Henry II supported Norman leaders in Ireland in their claim to portions of the island. The beginning of English law and administration in Ireland was prudent to follow.

¹³In a fascinating preface, Prendergast told of his quest to look at features of the period other than the well-documented military campaigns. John P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*. (London: Constable, 1996), xviii.

Irish colony state. In his estimation, the Commonwealth was only a naturally occurring high tide in the centuries-old English repression of Ireland, which fluctuated in its severity. Prendergast identified the reign of Henry VIII as the beginning of a new extreme phase in English repression, with subsequent monarchs seeking to replace the Catholic “Old-English” with Protestant landowners to achieve a decisive and permanent ‘second conquest of Ireland’. Indeed, this contention related intimately to another of Prendergast’s major themes: the irresistible Irish way of life that never failed to seduce and assimilate English adventurers before the sixteenth century: “Had the first English adventurers in Ireland been of the same mind as the king and nobility of England the Irish might possibly been subdued, their lands taken from them, and the nations reduced to serfdom, or exterminated. But the early settlers learned to love the Irish, and to prefer the freedom of Irish life and manners to the burdensome feudal system.”¹⁴ The reign of James I saw the “new religion” purge followers of the old from land and office, leading to Prendergast’s conclusion that the Cromwellian programme was not an abrupt anomaly in Anglo-Irish history, but followed policies that had built up for more than a century.

Prendergast saw the history of England and Ireland in a racial framework. Writing in the age of a resurrected Gaelic Ethos, British imperial militarism and jingoism, and pseudo-scientific racial and biological determinism, Prendergast contended that the English, possessed by “the land hunger of the Anglo-Saxon race”, were innately barbarous, violent, and xenophobic.¹⁵ The latter contention was made well clear in a fascinating section where Prendergast described how England exploited religious antipathies in attempting to make a reverse “apartheid” state out of the corner of south-east Ireland after making Connaught an Irish “reservation”:

Religion in 1520 had not created a difference between the Irish and other nations; but now, in 1653, there were foreign nations to be found, who, agreeing with the English in religion, might always be trusted to continue enemies of the Irish, and might be invited to form part of this plantation. Being nearest to the succour of England, being coasted on the east by the sea, and to be rendered defensible on the land by a few forts upon the banks of the rivers, the plantation might easily secure itself in case of any rising of the Irish inhabitants of the two other districts [The Connaught reservation and ‘mixed plantation’ that was the rest of Ireland]¹⁶

¹⁴Prendergast constantly reverted to this idea in the course of his narrative. When concerned with the Tudor and Stuart periods he maintained this argument in support of his condemnation of English government, not the adventurers, soldiers, or civilian population. *Ibid.*, lii, 129-131.

¹⁵Moreover, “LAND-HUNGER OF THE ENGLISH” is included in the book’s considerable subject index. *Ibid.*, 55, 268.

¹⁶Prendergast often used the terms “reservation” and “plantation”, and “apartheid” is a popular term to describe Cromwellian Ireland in later literature. *Ibid.*, 118-119.

Conversely, the Irish are unique surviving remnants of a pure, natural and enlightened Gaelic race.¹⁷ Yet, while Prendergast's allegiances were clearly Irish-Catholic-Gaelic, and his presentation made much of religious loyalties and perceived racial characteristics, his serious analyses cut through these artificial and inaccurate constructions to assert that forms of English authority are the only real villains: officers cheating soldiers out of their land; landlords cheating and exploiting their poor tenants; and a ruthless monarchy, and then a ruthless republic, exploiting and manipulating English, Scots, and Irish alike.

Prendergast organized the English adventure into three groups to clearly present their motivations, conduct, and eventual results; it is in this third area that he leaves a legacy to the study of the subject. The adventurers' main goal was simply to settle their land, but they came into conflict with parliament over the adequacy of protection from Tories, timetables for conquest and settlement, and tax exemptions. The descriptions of how the adventurers' plans were irreparably tied to parliament uncovered a major avenue for historical investigation, which Bottigheimer eventually addressed. Prendergast also touched on the roles of the Papacy and England's international strategic concerns. Moreover, Prendergast created the underpinning 'economic motivation thesis' by saying that financial concerns were primary among parliament's motivations, and that the soldiers and officers of the army, the third group, were also largely motivated by money: the soldiers largely wanted financial compensation for their lands as they wished not to settle or plant; the officers wished to accumulate as much land as possible to either sell or plant; and both were adamant that they receive the same rate of arrears as the adventurers.¹⁸

The other great legacy that Prendergast left for later scholars is the simple identification and description of major events and edicts, beginning with the determination of guilt and the deportations, and the transplantation scheme, remonstrances, and its application. Prendergast also provides the motivations for, as well as relevant texts from, and the ramifications of, the Down Survey, Petty's Civil Survey, the 1642 Adventurers Act, the Doubling Ordinance, and the 1653 Adventurers Act. The sum of these descriptions is that the Cromwellian endeavour in Ireland was an

¹⁷ "Free by nature, the Irish did not bind up their infants in swaddling clothes. It required the lapse of ages, and the burning eloquence of Rousseau, to induce the world to follow the practice of the Irish, who never went wrong in this respect; so true is the saying that he who follows nature never goes out of the way... The harp that had been long silent in Gaul, and was heard in Britain only in the mountains of Wales, was universally played in Ireland... Over the rest of Europe a thousand years of Roman and feudal slavery had divided society into conquerors and conquered, into gentlemen and serfs; so the lower classes are but in many countries emancipated villains, exhibiting traces of their former selfish condition, in their brutal manners. Ireland escaped the feudal yoke, and hence perhaps it is, that the commonest Irishmen has something in him of the gentleman." *Ibid.*, xxxix-xl, 55.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-21, 88-133.

utter debacle. One of the major strengths of this work is that Prendergast, when not making scathing anti-English comments, lets the sources speak for themselves and lead the reader to the obvious conclusions.¹⁹ At the same time, he can hardly be accused of examining and providing only selective examples to support a pre-formed thesis due to the groundbreaking and discovery oriented nature of the project, the comprehensiveness of this work, and a Thompsonian-style questioning and distrust of easy and convenient conclusions and generalizations.

This depiction of this confused and corrupt quasi-official exercise in greed was filled with black humour, scorn, and contempt. Often and with delight, Prendergast mocked the English and their abject failure. He also mocked their motives, methods, and their perception that they were backed by the divine. A good example was his description of the official procedure for land allocation to the army after the completion of the Civil Survey:

Having thus ascertained, by as near a computation as could be made without actual measurement, the extent and value of the lands seized by from the former proprietors on each of the three provinces on this side of the Shannon, a general council of officers next apportioned the amount of arrears to be satisfied in each province. They then proceeded, like the adventurers, to draw the first or grand lot, to ascertain in which province each regiment of horse, foot, and dragoons was to be satisfied in its arrears. For on debate of the matter whether they should take their lands by lot, or have them assigned to them respectively by some competent authority, they resolved for the former mode, declaring that they had rather take a lot upon a barren mountain as a portion from the lord, then a portion in the most fruitful valley upon their own choice²⁰

But the bumbling he described added comedy to the tragedy,²¹ and this feature has been closely imitated by subsequent scholars, as Bottigheimer put it: “Sometimes (to paraphrase Marx) historical events occur *first* as farce and *then* as tragedy. Lord Lisle’s expedition, finally launched in February 1647, was the curtain-raising

¹⁹Prendergast included some primary source material in his footnotes and the course of his narrative. The remainder are in the massive appendices.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 80.

²¹ “[the Irish] were brought to such wretchedness, as any stony heart would have rued the sight. Out of every corner of the woods and glynnys they came forth on their hands, for their legs could not bear them,—they looked like anatomies of death, and spoke like ghosts crying out of the grave; they flocked to a pot of water-cresses as to a feast, though it afforded them small nourishment, and ate dead carrion, happy when they could find it, and soon after scraped the very carcasses out of the graves... and, more horrible still, children were killed and eaten, and the poor wretches who killed them were tried and hanged for it by those that drove them to such horrors.” *Ibid.*, 14.

farce to the uncomic Cromwellian conquest of two years later.”²² Prendergast’s sweeping and bold narrative with its comparative references to the ancients and scripture remained refreshing and entertaining in the more coldly analytical and sterile state of more recent historical scholarship.

Bottigheimer’s *English Money and Irish Land* was the logical extension of his 1967 Doctoral thesis at Berkeley.²³ Inexorably rooted in the historiographical trends of its time, this work is very different from Prendergast’s in its cool and scientific detachment. Indeed, as Bottigheimer purported in the opening pages of the book, his analytical goals were formed in opposition to some of Prendergast’s assumptions:

This study is concerned with the mechanics of English expansion into Ireland during the seventeenth century. Both English and Irish historians have tended to regard that process as inevitable... In order to perceive more clearly how this phase of English expansion came about it has been necessary to assume that it was not at all inevitable, that it was not even the result of a distinct colonizing urge or a general land-hunger, but rather that it was a by-product of specific political and economic developments within England. If the concept of inevitability is thus suspended, and English Protestants are assumed to have been no more and no less inherently rapacious than other men in other times, there remains the hypothesis that the colonization of Ireland is comprehensible, and that it occurred because of identifiable forces within English society. What those forces were and how they operated is the general concern of this work. How they produced the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland is the more specific subject, while the minute operation and effect of the so-called ‘Adventure for Irish Land’ is the pinnacle upon which this inverted pyramid stands and from which more general ideas were developed²⁴

However, Bottigheimer’s major contentions pointed to a different sort of inevitability in discussing the intensifying of Irish policy in the Interregnum. Like Prendergast, Bottigheimer saw the reign of Henry VIII and the genesis of the fears of invasion and counter-reformation as making Ireland exceptionally important. Bottigheimer also identified a cyclical pattern of plantation and rebellion beginning in the mid-sixteenth century that could only be broken by a drastic measure, such as the ultra-ambitious Cromwellian scheme: “On one hand Plantation created an appetite for new appropriations by the English, while on the other it undermined the

²²Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: The ‘Adventurers’ in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 203.

²³His thesis dealt with the motivations and build-up to the settlement, but did not extend to the settlement itself. *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 2-3.

land tenure system of Ireland and stimulated new rebellions, which in turn justified further plantation.”²⁵

Bottigheimer wrote as a self-identified quantitative historian,²⁶ but he confronted possible criticisms of his methods in the preface, and this work managed to maintain a nice balance between quantitative and qualitative history.²⁷ Moreover, Bottigheimer’s plan of attack was part quantitative and part qualitative, leading to a greater qualitative end: he sought to discover who invested in Ireland and why they did so in order to address “the central question of Colonialism or Imperialism: why and by what means one society expands into another.”²⁸ Through considerable use of conventional government and government-related documents, Bottigheimer dealt with several questions relating to the interactions of government and the adventurers: What were their respective policies toward Ireland? Was either camp in possession of group cohesion or a cohesive agenda? How did the two camps agree and disagree? What success did the adventurers have in pushing their agenda on parliament? How did this relationship contribute to formulation of policy and the implementation of the settlement? In the end, Bottigheimer concluded that by 1649 the adventurers had been relegated to the status of “junior partner” in the Irish enterprise and that this abjection should have been seen as apart of the growing competence of the fledgling English Republic.²⁹

As revealed by the book’s title, Bottigheimer subscribed to the traditional thesis that money and property were the major motivating factors of both government and

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, vi.

²⁷ “This book is a composite of literary and quantitative methods of historical inquiry. Chapters I, II, IV and V will be found to be for the most part conventional attempts to describe from documentary evidence the origins, nature, and development of the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland. Chapters III and VI, and the two lengthy Appendices, A and B, are quantitative... Every attempt has been made to keep the quantitative methodology unobtrusive; in part because it is frequently more overwhelming than informing” *Ibid.*, v. *English Money and Irish Land* can be compared with the somewhat more unwieldy and statistical presentation of Kevin McKenny’s aforementioned article and Theodore K. Rabb’s *Enterprise and Empire* (1966).

²⁸ Bottigheimer concluded that the Cromwellian endeavour in Ireland was a failure for both capitalism and imperialism: “In the long run the adventure was a two-fold failure. In a fiscal sense it failed to raise the amount of money necessary to repress Catholic Ireland. In a colonial sense it failed to find and tap an aggressive, expansive, and enterprising stream within English society. It did not arouse any abiding interest in the colonization of Ireland, comparable to the seventeenth-century emigration to North America.” *Ibid.*, 54, 75.

²⁹ Bottigheimer’s 1967 article of the same title dealt with some of questions addressed in the subsequent book, and like the book, it attempted to address the interactions of capitalism and imperialism: “Might they [the adventurers] provide an example of a group of investors shaping the policy of their government along classical ‘imperialist’ lines?” Karl S. Bottigheimer, “English Money and Irish Land: The ‘Adventurers’ in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland” *Journal of British Studies*, 7 (1967): 12-13.

adventurer, but he made interesting and convincing arguments about supplementary motivations. He downplayed the role of Protestant zeal and instead gave agency to the reaction toward the 1641 Rebellion,³⁰ which he claimed was a direct and insulting affront to the otherwise confident and increasingly powerful parliamentary forces. He also emphasised the ensuing anti-Irish propaganda of 1641 and 1642.³¹ Bottigheimer explained the financial and supplementary motives of the adventurers in a fascinating regional and socio-economic framework:

Of the 1,533 adventurers it is possible to attribute a geographical location to all but 202. Of the 1,331 who can be classified, 750 prove to have been from London... The remaining adventure money came from all over the country... the West Country as a whole generated an amount of capital and a number of investors unmatched by any other provincial area. The West had long been identified with Irish colonization, particularly with the plantation of Ulster in the late sixteenth century, but this is not necessarily an adequate explanation of the enthusiasm of Devon. In addition, the phenomenon of small investment is nowhere more visible than in Exeter... The adventure in Exeter was therefore markedly different from the adventure in London, where it was largely the province of very rich men. In Exeter appeared the phenomenon of 'popular' colonialism, in which relatively humble people sought security and increments of wealth from the nearby lands of Ireland³²

Bottigheimer also pointed to a unique Cromwellian economic cyclical dilemma to explain how government was also largely motivated by money. The smaller expeditions of 1641 to 1649 were under-funded as parliament would not divert any considerable finances from the efforts in England. Consequently, the efforts of the adventurers did not yield any economic returns. By 1653, the costs of maintaining the Irish Garrison contributed to pressure for more confiscations; more time meant more money, more money meant more confiscation, more confiscation meant more extreme means, culminating in the attempted ethnic cleansing of Ireland.

Bottigheimer adhered to Prendergast's time-honoured thesis that the 'existing-English' were the great winners in the aftermath of the settlement due to their Protestantism and Protestant alliance with the administration of Henry Cromwell, as well as the vast majority of soldiers who wished not to plant their land. *English Money and Irish Land* was similar to Prendergast's book in its portrayal of the confused, piecemeal, and bumbling Cromwellian policy and implementation. It was

³⁰Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: The 'Adventurers' in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland*, 30-31.

³¹*Ibid.*, 75.

³²*Ibid.*, 64-66.

also similar to Barnard's *Cromwellian Ireland* in its unemotional focus on the politics and constructiveness of Irish Policy in the Interregnum. Bottigheimer referred to English policy as "clearly unable to make good use of the resulting spoils [of confiscation]"³³ and, in anti-governmental comments similar to Prendergast's, he engaged in some counter-factual 'what if' history: "Had Ireland been conquered in late 1642 or early 1643 by an expedition financed by the adventurers, a very different and much less drastic settlement would have resulted; one in which the adventurers rather than the soldiers played a key role."³⁴ In terms of style, *English Money and Irish Land* was well-written, clear, and as Bottigheimer promised, the massive amounts of computed-analysed data do not obstructively impinge themselves on his well-balanced and largely chronological narrative.

Stylishly garnished with arresting quotations, poetry, and Shakespearean selections, Ellis' *Hell or Connaught!* presented a very different sort of work from the others discussed in this article. Ellis is a popular historian and many of his non-academic public histories have sold very well. *Hell or Connaught!* was partly a political and military prosopography of the Cromwellian élite, and more of a chronicling narrative than a modern, analytical scholarly work with a Thompsonian 'pregnant principle'. Moreover, the book can generally be described as a traditional, top-down history, dealing with major figures, events, and battles, and the typical paradigms of national histories. This was evident in the work's structure: the chapters were titled after Henry Cromwell, Edmund Ludlow, and Charles Fleetwood; the major focus was the motivations and assumptions of the aforementioned men and men like them; the index was a mere massive compendium of names; and the book was printed with portraits of prominent English political figures dealt with in the narrative. However, this vividly written work investigates some unexplored areas of research at the time of its composition and publication, some of which were presented shortly after in *A New History of Ireland*.

Ellis managed to discuss the impacts of war and displacement on Irish life and Ireland itself in his dealings with poetry as a historical source and his dealings with changes in diet, environmental abuses, cultural manifestations, and currency. This work also provided an unmatched, considerable treatment of Irish migration to, and interaction with, America and Europe, deportation to the Barbados and America, the writings and persecution of underground Catholic priests, and the Continental network that supported them. Ellis utilized trial records to good effect as they not only reveal much about the persecution of priests and their intellectual and theological dispositions, but also because they typically lent themselves to entertaining narratives. In fact, this work had many of the characteristics of an amateurish

³³ *Ibid.*, 163.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

microhistorical work: using scant and fragmented evidence, Ellis asked the reader to make speculative and imaginative leaps when forming greater conclusions from particular examples.

While entertaining and not altogether without merits, this book was seriously flawed as accurate history. Ellis professed that he chose not to include a decent bibliography or references: "After considerable deliberation, I have decided not to use copious footnotes for source references because I do not wish to claim an academic status for this work to which I feel that it is not entitled."³⁵ The narrative was decisively pro-Irish and took its accounts of devastation, starvation, and cannibalism directly from Prendergast's work, and although it contained some good work from primary sources, Ellis usually leaned on other scholarly works. Most important, Ellis' dealings with the relevant historiographical debates were dilettantish: there was no penetration of the terms 'Irish-Catholic' and 'English-Protestant'; in a book that dealt with the military and national paradigms, there was little regard for the foreign and imperial ramifications of the issues.³⁶ The motives for the Cromwellian endeavour were discussed in no more detail than the metaphor with which he opened the book,³⁷ other relevant received scarce mention or none at all. There is, however, an exception. Ellis stated that the heightened concern for Ireland and the extreme programme of displacement began with the reign of Mary and the Spanish Armada, and outlasted the Republic, only fading with the renewed English confidence after the Glorious Revolution.³⁸ Perhaps, for the purposes of entertainment, Ellis attributed the motives of Petty and other figures under examination more to outrage and revenge, exacerbated by the 1641 Rebellion, and less to the widely reputed economic thesis.

Ideally, what would a replete and comprehensive historiographical study of the literature on Cromwellian Ireland entail? It might begin with the classic and seminal works of Prendergast, Gardiner, and Dunlop, as solid grounding to study the more recent work and as representatives of the first paroxysm of scholarly interest. Second, a full study and comparative study of the qualitative and quantitative innovations and contentions of the late-1960s and early 1970s. The military-oriented works of the 1990s, which testified to the sustained interest in the topic, should be examined and

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 250.

³⁶ Only on the final page of the book did Ellis vaguely and melodramatically mention greater questions of Ireland's status vis-à-vis Britain and the Empire: "the memory of all their conquests and the subsequent confiscations and colonizations, that kept alive in the Irish spirit to keep striking for their freedom... the feelings which were to cause generations of Irish to rise up in an attempt to strike off the colonial yolk" *Ibid.*, 249.

³⁷ "Early on the morning of September 11, 1652, three English frigates, *Revenge*, *Providence*, and *Expedition*, rounded Raven Point and sailed into Loch Garman, at the south-east tip of Ireland." *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

compared to the original militarily concerned works of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Finally, it would be prudent to examine the full range of recent studies including the works of Barnard and Clarke, the aforementioned literary- and cultural-histories, as well as those conducted under the multiple kingdoms model. The prospect of relevant materials in continental archives, as well as the utilisation of the relatively new transatlantic framework for historical analysis, should ensure continued interest in the period.

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