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Minding the Gaps: Exploring the intersection of political economy, colonial ideologies, and cultural practice in early modern Ireland.

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SUMMARY: Examinations of the imposition of colonial ideologies actualised through the mechanism of plantation, or enforced settlement, in Ireland often highlight plantation as a stark process that was founded upon, and thus fully accommodated to, a fully-fledged version of mercantile capitalism. Yet on the ground, engagements between peoples reveal that ideologies were incompletely applied, plantation plans seldom realised, and new economic formulations incompletely rendered. On close examination, seemingly incompatible economic structures (Gaelic, Old English, and incoming plantation) emerge as capable of mutation and accommodation, thus forcing a reconsideration of the rigid interpretations of the rise of capitalism in the early modern Atlantic that has typified scholarship in historical archaeology. The gaps between rhetoric and reality are considered, and a case made for how a more nuanced consideration of the intersections of culturally disparate political economies can yield a deeper understanding of colonial encounters and colonial settings.

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INTRODUCTION

During the first decade of the 17th century, the English crown capitalised upon its military victory over the Irish by implementing colonial schemes, or plantations, to control the Irish population, undermine Gaelic and Old English political and economic power, impose Protestantism, and exploit the natural resources of the island. Conceived as a means of civilising Irish society through the imposition of new settlement forms, plantation was clearly bound up with the expansion of mercantile capitalism in the broader Atlantic region. As such, it was foundational to the emergence of the 18th-century moral philosophies from which the concept of political economy, defined as a means of understanding the relationship between production, labour, and social governance, emerged. While firmly rooted in western European capitalism, the broad concept of political economy is capable of encompassing non-capitalist or partially capitalist formulations. Expanding our definitions of political economy allows for a more nuanced examination of the complex impacts and outcomes of the forces of colonialism and mercantilist expansion in the early modern world. Ireland presents a valuable case study for addressing the interplay of political economies within a colonial setting, and challenges notions of capitalist domination by revealing the ways in which pre-existing economic structures continued to operate and indeed shape the direction of the early modern political economy of the island and of its Atlantic engagements.

Historians of the Ulster plantation, which was launched in 1609 and encompassed much of the most northerly province of Ireland, have generally accepted the pervasive nature of capitalist ideologies in ordering life and purportedly destroying the foundations of a largely pastoral Gaelic world. As summarised by Raymond Gillespie:

Historians of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland accept that the society they study was undergoing a revolution. Most strikingly, economic life shifted from a situation in which economic surplus was redistributed in local lineages by gifts and exchange...to a system in which the market was the main means of economic interaction.¹

This generalised understanding draws from one earlier articulated by Karl Marx:

Ulster having been taken from its Irish owners who at that time 1600-1610 held the *land in common*, and handed over to Scotch Protestant military colonists...The whole Protestant reformation, as is well known to most students of history .. apart from its dogmatical squabbles and quibbles, was a vast plan for a confiscation of land..² Closely echoing Marx, geographer William J. Smyth further asserted that ‘like many equivalent peoples in colonized Middle and South America, Ireland then saw much of its ancient ways of living- its language, law codes, systems of land occupation and territorial organisation, its settlement, social and artistic structures – either replaced or radically reconfigured by a powerful English-speaking state and its agents and settlers.³

As illustrated by Smyth’s analysis, Marx’s interpretation of the nature and outcome of Plantation has lasting appeal. A straightforward narrative, it allows for the ready equivalency of the Irish experience with that of other oppressed and colonised peoples which continues to dominate many interpretations of Irish history.⁴ Furthermore, the emphasis upon plantation as a mechanism for radical change underpinned Marx’s own analysis of the causes of the demonstrably impoverished condition of the rural Irish in the late nineteenth-century. Notwithstanding the tenacious appeal of Marx’s analysis of plantation, it is actually fundamentally at odds with the evidence from the early plantation period. Combining the same documentary data employed by historians and historical geographers with archaeological and environmental sources reveals a messier, but more interesting story that acknowledges the operation of the emerging capitalist system but gives equal weight to evidence that ideologies were incompletely applied, plantation plans seldom realised, and new economic formulations only partially rendered. On close examination, seemingly incompatible political economies emerge as capable of mutation and accommodation.

At the same time, this Irish case study also provides a salutary lesson for the need to transcend presumptions about pre-capitalist versus capitalist economies in colonial settings in terms of the mutual affects and effects. While the evidence discussed below focuses on continuities and mutations in Irish practices under plantation, with an emphasis on practices relating to pastoralism and hospitality, it also highlights the ways in which Gaelic and Old English elites

in Ireland also actively engaged with and indeed influenced the expansion of mercantilism and nascent consumerism. In focusing upon the actions and impacts of these actors as integral rather than peripheral to early modern transformations, this analysis seeks to avoid what Bhabha has characterised as a fundamental failing of historical efforts to ‘emancipate those who have been ‘hidden from history’’. By seeking these others only in relation to the operation of Western modernity, ‘they are shorn of their stories and traditions; they are no longer hidden from history, but they have turned into spectral figures, transparent testimonies to the worldly triumph of secular capitalist modernity.’⁵ Awareness of the active engagement of Ireland’s ‘others’ helps to shift the balance in examinations of colonial processes away from one in which the actions of colonised others are only ever understood in terms of their adjustments to externally imposed structures, and towards one in which the outcome was neither wholly engineered nor predictable, but instead the often confused product of multiple small scale actions and reactions.

On a broader scale, this Irish case study also provides a lens for understanding other settings in which a colonial power only imperfectly applied ideologies, and in which multiple political economies operate- sometimes overlapping, sometimes entirely separately, and sometimes in irreconcilable conflict. Studying the intersections and spaces in between also allows for a rare opportunity to transcend the micro and macro scalar perspectives that can sometimes serve to dichotomise studies in comparative colonialism – focusing either on the daily experiences of the colonised other or prioritising considerations of the emergence of a capitalist economy that on the surface paid no attention to earlier formulations. This issue of scale remains a fundamental challenge for the social sciences more generally, as acknowledged by Manuel DeLanda: ‘The most critical question which a philosophical analysis of social ontology must answer is the linkage between the micro and the macro.’⁶ DeLanda’s solution to this challenge draws upon the work of Gilles Deleuze in positing an approach which focuses more upon the interrelationships between entities, or assemblages, specifically addressing the continental European economic transformations of the late medieval to early modern period. As such, his approach is relevant for addressing the complexities of intersecting political economies in early modern Ireland.

BACKGROUND

The political structure of late medieval Ireland was characterized not by unity, but by regionalism that complicated both English efforts at conquering Ireland and any long-term, effective centralization of Irish resistance. Outside of the English administration in Dublin, political power was held by hereditary chieftains or lords who maintained influence through control of inherited territories and a complicated system of mutual obligation. Society was structured by kin relationships, both real and fictive, which ensured loyalty and affinity between non-related families. On the eve of the Ulster Plantation, the most prominent clan in the north was that of the O'Neill based in county Tyrone, while the other prominent lordships included the Maguires in Fermanagh, the O'Cahans in what became county Londonderry under the operation of plantation; the O'Donnells and MacSweeneys in Donegal, the Clondeboye O'Neills in east Antrim and Down, and in north Antrim, the Scottish MacDonnells. While military resistance to the English forces forged some collective allegiances, there was little centralised authority beyond the individual lordship. At various points in the late 16th century, each of the clan chiefs strategically pledged allegiance to the English crown, turned on the other lordships, and then both individually and collectively rebelled against the crown.⁷ Beyond military prowess, chiefly power was by and large demonstrated not through fashionable architecture or expensive material culture as more common amongst the elite in England, but via complex hospitality rituals that demonstrated the munificence of the lords. These were chronicled in bardic poetry, and yet imposed often onerous obligations on hereditary tenants to provide the sustenance for the elaborate feasts.⁸

The principal economic basis for Gaelic rural society in Ulster was pastoral, as discussed in detail further below. In contrast to late medieval England where control over land fuelled economic competition and expansion, wealth in Gaelic Ulster was based upon control over cattle. Property rights were changeable and rooted in kin obligations with rents commensurately low, making cattle a far more consistently reliable source of wealth for the elite than land, and its development, could provide. Furthermore, in a land riven by decades of warfare, reliance upon wealth on the hoof ensured a degree of resiliency. If threatened, even the lowliest tenants could take their cattle and flee the land without losing an investment in crops. Mobility provided protection, but clearly worked against the kind of agrarian improvement envisioned by plantation theorists.⁹

While portrayed by the English as backward and feudal, Gaelic elites were in fact far from unacquainted with the capitalistic exchanges that characterised medieval and Renaissance European trade relations, and as such, would not have viewed the intended mercantile plantation economy as wholly alien. The increasing numbers of Irish scholars on the continent in the sixteenth century exposed Gaelic Ireland to not just Renaissance arts and letters, but also to a wide range of new forms of material culture and economic practices.¹⁰ Continental commodities, including the French wine and brandy essential to hospitality rituals, were increasingly acquired in exchange for Irish commodities including fish and cattle. As observed by Susan Flavin on the basis of exhaustive research into the Bristol port books, sixteenth-century 'Ireland was not isolated from wider European developments and indeed, the ... south-east, at least, played an active, independent part in the early expansion of the European Atlantic economy.'¹¹ Her research has highlighted an increasing appetite for luxury goods ranging from silks and velvets to fine tablewares, supported by the increasing diversification of economies on the island.

The geographical complexity of Ireland also supported a range of diverse subsistence practices. Along the coasts, powerful Gaelic lordships controlled sophisticated maritime economies.¹² By way of example, the O'Driscolls in the south-west dealt extensively with the Spanish fishing fleets. Their control over access to fish stocks was not just based on a handshake or promise of protection, it was a carefully costed economic exchange:

Every ship or boat that fishes there is to pay the lord in money sixteen shillings and two-pence, a barrel of flour, a barrel of salt, a hogshead of beer, a dish of fish three times a week from every boat, and if they dry their fish in any part of the said country to pay thirteen shillings for the rocks.¹³

The evolution of this relationship predates the involvement of the Spanish, with south-western English fleets extensively engaged within Irish waters from the fourteenth century until the development of the Newfoundland fishery in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ As has been discussed by Connie Kelleher, the O'Driscolls also endeavoured to strategically balance their political allegiances, pledging loyalty to the English Crown while at the same time providing support to their Spanish customers on the eve of the battle of Kinsale.¹⁵ In the seventeenth century,

Richard Boyle would further develop the South Munster fisheries, not as a new capitalistic enterprise, but built upon existing Gaelic foundations.¹⁶

On the west coast, the O'Flahertys and O'Malleys controlled their territories from the sea, while in the north-west much of the fishery was controlled by the O'Donnells with broader maritime power held by the MacSweeneys and the MacDonnells as part of the broader political linkages between the north of Ireland and western Scotland. As considered by Mark Gardiner and Tom McNeill, Ulster was not isolated from the expansion of the fishing industry in the north Atlantic. Sixteenth-century maps and documentary evidence reveal known havens, or landing places for foreign fishing fleets, while from the fifteenth century onwards, they argue, Gaelic lordships 'stimulated urban trade on the continental European pattern.'¹⁷ Ports such as Newry were developed with a mercantile orientation by the Magennises before the town was granted to Nicholas Bagenal in 1549, just as in a better known example, the O'Reillys developed the town of Cavan.¹⁸ The MacDonnells demonstrated the seriousness of their engagement in the fishing industry through the establishment of a saltworks on Ballycastle Bay, recently excavated by Wes Forsythe.¹⁹ Not coincidentally, the economic significance of the Ulster fisheries would be employed as a powerful inducement to planters in the seventeenth century, and especially within the Londonderry Plantation. To this day, the Irish Society, which represents the London Guilds, retains fishing rights in the Rivers Bann and Foyle.²⁰

Notwithstanding the increasing commercialization of these maritime activities, cattle pastoralism remained one of the most important economic activities within Ulster. The cattle economy was a subject of some considerable concern to the incoming English, who wilfully misinterpreted the seasonal movement of people and herds as indicative of rebellious nomadism, as expressed by the mapmaker Francis Jobson:

The greatest strength, riches, and relief of these rebellious people, in this Province and other parts of Ireland, consist chiefly upon great herds of cows, goats, and horse, which so long as they may have scope to range up and down in to pasture and feed, they both can and will ever at their pleasures (without regard of God, Prince, or humanity), rebel and make havoc.²¹

Fynes Moryson, secretary to the English commander in Ulster, Lord Mountjoy, noted that the Irish 'fight for them [cattle] as for religion and life,' even when, in Moryson's rather sarcastic assessment, the animals themselves 'seem as rebellious to their owners, as the people are to their Kings...'²² Considering that transhumance was common throughout the British Isles and that lands in parts of England were only just undergoing the transition from an infield-outfield system to organized enclosure, English commentators clearly shaded the truth to justify land acquisition on the basis that it was not owned nor sufficiently used by the native population.

PLANTATION TRANSFORMATIONS: THE CATTLE ECONOMY

Incoming Ulster planters were specifically encouraged to replace pastoralism with tillage, and the characteristic landscape of Ulster today, with its orderly field system, is often cited as support for the success of plantation. This perspective is most clearly expressed by the historical geographer Philip Robinson, who views plantation as both innovative and successful:

with the colonists came innovation: a radical transformation of the landscape...a market-based rural economy resulted in quite spectacular growth in urbanisation... sophisticated permanent dwellings... spread of hedged enclosure...²³

However, most enclosure and drainage schemes date to the late 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, a remarkable continuity of pre-plantation land divisions exists throughout Ireland through the survival of the townland system, with boundaries and names surviving from the medieval period to the present day. While some places, for example the parts of counties Antrim and Down that attracted a critical mass of lowland Scottish settlers, did see major changes in land use and settlement, even there, a Gaelic imprint was never erased, with medieval routeways and land divisions surviving to this day.²⁴

A documented dearth of enclosures in mid-century Ulster suggests that planters may have actually adapted to land use practices associated with pastoralism, an assertion supported by a reconsideration of plantation records. In September of 1614, Sir Oliver St John wrote to the King, suggesting that 'Great good will come to this kingdom by transporting cattle and corn from hence into England.'²⁵ That planters took up this obvious route to economic stability is evidenced by Sir Thomas Ridgway's 1615 comment on 'last winter's loss of cattle,' which he

described as ‘the country’s only chief riches,’²⁶ and exemplified by surviving records from 1613-15 for two proportions in Strabane Barony, held by Sir Claud Hamilton. These records indicate that the only expenditure on Hamilton’s estate in those years (besides construction costs for his manor) related to the feeding and maintenance of cattle, while Hamilton’s Irish tenants paid rent in the form of cattle much as they had provided tribute under Gaelic patterns of obligation, as illustrated by the annual payment made by Patrick Groome O’Duffeme to Hamilton of a 4 year old cow and a calf.²⁷ Even before the launch of plantation, English servitors strategically engaged in cattle raiding, such as the 1600 raid led by Richard Wingfield on the home of Phelim McFeagh, in which he took 600 head of cattle and a ‘great store of wine, aqua vitæ, and other provision for Christmas.’²⁸ It also must be acknowledged that incoming planters were not all drawn from English or Scottish territories with established capitalistic agrarian economies. Instead, the majority of planters came from regions where customary land tenure, as in Ireland, ‘restricted the commodification of land.’²⁹

Indicative of reliance upon a cattle economy is the prevalence of tanning activity in the Ulster plantation. While there is still a lack of attention paid to post-medieval faunal assemblages in Irish archaeology, physical evidence does exist from a number of plantation-period sites for tanning activities. For example, a series of tanning-related features have been uncovered from the English garrison town of Carrickfergus. In 1993, Ó Baoill recorded evidence for a stone-lined pit likely associated with tanning, while excavations in the town in the 1970s uncovered extensive evidence for leatherworking activity in the form of thousands of leather off cuts.³⁰ The extent of reliance upon cattle products in the goods shipped from Carrickfergus is evident in the port books, and also in the physical survival of a wall built almost entirely out of cattle horn cores from at least 25 individual animals- horn cores being a documented by-product of tanning activity.³¹ Excavations in Belfast in the 1980s highlight the presence of both imported longhorn cattle breeds as well as indigenous short horned varieties. By contrast, the seventeenth-century Carrickfergus assemblages indicate a continued reliance on short-horned Irish breeds.³² Excavations at the Salters’ Company bawn at Salterstown also unearthed faunal remains that appear (by virtue of size) to be dominated by Irish breeds rather than the English breeds that the Company was instructed to raise. The Salterstown assemblage principally dates to the second half of the seventeenth century, rendering the

dominance of smaller Irish cattle even more telling in terms of the lasting influence of Gaelic husbandry practices on English planters.³³

It is significant that there is documentary evidence for tanning activity from the lands held by the English servitor Sir Thomas Phillips at the former O’Cahan stronghold of Limavady for tanning, given that Phillips was one of the architects of the Londonderry Plantation scheme which was supposed to be imposing a new self-sufficient mercantile economy on the north of Ireland. In May of 1618, a *‘grant and license from the King to Richard Fitz-Symons, Merchant, during his life’* was made,

for the erection of one Tan-House, and for tanning of hides and leather at Gortneyhanemagh, the Town where the Castle of Lymavadie stands, in the Barony of Keenaught, and County of Londonderry; and also a grant to one Michael Taffe, Merchant, during his life, for the erection of a Tan house to tan hides and leather at the Newtoun of Lyme vadie, in the same Barony and County.³⁴

Phillips was clearly content to capitalize upon one of the key commodities of Ulster, while at the same time seeking to limit the ability of others to do the same. In 1623, Phillips issued a series of recommendations intended to reform the Ulster Plantation. Five of his 20 recommendations concerned the cattle economy. Phillips required that all cattle be branded, forbade any undocumented movement of cattle around the countryside, sought to prohibit any trading in cattle or cattle by-products outside of market towns, and attempted to outlaw any butchery conducted if not under the guidance of an English gentlemen (such as himself).³⁵

One of Phillips’ key concerns was the performance of the London merchant guilds that had been granted lands encompassing what had formerly been the O’Cahan lordship and was restyled as County Londonderry. While the O’Cahan, Donal Ballach O’Cahan, had actually given his allegiance to the Crown in exchange for clear English title to his traditional lands, he was falsely accused of treason in 1608 and his lands declared forfeit. O’Cahan was arrested by Phillips, thrown into gaol first in Dublin, and then in the Tower of London where he died without trial. Phillips was a beneficiary of O’Cahan’s downfall, and he was a key architect of the scheme to compel the London Companies into bankrolling the plantation scheme.³⁶ Lands were divided up amongst the twelve premier companies, with the exception of holdings granted to Phillips and a small handful of Irish owners. The companies were to build nucleated

settlements, expel all Irish, fund the development of two walled towns, Londonderry and Coleraine, and overall promote a mixed economy.³⁷

Demographic and economic realities rendered these plantation requirements unattainable. During a survey led by Philips in 1622, it was noted that two of the companies, the Salters and the Drapers, had each failed to complete the construction of a required manor house and bawn (fortified enclosure) in their principal towns, and that each had allowed the half-built constructions to be used as cattle pounds. The Salters' bawn at their principal settlement of Magherafelt was described thus:

This manor house and bawn, begun by the company of Salters and builded to the first floor, has so remained these six years, the timber rotting and decaying, being now used for a pound for cattle. ³⁸

In both cases, it would appear that those inhabiting the Company towns placed more emphasis upon economic stability in the form of cattle than upon defensive capability.

Extant entries from port books from Coleraine, Londonderry, Carrickfergus and other Ulster ports indicate an acceleration of trading activity in the early decades of the seventeenth century, while further underscoring the importance of cattle alongside more 'acceptable' plantation commodities like timber and salmon.³⁹ All of the 52 ships recorded as leaving the Lecale (Co Down) ports between January and September of 1614 carried livestock and cattle products for export.⁴⁰ Taking shipments from the port of Londonderry in the month of November 1614 as an illustrative snapshot, the reliance of the plantation economy upon pastoralism is abundantly clear. Five ships set sail from Londonderry that month for, respectively, Chester, Renfrew, Clyde, Southend and an unnamed Scottish port, carrying goods associated with 16 different merchants. The only commodity exported that was not livestock nor a livestock by-product (beef, tallow, hides, sheepskins, cheese) was one 'pack of yarn' and '2 bal salmon' that were shipped to Chester on the ship the *Bride of Londonderry* on 2 November.⁴¹ The centrality of the cattle economy is also clearly visible on a 1622 map of Coleraine produced by the cartographer Thomas Raven under the aegis of Phillips, as it depicts two sizable cattle pounds adjacent to the walled town. In outlining the wide range of vendible commodities that could be marketed at Londonderry, a 1609 report noted that these

goods would be paid for through exporting the 'commodities of the Country; live cattle, beeves, hide and tallow.'⁴²

Outside of Ulster, other plantation entrepreneurs similarly involved themselves with the cattle economy. Leitrim planter Sir Frederick Hamilton imported cattle from England and Scotland and bred those varieties, larger than the indigenous Irish breeds, on his plantation lands in Co Leitrim.⁴³ Crucially for all involved, there was a ready and expanding market in England. According to Raymond Gillespie an estimated 15,000 live animals per year were imported from Ireland to England in the latter half of the 1630s, while Smyth puts that figure as high as 30,000. Both scholars seeing the figure reaching nearly 50,000 on the eve of 1641, while Connolly provides a lower, but no less significant, estimate of 45,000 by 1641.⁴⁴ Regional differences are evident within the depositions taken in the wake of the 1641 uprising. Historian Nicholas Canny uses the absence of agricultural tools and repairs to hedges and ditches in post-1641 claims emanating from Ulster, in contrast to the evidence from Munster, to critique what he sees as a lack of industriousness amongst Ulster planters: 'Ulster farmers seem to have permitted their livestock to graze over an open countryside with nothing but castration to prevent them from breeding promiscuously.'⁴⁵ Canny does not, however, take into account those differences in both pre-existing cultural practices and in physical landscapes which shaped the choices made in Ulster.

Even given the more mixed agriculture afforded by Munster geography and economic practices, the livestock industry still played a significant role in that part of the island; so significant, in fact, that in gauging the productivity of land in the Munster Plantation, officials resorted to enumerating cattle rather than tenants as the most accurate expression of value.⁴⁶ Irish cattle also featured prominently in the New World aspirations of Munster planter Daniel Gookin, who convinced the Virginia Company of the merits of his plan to import cattle from Ireland and thereby fill the coffers of planters dependent upon pastoralism, including Daniel and his brother Vincent, who faced potential ruin in the form of the mooted 1621 Irish Cattle Bill, which would have forbidden the importation of live Irish cattle to England.⁴⁷ While content to profit from adapting Irish economic strategies, Vincent Gookin excoriated other planters for intermingling with the Irish through 'marriage and gossipry and the like' to secure local status.⁴⁸ Unlike them, Gookin claimed to stand 'at a distance from the Irish, and will not so much as suffer my children to learn the language.'⁴⁹ Gookin's comments

make it clear that planters were not averse to engaging with the Irish, even including intermarriage and the routine speaking of Irish. Vincent's cultural attitudes may have been firmly fixed, but such was not the case for the rest of his family. His nephew Daniel Gookin would attain a measure of fame for his engagement with New England indigenous communities. Alongside the Reverend John Eliot, Gookin set up fourteen Praying Indian towns, his conversion activities greatly aided by the fact that he had learned the Algonquian language.⁵⁰

Notwithstanding plantation prohibitions, the expansion of the cattle economy, described as a commercialised 'agri-business' and 'rancher-economy'⁵¹ has generally been credited to planter innovation and as another indicator of the all-pervasive nature of externally imposed capitalist expansion replacing archaic Gaelic practices. However, Gaelic forms of pastoralism were not inherently antithetical to more capitalistic formulations and the continuation of practices should be, and certainly must have been at the time, understood on multiple levels. The ability of planters to accommodate the seemingly archaic practices and obligations of the Gaelic cattle economy with the economic imperatives of plantation demonstrates not just pragmatism, but crucially an underappreciated ability to adapt to aspects of the unfamiliar culture of the demographically dominant Irish. Other examples include the routine reliance by English planters on Irish house forms, outlawed in plantation regulations but surprisingly common on cartographic depictions and revealed archaeologically.⁵² Similar to the adoption of Irish vernacular dwellings is the sleight of hand revealed by the textual transformation of unfamiliar Gaelic settlement forms like the circular rath or ringfort into '*round bawns*' when re-edified by English planters. Significantly, the language used to describe these '*circular bawns*' and island forts never acknowledges their Irish derivation; just as term Irish-derived term 'bawn' (from *bohún*, meaning cattle enclosure) itself became English.⁵³

PLANTATION TRANSFORMATIONS: HOSPITALITY PRACTICES

From an archaeological perspective, more attention has been paid to the construction of fashionable manor houses than to any other aspect of the built heritage of the Ulster Plantation.⁵⁴ Surprisingly little attention has been given to recognising and assessing the ways in which incomers adapted older forms. While Sir Thomas Phillips constructed a new manor house at Limavady, he also re-edified the adjacent O'Cahan tower house rather than

symbolically destroying it and rebuilding anew. His brother-in-law Sir Edward Doddington did the same with another O’Cahan tower house at Dungiven. Phillips and Doddington may have employed their captured O’Cahan halls to enact their versions of Gaelic lordly hospitality and thereby claim a form of locally understood political status. Archaeological evidence from both sites reveals that the finest early 17th-century decorative plasterwork was installed not in the new manor houses, but in the repurposed medieval halls.⁵⁵

Rather than consciously acknowledging Irish patrimony, they may have understood such activities as on par with the English fashion for play castles as illustrated by the Smythson-design Little Castle built by William Cavendish at Bolsover in Nottinghamshire,⁵⁶ and in keeping with the residences of other new planter elite in Ireland in which, as described by Eric Klingelhofer, ‘the classical and the feudal met and mingled.’⁵⁷ For both Phillips and Doddington, use of the tower houses may have normalised their standing in the eyes of their largely Irish tenantry, previously accustomed to the rule of the O’Cahans as physically expressed in the same buildings. What did these English men do in their Gaelic-esque tower houses? Arguably, they may have endeavoured to enact a version of the same hospitality rituals employed by the Gaelic elite to reify and codify sociopolitical standing, rituals that bore enough of a resemblance to late medieval aristocratic English modes of expression to permit their adoption.⁵⁸

The interpretation and imitation of Gaelic behaviour on the part of Phillips and Doddington is indicative of the process of mimesis. In colonial settings, such copying occurs across cultural boundaries, but is not simply a coping strategy engaged in by colonised others as it is most frequently considered. Crucially, it is a strategy also employed by those in authority endeavouring to understand the behaviour of those over whom they wielded power. As described by Taussig, ‘the wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power.’⁵⁹ Helping to explain what Phillips and Doddington may have been doing in their tower houses is evidence from a 1602 narrative by Captain Josias Bodley describing the effusive hospitality proffered by the English military leader Sir Richard Moryson, in a captured Gaelic tower house in Downpatrick. Days of excessive feasting and drinking were punctuated by entertainments provided by Irish mummers and by visits to local

antiquities, such as St Patrick's seat at the pilgrimage site of Struell Wells, as well as periods of rest and recovery in bed chambers described by Bodley as 'prepared in the Irish fashion.'⁶⁰

Bodley's description of the generosity of his host is instructive:

... at first we sat as if rapt and astounded by the variety of meats and dainties In the midst of supper Master Morrison ordered to be given to him a glass goblet full of claret... and drank to the health of all and to our happy arrival. We freely received it from him, thanking him, and drinking, one after the other, as much as he drank before us. He then gave four or five healths of the chief men and of our absent friends... Et est res valde laudabilis (And it is a very praiseworthy thing).⁶¹

The phraseology used by Bodley can be directly compared to that of bardic poetry, such as the poem by Cú Choigríche Ó Cleirigh praising the hospitality of Cú Connacht Mág Uidhir: 'red wine will not last long in his palace, so abundantly is it drunk; nobody yet has been questioned in the crowded feast of vintage drink;⁶² or that by Tadhg Dall O hUiginn on the hospitality of Turlough Luinneach O'Neill: '...the sound of banqueting... we liken to a stormy sea coming against the shore, from the clashing of purple vessels...from then till morn the fair, haughty cupbearers of famed O'Neill plied us unrelaxingly with refreshment.'⁶³ That Bodley wrote about Moryson's abilities in a bardic style is notable considering that the English generally condemned the bards. According to Barnaby Rich 'There is nothing that hath more led the Irish into error, than lying historiographers, their chroniclers, their bards, their rhymers, and such other their lying poets.'⁶⁴ However much English commentators and later generations may have dismissed bardic culture as backward and outmoded, it appears from both the archaeological record and Bodley's account that aspects of hospitality and praise poetry were readily adopted and incorporated into elite planter life and by extension, the plantation political economy.

Similarly, of course, the Gaelic Irish were also open to new practices and products, as has also been acknowledged by Raymond Gillespie:

Even the most conservative of those in Gaelic Ireland were becoming more interested in the material goods they could acquire in markets that were evolving to meet their needs...[which] required ability to master new...worlds of commerce and language, not

because of compulsion but because of a desire to enter the world of consumer goods on their own terms.⁶⁵

Importantly, new items of material culture do not necessarily signify the loss or thorough alteration of cultural practices, but rather can be used in familiar ways. A multi-handled tyg can be effectively passed from guest to guest in a performance of a Gaelic drinking ritual just as the more traditional multi-handled wooden methers would have been, be without necessarily suffering a wholesale loss of meaning or compromise to accepted practice.⁶⁶

A final illustration of the convergence and contestation between differing forms of political economy in early modern Ireland is provided by the remarkable career of the Catholic Highlander Randal MacDonnell. Scottish by birth but a prominent landholder in north Antrim, MacDonnell gained the patronage of the Protestant King James, and strategically redefined himself as a key promoter of plantation, having previously opposed the Crown by siding with the Gaelic Irish lords. To materialise his new identity and socio-political standing, MacDonnell redesigned his clifftop defensive residence, Dunluce Castle, into a semblance of an English gentleman's residence complete with a fashionable manor house featuring large windows and symmetrical chimney stacks, all overlooking a formal garden landscape and accompanied by a new town designed to promote mercantilism and plantation civility.⁶⁷ However, within the hall in his 'English-style' manor house, MacDonnell and his household evidently continued to enact Gaelic hospitality rituals, as is richly evoked by the recent recovery of a harp tuning peg alongside the highly utilitarian, locally made hand-built Ulster coarse pottery.⁶⁸ While politically extremely savvy, MacDonnell's attempt to profit from speculative urban development was unsuccessful. His aspirational mercantile entrepôt faced one insurmountable challenge: the lack of a viable harbour. The steep basalt cliffs that had long defended the castle also defeated any concerted efforts to engage in seaborne trading.

MacDonnell's understanding of 'modernity' in the form of his designed town may have been incomplete, but it was strategic. He built a Protestant church, but continued to attend Catholic services provided by the Scottish Franciscans for whom he served as patron. He required his tenants to build villages, but turned a blind eye when those settlements, such as an enigmatic grouping of subrectangular turf walled houses at Goodland, Co Antrim, on lands granted by MacDonnell to two brothers from Islay, bore absolutely no relationship to the prescribed

regular townscapes of plantation.⁶⁹ This site itself illustrates - in a different way- the incomplete penetration of capitalism and consumerism in early modern Ireland. Excavation of one house yielded only a single sherd of Ulster coarse pottery (dateable anywhere between the thirteenth- late seventeenth centuries), but a surprising radiocarbon date suggesting occupation extended into the late 18th century.⁷⁰ Similarly in the nearby Scottish isles, small scale rural settlement sites of the same period also seem to contain little to no manufactured pottery. Excavations in 2013 at Ardskenish, on Colonsay, explored two dwellings in a coastal settlement cluster known to have been occupied into the 18th century. Beyond a hand-wrought nail, the only other artefact recovered was a single sherd of hand-built pottery.⁷¹ The apparently nearly aceramic nature of post-medieval rural life in the north of Ireland and the Isles provides a sharp contrast to more common assumptions of the all-pervading nature of capitalist-fuelled consumption which are based upon evidence from the materially-rich assemblages of colonial British North America. Even in less remote rural Scottish locations, there appears to have been a continued reliance upon locally-produced pottery rather than upon the industrial products of Staffordshire and Glasgow that were finding their way around the globe by the end of the 18th century.⁷²

CONCLUSION

It has been argued that early modern Atlantic expansion was inherently different from earlier periods, marked by the interrelationship between capitalism, colonialism, Eurocentrism, and modernity.⁷³ But as acknowledged by the contributors to this volume and drawing upon the mid-20th-century insights of the Annales School, capitalist behaviours did not emerge anew immediately in the wake of the Columbian venture, often taken as the start date for historical archaeology, but actually have much older and deeper roots in medieval Europe. Through the mechanism of plantation, Ireland clearly experienced first-hand the entangled forces of capitalism and colonialism. However, the evidence suggests that this did not play out in a straightforward or simplistic manner, with a feudal and pastoral Gaelic economy replaced wholesale by a newly emergent mercantile capitalist economy in which everything- land, people, things- was rendered instantly alienable. Instead, we can tease out the simultaneous operation of different political economies, and the spaces where they overlapped – as in the integration of pastoralism and its peculiar labour relations and social expectations-- into the plantation economy. When we consider political economy at multiple levels, we also see the

incomplete penetration of capitalist systems of value and attendant consumption practices, as reflected in the dearth of manufactured goods found on rural sites in marginal areas of the north of Ireland and the Scottish isles as late as the end of the 18th century.

To what extent, then, did the plantation period in Ireland mark a fundamental shift in political economy and cultural identity? To what extent were individuals, be they natives or newcomers, consciously situating themselves as arbiters of change? Something that could be termed a cultural climate for change did exist in the period, but not in the sense of seeking some momentous alteration in the fortunes of the island. A climate for change existed mostly at the individual level, in the same way that the myriad small decisions made by individuals collectively contribute to larger scale processes. But the critical point to remember is that no one could predict the future. When the Ulster Gaelic lord Donal Ballach O’Cahan willingly signed over his lands in order to receive them back under English law, accompanied by an English knighthood, he could not have known that in a few years he would be falsely arrested, his lands recast as the Londonderry Plantation, and that centuries later he would be reviled as some kind of Gaelic traitor. In his mind, he was adapting to a small change that would allow him to wield even greater control over his hereditary lands, rather than paving the way for the Londonderry Plantation, a scheme that had not even been dreamt up when O’Cahan scrawled his mark on the page that ultimately sealed his fate. If we instead start to do history backwards⁷⁴, in other words take it from the standpoint of the person in the past looking to an uncertain future rather than from our standpoint of knowing how it all worked out, we will come much closer to a truly critical and human-centred understanding of the past. Furthermore, and referring back to the work of DeLanda, if we focus more explicitly upon interrelationships and overlaps - as in the mimetic hospitality practices of incoming planters and the manner in which the Gaelic cattle economy became the cornerstone of the plantation market economy- we can begin to transcend the dichotomy between macro- and micro-scalar analyses.⁷⁵ As such, it is hoped that this brief examination of the gaps between plantation rhetoric and on the ground realities in early modern Ireland has demonstrated the valuing of exploring the intersections of culturally disparate political economies to expose deeper and more culturally meaningful understandings of colonial encounters.

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¹ Gillespie 2009, 43.

² Writing to his daughter Jenny Marx Longuet February 1881, Marx and Engels 1971, 326-329; see also https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1881/letters/81_02_24.htm accessed 18 October 2016.

³ Smyth 2006, 16.

⁴ Indicative postcolonial readings of the Irish experience include works by cultural theorist Declan Kiberd (1997), geographer Gerry Kearns (2007) and the previously cited study by William Smyth 2006. From an archaeological perspective, the work of Charles Orser adheres most closely to this perspective. See Orser 2005, 1996, 89-106. Joe Cleary (2000) provides a thoughtful case for considering Ireland through a postcolonial lens. For critical perspectives, see Howe 2000, Kennedy 1996, and for the 16th century specifically, Morrissey 2004. For a longer discussion, see Horning 2011.

⁵ Bhabha 2002, xi.

⁶ DeLanda 2006, 250.

⁷ O'Dowd 1986; Connolly 2007; Nicholls 2003.

⁸ O'Sullivan 2004; Simms 1978; Nicholls 2003; contributions in Duffy et al 2001.

⁹ Dowling 1999; Nicholls 2003; Connolly 2007.

¹⁰ Lyons and O'Connor 2008; Silke 1993; Potterton 2011; Ó Catháin 2009.

¹¹ Flavin 2011, 216.

¹² Breen 2005, 2001; Gardiner & McNeill 2016.

¹³ O'Mahony 2000.

¹⁴ Breen 2001; Kelleher 2007; Naessens 2007, 222-223.

¹⁵ Kelleher 2007.

¹⁶ MacCarthy-Morrogh 1986; Canny 1982; Ranger 1957; Heffernan 2015; Horning 2017; Ohlmeyer 2012.

¹⁷ Gardiner and McNeill 2016, 24.

¹⁸ Cherry 2007.

¹⁹ Forsythe 2014; Forsythe and McConkey 2013.

²⁰ Mitchel 1965; Moody 1939; Curl 1986; Horning 2007.

²¹ Jobson 1598, 445.

²² Moryson 1907 (1617), IV, 200-201.

²³ Robinson 1986, xvii. Interestingly, the same author earlier (Robinson 1977) acknowledged the late development of hedged enclosures in Ulster, but by 1986 had shifted to emphasising the changes wrought by plantation.

²⁴ O'Keeffe 2008.

²⁵ Sir Oliver St John 1614, *Calendar of State Papers of Ireland (CSPI)*, 1611-14, 501-2.

²⁶ CSPI 1615 p. 86, 7 August.

²⁷ Hunter 2011.

²⁸ Thomas Phillips to Robert Cecil, 18 December 1600, in *CSPI* November 1600-31 July 1601, viii.

²⁹ Dowling 1999, 120; Perceval-Maxwell *Scottish Migration* 1973, 30-31, 129.

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- ³⁰ Ó Baoill 1993; Rachel Tracey, pers. comm October 2016.
- ³¹ Murphy 2007; Murphy, Ó Baoill and Brannon 1998.
- ³² Murphy 2007.
- ³³ Miller 1991, 541-547, 716.
- ³⁴ Boyle 1912, 2.
- ³⁵ Phillips, June 1623 'Reformation of Abuses in the Ulster Plantation', *CSPI* 1615-1625, 412.
- ³⁶ Casway 2001; Horning 2013, 178, 190-91.
- ³⁷ Moody 1939; Curl 1986; Horning 2013.
- ³⁸ *CSPI* 1615-1625, p. 375.
- ³⁹ Connolly 2007, 279-80; Hunter 2012.
- ⁴⁰ Scott 2012, xiv.
- ⁴¹ Hunter 2012, 27-28.
- ⁴² 'Commodities vendible at Derry,' *CSPI* 1608-10, 340.
- ⁴³ Rooney 2013, 92.
- ⁴⁴ Gillespie 2006, 79-80; Smyth 2006, 97-98; Connolly 2007, 281.
- ⁴⁵ Canny 2001, 350.
- ⁴⁶ McCarthy-Morrogh 1986, 128-129; Dowling 117-118.
- ⁴⁷ Horning 2013, 280, 316.
- ⁴⁸ Gookin was forthright in his negative opinion of Ireland in a 1633 missive to Lord Deputy Wentworth, printed in *CSPI 1647-1660*, 181-186, quotations on 184-185; see also Barnard 1990, 70.
- ⁴⁹ Gookin, 1633 missive to Lord Deputy Wentworth, printed in *CSPI 1647-1660*, 181-186, quotations on 184-185; see also Barnard 1990, 70.
- ⁵⁰ Gookin 1912; Hadfield 2004; Breen 1999.
- ⁵¹ Smyth 2006, 98.
- ⁵² Horning 2001; 2013, 61, 231-234.
- ⁵³ Horning 2013, 168.
- ⁵⁴ Eg Jope 1960, 1961, Waterman 1961, Reeves-Smith 2007.
- ⁵⁵ Horning 2013, 206-207; Brannon and Blades 1980, Brannon 1983, 1985.
- ⁵⁶ Girouard 1983; Raylor 1999; Faulkner 1972.
- ⁵⁷ Klingelhofer 2010, 142.
- ⁵⁸ Matthew Johnson (2002, 133) considers the intentional retention of older parts of a castle in the Renaissance and notes that such structures may have been understood to reflect 'values of hospitality and good lordship.'
- ⁵⁹ Taussig 1993, xiii.
- ⁶⁰ Bodley 1854 [1602], quote on 78; McCormick 2009.
- ⁶¹ Bodley 1854 [1602], 78-79.
- ⁶² O'Sullivan 2004, 105; Greene 1972 poem XX verse 4.
- ⁶³ Knott E. 1922, 34.
- ⁶⁴ Rich, B. 1923 [1610], 340-341.
- ⁶⁵ Gillespie 2009, 56-57.
- ⁶⁶ Elizabeth Gray 2016 has conducted experimentation around the actual practice of passing a wooden mether as part of a drinking ritual.
- ⁶⁷ Breen 2012a, 2012b; Horning 2013, 243-244; Reeves-Smith 2007, 302.
- ⁶⁸ Breen 2012a.
- ⁶⁹ Horning 2004.
- ⁷⁰ Horning and Brannon 2004; McSparron 2011; the radiocarbon date from charred hazel was 204 +/-25 years BP.
- ⁷¹ Excavations at Ardskenish were conducted by Wes Forsythe and Audrey Horning in 2013 as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Connected Communities project in collaboration with the Colonsay and Oransay Heritage Trust. See entry in *Archaeology Scotland DES* 2013.
- ⁷² Schweickart 2014.
- ⁷³ Orser 1996.
- ⁷⁴ Following the position advocated by Mrozowski 2014.
- ⁷⁵ DeLanda 2006.