

such skill hold enormous promise to act as a stimulus to fresh research on a sadly neglected period of Irish history.

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IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS NO. 18: ARMAGH. By Catherine McCullough and W. H. Crawford. Pp 47, illus. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy. 2007. €30.

Armagh's rich history is fairly clearly inscribed in its landscape, particularly in the enduring configuration of a core around the cathedral, which is evident in the first 'colonial' maps of the ruinous settlement in the early seventeenth century, and a series of important cadastral surveys in the eighteenth century. Armagh's topographical history has been significantly influenced by the fact of its ownership largely by the archbishop.

*Armagh* by Catherine McCullough and W. H. Crawford follows the strict format of the *Irish historic towns atlas* – a selection of historic maps and illustrations accompanied by an interpretative essay. In spite of its regulated format, like all the other numbers, each fascicle (as they are labelled) is distinguished by the individual characteristics (topographical or historical) of the towns being mapped and described.

The turbulent experience of this Ulster region in the late sixteenth century is marked in the landscape of the town, which became one of the twenty-eight urban centres designated as boroughs in the Ulster plantation. Its extensive range of medieval ecclesiastical buildings and accompanying settlement were ruined following the loss of property and prestige in the Reformation and the Nine Years War. Bartlett's famous (1602) map/view shows these ruins, with evidence of some Gaelic temporary resettlement in thatched cabins: a later 1618 survey of the town detailing an extensive Gaelic settlement mostly in 'creetes' and coupled houses is reprinted in an appendix.

The ownership of the town by the archbishop (with the exception of small sections held by Annesley, later Anglesey, and Charlemont) had important repercussions for the evolution of Armagh. Following the 1641 uprising, the small Ulster plantation settlement was largely destroyed, with only ninety-four houses counted in the 1664 hearth-tax rolls. The immigration of Presbyterians in the later seventeenth century led to a surge in population and building construction in the town, including the largest meeting house in Ulster and an early market house in 1664. The Church of Ireland tried to prohibit Presbyterian or Catholic places of worship in the town, but they were eventually erected on the Charlemont and Anglesey properties by Presbyterians in 1712 and 1722, by Catholics in 1750, and by Methodists in 1786.

One of the earliest undertakers under the archbishop was the Dawson family, which assembled a range of properties in the town. Thomas Ashe's 1703 survey – described as an 'anatomy' of the town given the manner in which it locates and describes its holdings – is an especially appropriate source for this project. Ashe compared his survey notes with the books of survey and distribution in Dublin. The only thing missing is a map to accompany its details, but he does give good pen pictures of the state of buildings – such as the bridewell, a 'fair well-built house of lime and stone, well enclosed by a high stone wall; there are a large pair of gates at the entrance to the yard belonging to the said house without the out wall; the house is well-fitted and made convenient for the uses designed' (p. 4). He noted such details as sash windows in some houses, a recent innovation in Armagh as they were becoming fashionable in England after the 1690s.

Primate Robinson (1765–86) was the first resident archbishop, and a significant improver in the town. He enclosed the ancient common – a residue of the ancient *aonach* site – into a fashionable mall, and established schools and churches. Coote commended the town in 1803 for its neatly slated 'new and handsome rows of houses' with every appearance of

wealth and gentility. During and following Robinson's episcopacy – into the early decades of the nineteenth century – there was a burst of building activity that reflected the civic energy of an expanding and self-confident urban community: church, lunatic asylum, school, ballroom, assembly rooms, market house, courthouse, gaol, county infirmary, fever hospital, workhouse, almshouses, music hall. The sovereign of the market, Thomas Macan, was also enormously influential on townscape and infrastructure during his long custodianship from 1765–95. When the Roman Catholic Archbishop Crolly moved his seat from Drogheda (which had medieval residential precedents for the diocese) to Armagh, he initiated another influential surge in building activity, which added significantly to the townscape. In this case – as is evident in most modern views of the town, and reflecting a new Catholic triumphalism found in other towns in Ireland – his new cathedral was designed 'to frown down upon the various conventicles ... that represented the different shades of Protestant opinion in the city beneath' (p. 7).

As with all the fascicles in the *Towns atlas*, in addition to the maps and illustrations (in Armagh's case, a wide-ranging selection of nineteenth-century painted and photographed 'views' of the town), there is a copiously documented supplement with topographical information on population, housing and street names. The latter includes a record of each street, lane and space, with the earliest rendition of the name and its various transformations, together with sources. It features a detailed inventory of all religious sites in the town from early Christian churches (with dates and sources of reference), through Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Catholic churches erected over 400 years. There are details on administrative and military buildings, as well as hugely comprehensive details on sites of manufacturing (many from directories, though the specific sites are 'unknown'), trades and services, transport and utilities (such as livery stables, wells, pumps, fountains and toll gates), health and education (including at least 106 schools ranging from Charter (1740) and Royal (1774) schools, St Patrick's College (1838), the Classical, Mathematical and Mercantile school (1844), to Owen McCaffry's school (1826) and Miss Calvert's ladies' boarding and day school (1887)). There are also lists of significant private residences (single, paired, rows and terraces), with their dates of construction.

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CONTESTED ISLAND: IRELAND, 1460–1630. By S. J. Connolly. Pp xii, 426. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007. £35. (Oxford History of Early Modern Europe)

One of Sir Geoffrey Elton's many trenchant aphorisms was that there were only two periods in a scholar's career when they should write textbooks. The first was (for the most gifted) as soon as they had written their first monograph, when they had challenged the paradigms and believed they could create new ones; the second was towards the end of a distinguished career, when they were on top of all that had been written and knew what students found hardest to understand. Sean Connolly has taken the second route, and passes the test with flying colours. I assume he was asked to write a single volume for a series, and came up with such a whopper that it has been divided into two, dividing at the rather unsatisfactory date of 1630 (the other volume, *Divided Ireland*, has appeared whilst this volume was under review). Still, 350 pages on 171 years is quite a stretch.

Textbooks come broadly in four forms: the hopeless form is the one in which authors write up disconnectedly the bits they know about; the bold form (Russell, *The crisis of parliaments*; Scott, *England's troubles*), in which authors stamp their own personality on their books and share a vision of the whole that is distinctive and recognisably theirs; the diffident form, in which authors faithfully and accurately summarise the state of knowledge on each aspect of the subject but fail to bring coherence to the whole. The biggest-selling