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Reviews and short notices

THE MANOR IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN IRELAND. Edited by James Lyttleton and Tadhg O'Keeffe. Pp 220, illus. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2004. €50.

ALTHOUGH it is generally recognised that Ireland witnessed increasing feudalisation in the years leading up to 1169–70, the concept of the manor appears to have been introduced by the Anglo-Normans. It was to endure as one of the basic methods of organising the landscape and of governing people's activities until the nineteenth century. As the first book-length investigation of a phenomenon that affected the daily lives of generations of Irish people for over six centuries, this volume has to be welcomed.

It consists of six case studies that concentrate almost exclusively on physical topography and spatial arrangements within the manor. This collection is based on papers delivered by recent graduates at conferences of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement. Inevitably it shows both the strengths and weaknesses of its origins. There is considerable internal repetition and restatement, as well as unnecessary summations of previous literature, some of which are inadequate or misunderstood. On pp 45–6, for instance, David Harkness and Mary O'Dowd are credited with developing the notion 'that the settlement at the manorial *caput* was a borough'. This is a problematic view that would be brilliantly simple if it were true. Examination of the reference shows that the relevant page was not written by Harkness or O'Dowd but is actually part of a well-known paper on boroughs by the late Geoffrey Martin. This gets us no further, however, because neither on that page nor anywhere else in Martin's paper is the alleged statement to be found. I am left wondering if it is a misattribution or misunderstanding of something that Brian Graham may have said, but I am none the wiser. Such slips, however, constitute the price that has to be paid for the energy, enthusiasm and excitement of the new research presented here.

Mark Keegan introduces the major themes of the volume with a review of the archaeology of manorial settlement in west County Limerick. He establishes the size of the manors before examining their individual components, and one of his conclusions is that moated sites may have been introduced slightly earlier than the usually accepted date of *c.* 1225. Other broad survey papers include Brian Shanahan's examination of the manor in east County Wicklow from medieval to early modern times, and William Roulston on seventeenth-century manors within the barony of Strabane, County Tyrone. Detailed individual studies are provided by Linda Shine on the manor of Earlstown, County Kilkenny; by Sinéad Armstrong-Anthony on the Bermingham manor of Monasteroris, County Offaly; and by Matthew Seaver on three County Meath boroughs that were also manors, Slane, Siddan and Drumcondra. The volume has a foreword by Brian Graham and a conclusion by Tadhg O'Keeffe in which they endeavour to address some of the broader issues raised by the studies.

The main weakness of the book is its title. It is not a study of the manor but of manorial settlement. The reader expecting an investigation of themes such as the origin, social organisation, growth, decline or comparative development of the Irish manor will be disappointed. There is much here on the manor as a nucleated or as a dispersed settlement, and the thrust of the volume can almost be summed up in Linda Shine's contention that the manor was essentially an estate settlement combining castle, church and village. There is no reference to Curtis's seminal paper on Lisronagh or Colfer's

benchmark study of manorial settlement in County Wexford. There seems to be a fear of Latin manuscript sources, and one has the impression at times that the authors believe they are exploring a research landscape devoid of fixed points. In general, the editing and proof-reading are good, but in using the Harvard system of referencing it would have been safer to leave bibliographies at the end of each contribution. Instead a common bibliography was created, presumably to save space and give the volume a sense of coherence. This has resulted in the conflation of papers by authors who might have published more than one per year, while others, such as Davies 1949 (p. 97), are dropped. The contributors must be applauded for their initiative and originality, and the editors for the worthiness of the idea, but the result is a volume in which the whole is less than the sum of its parts.

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THE TREASON AND TRIAL OF SIR JOHN PERROT. By Roger Turvey. Pp xiv, 208. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. 2005. £30.

DURING the sixteenth century (and for most of the seventeenth) 'guilty' verdicts were a foregone conclusion in English treason trials. As a matter of course, the accused was denied legal counsel, a copy of the charges, the right to call witnesses, and even a pen, ink and paper with which to take notes during the trial. It was entirely predictable, then, that when the former chief governor of Ireland, the Welshman Sir John Perrot, was tried for treason on 27 April 1592, the jury took just forty-five minutes to reach the expected verdict. 'Being demaunded whether the prisoner were guiltie or not of the severall treasons in the Indictment, they answered "Guiltie" ' (p. 164). He was duly condemned to a traitor's death, by public execution, only to beat the executioner to it by dying 'of sicknesse' in the Tower of London before the scaffold could be built.

The real mystery of Perrot's condemnation, of course, is neither the verdict nor how it was reached, but rather why he was indicted at all. Plainly he made a most unlikely traitor. Aged about sixty-four at the time of his death, he had served the Tudor monarchy in various capacities for fully forty-six years, beginning with service to the lord treasurer of England, Sir William Paulet, when just eighteen (p. 5). Made a knight of the bath at the coronation of Edward VI in 1547, his close connexions to first the Dudley family and later the Cheyneys had enabled him to survive the topsy-turvy politics of the mid-Tudor years before emerging as a figure of some importance under Elizabeth I. Elizabeth facilitated Perrot's growing dominance of his native Pembrokeshire and appointed him to a string of important provincial posts, as vice-admiral of Wales (1562), lord president of Munster (1570), and a member of the Council of the Marches of Wales (1574), before in his later years choosing him for one of the great offices of the Tudor state, the lord deputyship of Ireland, in December 1583 (misdated, incidentally, by Dr Turvey as January 1584). While his rule in Ireland had proved controversial, and at times his antics there had greatly angered Elizabeth, the upward trajectory of his career continued unabated after his departure from Dublin in 1588, culminating in his appointment to the English privy council in February 1589. From his unspectacular Welsh origins Perrot had managed to climb the ladder of Tudor government to reach its highest, and supposedly safest, point. What went wrong?

Taking their lead from comments made by some of Perrot's contemporaries in the generation after his trial, historians have long suspected that his fall was more a case of plots against him than of plots involving him. In this timely study Roger Turvey examines the evidence for the treason trial of 1592 and its political background in great detail. Part I outlines Perrot's career in Wales, Ireland and England, allowing his capacity for making