



Imaging frontiers, contesting identities / edited by Steven G. Ellis and Lud'a Klusáková
(Frontiers and identities : thematic work group 5 ; 2)

305.8 (21.)

1. Identità 2. Multiculturalismo I. Ellis, Steven G. II. Klusáková, Lud'a

CIP a cura del Sistema bibliotecario dell'Università di Pisa



This volume is published thanks to the support of the Directorate General for Research of the European Commission, by the Sixth Framework Network of Excellence CLIOHRES.net under the contract CIT3-CT-2005-00164. The volume is solely the responsibility of the Network and the authors; the European Community cannot be held responsible for its contents or for any use which may be made of it.

Cover: Fernand Leger (1881-1955), *Contrast of Forms*, painting, Rosengart Collection, Luzern, detail ©1990.

Photo Scala Archives, Florence

© Copyright 2007 by Edizioni Plus – Pisa University Press

Lungarno Pacinotti, 43

56126 Pisa

Tel. 050 2212056 – Fax 050 2212945

info-plus@edizioniplus.it

www.edizioniplus.it - Section "Biblioteca"

Member of



Association of American
University Presses

ISBN 978-88-8492-466-7

Manager

Claudia Napolitano

Editing

Francesca Petrucci, Eleonora Lollini

Informatic assistance

Massimo Arcidiacono, Michele Gasparello

Civilizing the Natives: State Formation and the Tudor Monarchy, c.1400-1603

STEVEN G. ELLIS

National University of Ireland, Galway

ABSTRACT

The theory of human development from barbarism to civilization was a commonplace of political discourse in premodern times. It also supplied a useful ideological weapon of state formation and so enjoyed a wide currency among centralizing monarchs in the high middle ages and beyond. It could be deployed defensively as a method of stabilizing an existing frontier, as part of a rhetoric of difference. It could also be used more aggressively to undermine the claims to autonomy of a neighbouring people on whom the monarchy had designs. Traditionally, Latin Christian authors had used the word 'barbarian' as a synonym for 'pagan'. From the 12th to the 17th centuries, however, the English monarchy adapted and exploited the theory in its dealings with the neighbouring Christian peoples of the British Isles, denigrating the Irish, Scots, and Welsh as primitive savages and barbarians. In this manner, the course of English history came to be represented as the triumph of civilization over savagery. Particularly in 16th-century Ireland, moreover, it also sought to translate ideology into a practical strategy of conquest, albeit with little success.

Roimh an tréimhse nua-aimseartha, creideadh go forleathan gur fhorbair an sochaí daonna de réir a chéile ó fhánaithe bochta agus sealgairí-bailitheoirí (sé sin barbarachas) go dtí cuireadóirí agus cathróirí saibhre (sé sin sibhialtacht). An teoric mheán-aoiseach seo fá fhorbairt na náisiún éagsúla ó stádas íseal bunúsach go dtí uaspoinnte sofaisticiúil sibhialta, bhí sí bunaithe ar scríbhinní Aristotle agus Cicero. Go háirithe san ard-mheánaois, scaipeadh go forleathan an teoiric i measc rialtóirí na hEorpa a bhain sochar aisti mar arm idéolaíoch i gcomhthéacs tógáil an stáit. B'fhéidir le rialtóirí úsáid a bhaint as an teoiric le reitric na difríochta a mhúnlú idir ghéillsínigh an rí a bhí ina gcónaí ar thaobh amháin de theorainn mhíleata agus stráinséirí ina gcónaí ar an taobh eile, sé sin le cuidiú le cosaint na teorann. Idir 1100 agus 1700 bhain ríthe Shasana sochar as an teoiric agus iad ag déileáil le náisiún eile na Breataine agus na hÉireann. Chuir siad droch-cháil mar bharbaráigh amach ar na Gaeil, na hAlbanaigh, agus na Breatnaigh, in ainneoin gur Christaí iad: go dtí sin níor bhain údáir Christaí an Iarthair úsáid as an fhocal "barbarach" ach maidir le págánaigh neamh-Christaí. De réir a chéile, mar shampla, forbratodh téarmaíocht a bhí bunaithe ar reitric na difríochta idir Ghaeil agus Ghaill

na hÉireann: bhí “géillsínigh dílise Sasanacha an rí” ina gcónaí i “dtír na síochána” (an “Pháil Shasanach” mar a tugadh uirthi ó dheireadh na 15ú haoise i leith) – tír shaibhir thorthúil le go leor cathracha agus bailte móra ar tháinig “tír an chogaidh” timpeall uirthi, áit a raibh “naimhde Gaelacha an rí” (nó na Gaeil fiáine) ina gcónaí – náisiún aindiaga barbartha a chónaigh i mbótháin dóibe sna sléibhte agus sna portaigh. Sa dóigh seo cuireadh i gcéill gur bhua na sibhialtacha ar an bharbarachas é cúrsa stair Shasana. Ina theannta sin, agus go háirithe sa 16ú haoise, tugadh iarraidh ar an idéolaíocht a athrú i stráitéis inoibríthe an choncais: sé sin dlí coiteann Shasana agus oifgigh rialtas áitiúil Shasana a leathnú go dtí Éire na nGael, agus Gaill-Bhéarla agus nósanna Sasanacha a chur i bhfeidhm orthu le tabhairt ar na Gaeil éirí níos Gallda “sibhialta”. Ach níor éirigh leis an stráitéis seo.

One of the most effective means of clarifying the limits to a ruler’s authority was to foster antagonism towards neighbouring peoples living on the other side of a territorial frontier. This was frequently done through the creation, revival, and maintenance of ideologies, with their accompanying myths and symbols, which emphasized the uniqueness of the in-group and promoted a negative picture of the out-group. Very often these ideologies would emphasize religious or cultural differences between the two peoples, but where religious or cultural distinctions were less apparent, rhetorics of difference might be developed to overcome the similarities¹. A typical one was the practice of labelling neighbouring peoples as savages and barbarians. The theory of human development from barbarism to civilization was a commonplace of political discourse in medieval and early modern times. It was consciously used and misused in the case of almost all the European peripheries. In the context of state formation, the theory was also a useful ideological weapon in the hands of centralizing monarchy, enjoying a wide application in the high middle ages and beyond. In the political discourse of the early modern period, for instance, the periphery was to be discovered and explored, culturally civilized, and in general ‘Europeanized’². It could be exploited both negatively, as a method of stabilizing an existing frontier, by emphasizing the ‘otherness’ of peoples ‘beyond the Pale’. It could also be used more aggressively, as a means of undermining the claims to autonomy of a neighbouring people on whom the monarchy had designs. The present chapter, which aims to illustrate the particular application of the theory by the English monarchy of the Renaissance period, offers examples of both types of usage. A further extension of the aggressive strategy, which seems to have been peculiar to the English monarchy, sought to translate ideology into a practical strategy of conquest, but this strategy enjoyed little success.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The medieval classification of peoples as civil or barbarous had its origins in the writings of two ancient philosophers, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and Cicero (106-43 B.C.). Aristotle identified life in the settled communities of the city-state as the highest form

of human existence, the locus for the development of the good and virtuous, and a logical and necessary consequence of man's innate sociability. Cicero posited the evolution of the proper conditions for a fully human life by describing how "scattered humanity" living in tiny communities in fields and forests were led by the eloquence of orators "out of its brutish existence in the wilderness up to our present condition of civilization as men and as citizens". Blended together, the views of Aristotle and Cicero provided a coherent and universal theory of human development from barbarism to civilization which was adopted by Christian thinkers in large measure because Christianity first developed in the cities of the Mediterranean. The administrative structure of the church, with territorial parishes and dioceses, paralleled the Roman imperial administration and assumed, as the social basis of Christian society, the existence of a settled, agriculturally-based people living in a society of city-states. As Christian missionaries encountered the barbarian peoples and other modes of social organization beyond the limits of the Roman world, they were forced to consider the relationship between Christianity and civilization. Missionaries came to stress the need to civilize the barbarians as part of the process of converting them, transforming hunter-gatherers and pastoral peoples into settled agricultural societies³.

A familiar aspect of monarchical government in Renaissance Europe was the extension and consolidation of princely power in the provinces, at the expense of both local communities and the territorial magnates. All over Europe, the growth of standing armies, paid bureaucracies and more effective systems of taxation extended the claims of the prince over his subjects, promoting the development of royal absolutism, and tipping the balance of power in the major dynastic states away from the more decentralized power structures, feudal particularism, and representative institutions of the later middle ages. In the drive for increased control, Renaissance princes like Francis I of France and the emperor Maximilian broadly struck a balance between attempts to harness inherited and particularist power structures more closely to the expanding needs of monarchy and the piecemeal creation of more uniform and centralized institutions: for instance, in France typical products of the drive towards centralized authority were the *maîtres des requêtes de l'hôtel* or the *solde des 50,000 hommes*, and in the Empire there were the *Reichskammergericht* and *der gemeine Pfennig*⁴.

ENGLISH PATTERNS OF STATE FORMATION

It has long been appreciated by historians that, by comparison with the typical pattern of state formation in the major monarchies of continental Europe, developments in England followed a rather different course. These differences were most visible at two levels. On the one hand, there was a quite striking drive by English monarchs for uniformity, especially in matters of law and administration: indeed, particularly in Tudor times, this drive for uniformity almost bordered on an obsession, extending even to language and culture. Nowhere in continental Europe did monarchs believe that this degree of uniformity was feasible or desirable. Yet, at the same time, there was no

recourse in England to standing armies, no major drive to build a powerful paid bureaucracy, and efforts to develop a more effective system of national taxation were also sporadic and largely unsuccessful. In default, the growing reliance of the Tudors in local government on unpaid officials severely hampered the monarchy in its dealings with its wealthier subjects. And whereas the English parliament assumed a new importance in Tudor government, by contrast with the general decline of representative institutions in continental Europe, successive English monarchs proved less and less able to control parliament. In all these areas, therefore, the English monarchy seemed to lose ground in the 16th century *vis-à-vis* its continental counterparts⁵.

How do we explain this paradox? The renewed drive for uniformity no doubt betokened an increasing recognition among English kings and officials that Tudor rule extended to other peoples and cultures whose turbulent lifestyles and unpredictable and incomprehensible modes of behaviour were sharply at variance with English norms. Arguably, it was a sign of weakness and insecurity, reflecting an uneasy awareness that more effective instruments of coercion were lacking. England's insular location also facilitated this Tudor divergence from more normal continental patterns of state formation. With the loss of its continental possessions in the mid-15th century there was no longer the same stimulus for English kings to develop a powerful standing army to defend outlying territories against powerful neighbours. England's first line of defence became the Channel, and so its navy. Significantly, however, the English monarchy still faced in Ireland the problem of defending an extended and militarized land frontier with the independent Gaelic lordships, and there the development of royal government after 1534 followed more continental lines. A small standing army was gradually built up for defence purposes; and a more effective system of military taxation was devised, with captains and soldiers increasingly used as the bureaucratic muscle to collect taxes and enforce policy. Irish parliaments also met less frequently as their usefulness to government declined⁶. Thus, where political conditions approximated more closely to continental norms – a long landed frontier, a more militarized society – English monarchs showed themselves capable of responding with continental solutions. It is thus possible to imagine that, if the Lancastrian kings had succeeded in hanging on to their possessions in Normandy and Gascony, circumstances might have prompted the development of a continental-style Tudor absolutism. The very existence of long landed frontiers remote from the political centre might have tempted monarchs like Henry VIII to build up a powerful standing army, paid bureaucracy, and a more effective system of taxation in order to defend them against hostile and powerful neighbours⁷.

A further influence in the drive for uniformity was the fact that the Tudor state was a conquest lordship par excellence. The circumstances of earlier monarchical expansion made it much easier to build up a comparatively centralized and uniform set of administrative structures. The monarchy's core territory of lowland England was the original area of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom conquered by the Normans in 1066. To this was later added by a further process of conquest and colonization Wales, the English far north, and parts of Ireland. This expansion brought medieval English kings and their officials

into contact with predominantly pastoral peoples whose norms and values were quite different from those of the English heartland. English kings were, for instance, contemptuous of the other legal systems which they encountered in these outlying parts. In regard to Brehon law in Gaelic Ireland, Edward I had memorably observed in 1277, that “the laws which the Irish use are detestable to God and so contrary to all laws that they ought not to be called laws”. His opinion of Welsh law and the problem of the two laws in Wales was hardly less forthright: he felt that “by his coronation oath he is bound to root out from the boundaries of his kingdom all bad laws and customs”⁸. Thus, by the late 13th century the rule of the English monarchy’s insular territories already exhibited a high degree of uniformity in terms of their administrative structures: English common law and feudal institutions had been extended to outlying parts, with the erection of counties and the appointment of sheriffs and other royal officials such as escheators and coroners; and this system of local administration was coordinated through the central courts at Westminster.

In the later middle ages, however, the English system of law and administration was not universally in operation. It was supplemented in the borderlands by different forms of march law and marcher lordships. Native Welsh law also survived in attenuated form in parts of Wales, despite Edward I’s strictures⁹. In Gascony and Normandy, moreover, English kings also held of the French crown territories which were theirs not by conquest but by dynastic inheritance— although Normandy had, in practice, to be reconquered by Henry V. These continental possessions had their own local systems of law, custom, and administrative structures which remained entirely outside the jurisdiction of the common law courts and beyond the purview of English statutes. No attempt was made to introduce English law and administration in these continental possessions. Thus, if we focus on the rule of the wider feudal condominium of the medieval English monarchy, there were in fact three distinct administrative regions: lowland England, with supposedly ‘standard’ administrative structures; the conquest lordships of the borderlands in which ‘standard’ structures had been partially imposed; and the non-English continental possessions whose administrative structures were quite different. England’s medieval empire was, in reality, an extremely diverse patchwork of lordships, duchies, towns and kingdoms, with five or six separate blocs of territory separated by land or sea, and with many marches to patrol and defend. In terms of government, too, the administrative structures of the medieval English monarchy were not much more centralized and uniform than those of its continental rivals. The loss of the crown’s continental possessions in the mid-15th century, however, left the English monarchy with a more compact group of territories whose centre of gravity was firmly insular. In each of the remaining territories, English common law and administrative structures were at least partly in operation. The loss of the continental territories, moreover, inaugurated the only extended period in English history when English kings and officials did not have to wrestle with territories which had been acquired, not by conquest, but by dynastic inheritance. (From 1603 the dynastic union with Scotland involved England in one of the typical multiple monarchies of the early modern period)¹⁰.

Initially, in the half-century of dynastic rivalry known to historians as the Wars of the Roses, successive kings were preoccupied with challenges to their traditional power base; but once the Reformation crisis underlined the need for greater central control over outlying parts, the opportunity was taken in the 1530s to centralize administrative structures along lowland English lines. Accordingly, in Wales, the marcher lordships were transformed into shire ground, the normal officers of English local government were introduced, and English common law was extended throughout the land. In the English north, likewise, the remaining feudal liberties were abolished, and shire government extended throughout the region. In Ireland, too, similar changes known to historians as surrender and regrant initiated the long-drawn-out process whereby English law and administrative structures were gradually extended to the Gaelic parts¹¹.

A similar pattern of development, with a Tudor intensification of long-standing medieval tendencies, may be observed in the sphere of language and culture. For instance, in 1300 at least five languages were spoken by the king's subjects: forms of Cornish, English, French, Gaelic, and Welsh, of which French, with Latin, was the language of administration¹². Gradually, however, English ousted French – and later on Latin too – as the language of administration, and attempts from 1366 to legislate against the use of Gaelic by the English of Ireland marked the start of a more systematic legislative campaign against the Gaelic language in Ireland¹³. French lingered on as a written language of the law courts but, after the loss of Normandy and Gascony, French was no longer spoken by the king's subjects except in the Channel Isles (and briefly too Calais, until 1558). In 1536, the so-called Act of Union required that all administrative and judicial business in Wales was to be conducted in English, and that no one speaking Welsh was to hold office there unless he could also speak English¹⁴. The onset of the Tudor Reformation further consolidated the ascendancy of English. Everywhere English replaced Latin as the language of the church, although in Wales bilingualism was promoted by Welsh translations of the Bible and prayer book (and later, with marked reluctance, Gaelic translations for Ireland). In regard to Cornish, however, the failure to provide translations of the Bible and prayer book dealt a final blow to that language which, by the mid-16th century, was in any case confined to small parts of west Cornwall. In regard to culture, the fact that English monarchs increasingly resided in lowland England, where the principal royal palaces were all located, meant that English court culture was normative for the English territories; but in Ireland, where Gaelic culture proved unexpectedly vibrant, the influence of the court had to be bolstered by a long statutory campaign against native customs and culture extending as far back as the parliament of 1297¹⁵. Besides accepting English law and administration, erstwhile Irish chiefs were expected as part of surrender and regrant, for instance, to use “the English habits and manner”, to speak the English language, and to put lands suitable for tillage in “manurance and tillage of husbandry”, building houses for the tenants¹⁶.

THE MEDIEVAL BACKGROUND

Essentially, therefore, the English obsession with uniformity in matters of administration, law, language and culture reflects the particular circumstances of Tudor government in an island kingdom of conquest lordships. Yet, the fact remains that this insistence on uniformity constituted a departure from the accepted norms of monarchical government. Medieval men, for instance, expected to be governed by their own laws; and it was normal for kings and princes, on acquiring new territories, to confirm the laws and customs of the peoples who had recently come under their rule. Clearly, then, the refusal of English kings to conform to the accepted norms of medieval and Renaissance monarchy required some theoretical justification, or rationalization, of policy. Once again, the Tudor solution was to identify medieval precedents and apply them more systematically. As early as 1125 William of Malmesbury, in his influential *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, had ingeniously recast the concept of barbarism to promote the theory that the course of English history represented the triumph of civilization over savagery. Traditionally, Latin Christian authors had used the word 'barbarian' as a synonym for 'pagan'. William of Malmesbury, however, took the religious component out of the concept and redefined it in terms of secular and material culture so that it might apply to the Christian Irish, Scots, and Welsh. Very soon, English commentators were highlighting as the essence of civility what were in reality the normal features of economic activity in lowland England and the anglicized parts of the British Isles. These included a well-populated landscape, with a settled society, wealthy towns and nucleated villages, a manorial economy, a cereal-based agriculture, and a well differentiated social structure with a numerous and vigorous gentry. By contrast, they denigrated the wild peoples of the British upland zone as lazy, bestial and barbarous – a shifting population living in mean wooden huts and scattered settlements in remote regions of forest, mountain, and bog, eking out a miserable existence from cattle raising and rustling. Alongside the distinguishing features of economic activity, there was also a checklist of attributes of civility and savagery in regard to morals, dress, and physical appearance. The particular characteristics of savagery changed over the years and varied somewhat from region to region, but essentially the commonplaces of English observations about the peoples of the British upland zone – Wales, the English far north, Scotland and Ireland – were remarkably consistent from 1100 to 1600. Even in the 17th and 18th centuries, English public opinion could be galvanized by the image of hordes of Catholic, savage and primitive Irishmen preying on unsuspecting Englishmen¹⁷.

Initially, the English image of civility drew heavily on the aristocratic and cultural values of northern France. This is hardly surprising, given the political and economic orientation of lowland England during the Anglo-Norman period¹⁸. The extended period of Anglo-French rivalry known as the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), however, provided a powerful stimulus to the development of a separate English sense of identity, in opposition to the French. The French and the other major nations of continental Europe were never denigrated as savages, notwithstanding mounting English xenophobia; but increasingly in their comments on and dealings with the other peoples of

the British Isles, the English built up a rhetoric of difference in which Englishness and civility were bracketed together, almost as synonyms, in opposition to the savagery of the benighted natives. Very soon, too, a religious dimension gradually crept back into this rhetoric. In the late 14th century, the English made the happy discovery that God was an Englishman, and in the mid-16th century under the impact of the Reformation English identity acquired a pronounced religious character, the product of Protestant perceptions of England as God's elect nation. Thus, if God was English, then civility as the manifestation of English culture had to be closest to godliness; and to the extent that other peoples departed from English norms, they were less civil¹⁹.

In the later middle ages, however, the purpose of this rhetoric was chiefly defensive. It aimed to promote among the king's subjects a sense of English identity and solidarity, that is, to persuade them that those who forsook English habits and manners in favour of native customs and culture were degenerating from civility to barbarism in a way which was manifestly incompatible with their status as the king's loyal English lieges. Thus, for instance, legislation passed by the Irish parliament attempted to prevent the English from wearing their hair in the Irish manner or using Irish dress (1297); it prohibited them from using Irish or march law ("which ought not to be called law but bad custom") (1351, 1366); and it required them to take an English name and to use the English language, customs, fashion, apparel, and mode of riding in a saddle instead of adopting the manners, fashion and language of the Irish (1366). Irishmen living in the Englishry were also expected to conform to these regulations²⁰. There was a tendency in the 15th century to make the legislation in certain instances more specific. By a statute of 1465, for instance, the Irish living among the English were to use English apparel, to be sworn the king's liege man and to take an English surname, such as the name of a town, or colour, an office or an art. Englishmen were not to have any beard above the mouth, but should shave their upper lips at least every fortnight (1447, also 1465). They were also to foster archery with English longbows (1460, 1465)²¹. Overall, though, there was no wholesale attempt during this period to promote English customs and culture among the mere Irish or Welsh by extending English law and administration to the natives, even if "charters of English liberty and freedom from Irish servitude" (as they were tellingly described) might be granted to (or purchased by) favoured individuals²².

TUDOR REFORM

From the 1530s, however, a much more thoroughgoing strategy was pursued in the Tudor borderlands which went far beyond inhibiting 'degeneracy' among the English. Instead, English law was extended to the natives and administrative structures were centralized along lowland English lines as part of a strategy of promoting English norms and values ("civility") among the natives themselves. No doubt part of the reason for this is a shift in the priorities of government, away from continental adventures towards the consolidation of monarchical authority in an island kingdom.

The Reformation crisis in particular underlined the need for greater central control over outlying parts. Yet these changes also coincided with a period of heightened optimism in official circles about the reformative potential of English common law and administrative structures²³. The reorganization of crown government in the borderlands was part of a process of Tudor reform which sought to impose English norms and values as a means of reducing the natives to civility. Although the argument is nowhere spelled out, contemporary comments by English officials on the conduct of the “primitive” peoples of “the Celtic fringe” betray an underlining assumption that the mere extension of English law and administrative structures to non-English parts would have a reformative effect on the natives, training the wild peoples of the periphery to peace and civility.

The impact of all this was most clearly felt in Ireland where what was essentially an ideology of Tudor reform masqueraded as a practical strategy of conquest, with disastrous results. Beginning in the 12th century, a quite extensive vocabulary had gradually been developed to differentiate between “sweet civility” and “barbarous rudeness”, and so between “the civil English” and “the wild Irish”. The former, the king’s loyal English subjects, lived in a “land of peace” maintained by “the sweetness of English justice”. The latter, the king’s Irish enemies, were “savage, rude and uncouth”, living in a “land of war” and known as “wild men of the woods”²⁴. Civility, allegedly, even determined choice of language: “the inhabitants of the English Pale” argued Richard Stanyhurst, “have been in old time so much addicted to all civility, and so far sequestered from barbarous savageness, as their only mother tongue was English.” In between English civility and Irish savagery, moreover, lay an unstable and turbulent march where, through extended contact with the wild Irish, “the English, degenerating, become Irish”. Irishness was like a “canker”, or disease, which undermined the constitution of the body politic, creating “a very sickly body”: “want of execution of good laws increaseth the disease”, so that “the body that before was whole and sound, was by little and little festered, and in manner wholly putrified”. Conversely, natives who adopted English ways were seen to “grow civil” or “become English” – the two terms were interchangeable! Sir John Davies argued, for instance, in 1612 that where formerly “the neglect of the [common] law made the English degenerate and become Irish”, so now “the execution of the law doth make the Irish grow civil and become English”²⁵. As for the supposed Christianity of the Irish, even the 12th-century papacy had doubted it, but during the period of the Tudor conquest, the religious argument developed on rather different lines. Pope Adrian IV had authorized English overlordship of Ireland as a means of “enlarging the boundaries of the church, checking the descent into wickedness, correcting morals and implanting virtues, and encouraging the growth of the faith of Christian”; while his successor, Pope Alexander III, condemned the Irish as a “barbarous people, undisciplined, uncivilized, ignorant of divine law” and “Christian only in name”²⁶. The English continued to denigrate Irish Christianity throughout the middle ages, and Henry VIII could announce quite conventionally in 1534 that

the King's Highness, like a most virtuous and most Christian prince, mind[eth] and desir[eth], above all things, the repression and extingting of any abuse and enormity, which in any wise may be contrary to the laws of God, or be occasion to his people to fall from charity or Christian manners²⁷.

Yet by the late 16th century the consolidation of religious divisions following the Reformation controversy meant that popery was beginning to replace incivility in the rhetoric of difference. Edmund Spenser could argue, for instance, that the Irish "are all papists by their profession but in the same so blindly and brutishly informed ... that ye would rather think them atheists or infidels"²⁸.

In those regions adjoining lowland England, English influences were by Tudor times more pervasive, notably in Wales. Under Elizabeth, English officials, puzzled by the failure of Tudor reform to achieve in Ireland the kind of progress which occurred in Wales, continued to urge the same policies which, allegedly, had "civilized" Wales. There were, however, fundamental differences by Tudor times between social structures and political conditions in Ireland and Wales: Ireland remained a military frontier, with a highly militarized society; Wales had been fully conquered by 1283, and by Tudor times was an internal periphery²⁹. The result was that, uniquely in Wales, the particular variety of Tudor reform which was devised to tackle native barbarism appeared to have the desired effect. For instance, English justice meted out by the king's council in the Welsh marches had allegedly, "at the beginning, brought Wales to that civility and quietness that you now see it". Even so, if "the sword of justice" were withdrawn, "the Welsh will wax so wild it will not be easy to bring them to order again". When, however, the government proposed to introduce English-style peace commissions in Wales in 1536 and to allow the disorderly Welsh to be justices of the peace, Bishop Rowland Lee, president of the king's council there, opposed this on the grounds that the Welsh lacked the wealth and political maturity for this. "There are very few Welsh in Wales above Brecknock", he declared sternly, "who have £10 in land, and their discretion is less than their land"³⁰. Bishop Barlow of St David's suggested that a period of religious and cultural reorientation was first necessary, with provision made among the Welsh "for learning as well as in grammar as in other sciences and knowledge of the scripture" whereby "Welsh rudeness would soon be framed to English civility and their corrupt capacities easily reformed into godly intelligence". In the event, a later verdict was that the further extension of English law and government throughout Wales by the 1536 act and its rigorous enforcement by Bishop Lee had "brought Wales into civility"³¹.

Although exposed to more sustained anglicizing pressures, the Welsh were also a Celtic nation with much in common with the Irish, at least in terms of culture. So it is hardly surprising that English comments on the Welsh should at times resemble their observations on the wild Irish. Perhaps more revealing, however, are the comments of English observers on the customs and activities of the people of the far north of England. This predominantly upland, heavily-militarized region formed an extended borderland with Scotland, and to that extent conditions along the Anglo-Scottish frontier resembled those in Ireland. The inhabitants of the far north, however, were overwhelmingly Eng-

lish, and the differences from lowland England in wealth, land use, and settlement patterns chiefly reflected differences of geography and political conditions rather than of law, language, and culture. Even so, comments on the northerners depicted a primitive and savage people, devoid of religion, who resembled nothing so much as the Irish. According to Archbishop Cranmer, the northerners were

a certain sort of barbarous and savage people, who were ignorant of and turned away from farming and the good arts of peace, and who were so far utterly unacquainted with knowledge of sacred matters, that they could not bear to hear anything of culture and more gentle civilisation. In its furthest regions on the Scottish border, England has several peoples (populos) of such a kind, who I think should rather be called devastators (populatores); in ancient fashion, they fight their neighbouring clans (gentibus) on both sides [of the border] in perpetual battle and brigandage, and they live solely upon the pillage and plunder won from it³².

Indeed, Irishness and incivility were so closely identified in the official mind that, a generation later, Archbishop Parker could underline the need to appoint bishops to northern sees by arguing that otherwise the region would become “too much Irish and savage”³³. Predictably, too, the suggested remedy for this state of affairs was likewise to execute good English justice among them. Allegedly, the whole country of Northumberland was “much given to wildness” and North Tynedale in particular “plenished with wild and misdemeaned people” who, “nothing regarding the laws of God or of the King’s Majesty’s for any love or other lawful consideration”, were “much inclined to wildness and disorder”. Accordingly, they should be kept “in a continual dread of justice, for other means is there none to keep them in good order but only dread and sharp correction”. The men of Redesdale “be even of like nature and qualities as the Tynedale men, save that they be not so trusty of their words and promise”: they could “in no wise be kept in order but by correction and dread”. By this means, the borderers had in recent years “been kept within a moderate good rule and order without committing any such notable heinous offences” as formerly; but if offenders were not “corrected and punished without delay for one offence”, it would be “occasion of sundry other to follow”³⁴. During Elizabeth’s reign, moreover, “that half barbarous and rustic people” also profited from the ministrations of the famous preacher, Bernard Gilpin, so that “at this present their former savage demeanour is very much abated, and their barbarous wildness and fierceness so much qualified that there is hope left of their reduction unto civility”³⁵.

By the late 16th century, however, English observers were puzzled and bewildered by the persistent refusal of primitive man, particularly the Irish, to embrace the benefits of English civility. English officials such as Sir William Gerard, Edmund Spenser, Sir John Davies, Sir William Herbert, and Richard Beacon all wrote lengthy reports and treatises on the problem, offering a variety of explanations as to why Tudor reform had failed to achieve the anticipated results³⁶. This is not the place to offer a detailed explanation about the shortcomings of Tudor policy³⁷. Briefly, the fact was that throughout the British Isles patterns of landholding, of settlement, and land usage chiefly reflected the

quality and topography of the land and also local political conditions. What English observers accounted the essence of civility – a settled society, with well differentiated social structures, wealthy towns and villages, and a cereal-based agriculture – simply reflected conditions in lowland England. Likewise, the centralized system of English law and government worked best where close royal supervision was possible and a large pool of wealthy gentry was available to staff the omni-competent peace commissions. By contrast, Ireland and the English far north were remote frontier regions where the more disturbed political conditions promoted marcher lordship, compact landholdings, and a militarized society with strong ties of kinship. And more generally, conditions in the British upland zone also dictated a pastoral economy, more dispersed patterns of settlement, and relatively few gentry³⁸. In short, the Tudor strategy of promoting English civility by extending English law and administration over the benighted natives was highly problematic. The quality and topography of the land and also local political conditions all militated against the strategy. Where there were no longer any frontiers to defend, as in the Anglo-Welsh marches, such policies did gradually achieve results; but in the Tudor state's two remaining frontier regions, they proved disastrous. Only after 1603, following the dismantling of the frontiers, did more peaceful forms of "civil English" society begin to emerge.

NOTES

- ¹ See, for instance, N. Standen, *Nine case studies of premodern frontiers*, in D. Power, N. Standen (eds.), *Frontiers in question: Eurasian borderlands, 700-1700*, Basingstoke 1999, pp. 13-31, esp. pp. 24-5.
- ² See, for instance, L. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the map of civilization on the mind of the Enlightenment*, Stanford CA 1994; M.N. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford 1997.
- ³ For this paragraph, see J. Muldoon, *Identity on the medieval Irish frontier: degenerate Englishmen, wild Irishmen, middle nations*, Gainesville FL 2003, pp. 7-13 (quotations, p. 10).
- ⁴ R.J. Knecht, *Francis I*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 24, 122-3, 379-89; G. Vogler, *Europas Aufbruch in die Neuzeit 1500-1650*, Stuttgart 2003, pp. 48-9; W. Blockmans, *Emperor Charles V, 1500-1558*, London 2002, pp. 32-3.
- ⁵ S.G. Ellis, *Crown, community and government in the English territories, 1450-1575*, in "History", 1986, 71, pp. 187-204.
- ⁶ S.G. Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors, 1447-1603: English expansion and the end of Gaelic rule*, London 1998, esp. pp. 184-9.
- ⁷ Cf. A. Curry, *The first English standing army? Military organization in Lancastrian Normandy, 1420-1450*, in C. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England*, Gloucester 1979, pp. 193-214.
- ⁸ Quoted, A.J. Orway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland*, London 1968, p. 189. On this paragraph, see esp. R.R. Davies, *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*, Oxford 2000.
- ⁹ Id., *The twilight of Welsh law*, in "History", 1966, 51, pp. 143-64; B. Smith, *Keeping the peace*, in J. Lydon (ed.), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297*, Dublin 1997, pp. 57-65.
- ¹⁰ S.G. Ellis, *Integration, identities and frontiers in the British Isles: a European perspective*, in H. Gustafsson, H. Sanders (eds.), *Vid Gränsen: Integration och identitet i det förnationella Norden*, Gothenburg

- 2006, pp. 19-45; Id., *From dual monarchy to multiple kingdoms: unions and the English state, 1422-1607*, in A.I. Macinnes, J. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Stuart kingdoms in the seventeenth century: awkward neighbours*, Dublin 2002, pp. 37-48.
- ¹¹ S.G. Ellis, *Centre and periphery in the Tudor state*, in R. Tittler, N. Jones (eds.), *A companion to Tudor Britain*, Oxford 2004, pp. 133-50.
- ¹² For the following paragraph, see esp. S.G. Ellis, *Languages 1500-1800*, in B. Cunliffe, R. Bartlett, J. Morrill, A. Briggs, J. Bourke (eds.), *The Penguin Atlas of British and Irish History from the earliest times to the present day*, London 2001, pp. 152-3.
- ¹³ H.F. Berry (ed.), *Statutes and ordinances, and acts of the parliament of Ireland. King John to Henry V*, Dublin 1907, pp. 434-5; Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors* cit., pp. 94, 235-6.
- ¹⁴ G. Williams, *Wales and the Act of Union*, Bangor 1992, p. 29.
- ¹⁵ For instance, S. Duffy, *The problem of degeneracy*, in J. Lydon (ed.), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297*, Dublin 1997, pp. 87-106; Smith, *Keeping the peace* cit., pp. 57-65; Berry (ed.), *Statutes and ordinances, and acts of the parliament of Ireland. King John to Henry V*, pp. 194-213, 434-5.
- ¹⁶ *State papers, Henry VIII*, 11 vols., London 1830-52, iii, pp. 291-2. On surrender and regrant, see in general, B. Bradshaw, *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century*, Cambridge 1979, ch. 7.
- ¹⁷ J. Gillingham, *Foundations of a disunited kingdom*, in A. Grant, K. Stringer (eds.), *Uniting the kingdom? The making of British history*, London 1995, pp. 59-60; Davies, *First English empire* cit., pp. 114-30.
- ¹⁸ Davies, *First English empire* cit., pp. 116-18.
- ¹⁹ J.W. McKenna, *How God became an Englishman*, in D.J. Guth, J.W. McKenna (eds.), *Tudor rule and revolution*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 25-43; W. Haller, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the elect nation*, London 1963; S.G. Ellis, *Civilizing Northumberland: representations of Englishness in the Tudor state*, in "Journal of Historical Sociology", 1999, 12, pp. 104-5.
- ²⁰ Berry (ed.), *Statutes and ordinances* cit., pp. 210-11, 388-9, 431-7; H.F. Berry (ed.), *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland, first to the twelfth years of the reign of King Edward the Fourth*, Dublin 1914, pp. 290-91.
- ²¹ Id., *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland, reign of King Henry the Sixth*, Dublin 1910, pp. 88-9, 648-9; Id., *Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland, first to the twelfth years of the reign of King Edward the Fourth* cit., pp. 290-93.
- ²² Cf. S.G. Ellis, *Reform and revival: English government in Ireland 1470-1534*, London 1986, pp. 129-30.
- ²³ See esp., C. Brady, *The chief governors: the rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland, 1536-1588*, Cambridge 1994, pp. xi-xii, 4-8, 296-7.
- ²⁴ C. McNeill (ed.), *Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland*, in "Analecta Hibernica", 1931, 2, p. 97; P. Vergil, *Anglica historia*, ed. D. Hay, London 1950, p. 79; E. Spenser, *A view of the present state of Ireland*, ed. W.L. Renwick, Oxford 1970, p. 48.
- ²⁵ McNeill (ed.), *Lord Chancellor Gerard's notes*, pp. 97, 118, 121, 122; J. Davies, *A discoverie of the true causes*, ed. J. Barry, Shannon 1969, p. 272; R. Stanyhurst, *The description of Irelande*, in L. Miller, E. Power (eds.), *Holinshead's Irish chronicle*, Dublin 1979, pp. 13, 14.
- ²⁶ A.B. Scott, F.X. Martin (ed.), *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, Dublin 1978, pp. 146-7; J.A. Watt, *The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland*, Cambridge 1970, pp. 36-40 (quotation, p. 40).
- ²⁷ *State papers, Henry VIII*, ii, 197.
- ²⁸ Spenser, *View of the present state of Ireland* cit, p. 84.

- ²⁹ See, in particular, C. Brady, *Comparable histories?: Tudor reform in Wales and Ireland*, in S.G. Ellis, S. Barber (eds.), *Conquest and union: fashioning a British state 1485-1725*, London 1995, pp. 64-86.
- ³⁰ Quotations, Williams, *Wales and the Act of Union* cit., pp. 11, 20; J.G. Jones, *Wales and the Tudor state: government, religious change and the social order 1534-1603*, Cardiff 1989, pp. 169, 180.
- ³¹ Quotations, P.R. Roberts, *The Welsh language, English law and Tudor legislation*, in "Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society", 1989, p. 41; Williams, *Wales and the Act of Union* cit., p. 18.
- ³² Quoted, D. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: a life*, New Haven 1996, p. 178.
- ³³ J. Bruce, T.T. Perowne (eds.), *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D. Archbishop of Canterbury*, Parker Soc., Cambridge 1853, p. 123.
- ³⁴ *Survey of the east and middle marches by Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Ralph Ellerker*, 1542; *Sir Robert Bowes' survey of the border*, 1550: both printed in J. Hodgson, *A history of Northumberland*, 3 pts. in 7 vols., Newcastle 1820-25, III, ii, 171-248 (quotations, pp. 224-5, 228, 234, 236, 244).
- ³⁵ *The life of Bernard Gilpin, written in Latin by [George] Carleton, bishop of Chichester ... translated into English and published in the year 1629 ... by William Freake, minister*, in C. Wordsworth (ed.), *Ecclesiastical biography*, 6 vols., London 1810, 4, 115; Hodgson, *Northumberland*, II, i, 75.
- ³⁶ See Sir W. Herbert, *Croftus sive de Hibernia liber*, ed. A. Keaveney, J.A. Madden, Dublin 1992; R. Beacon, *Solon his follie, or, A politique discourse touching the Reformation of common-weales conquered, declined or corrupted*, ed. C. Carroll, V. Carey, Binghamton, NY 1996; Spenser, *View of the present state of Ireland*; McNeill (ed.), *Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland*, pp. 93-291; Davies, *A discoverie of the true causes*.
- ³⁷ See Ellis, *Ireland in the age of the Tudors* cit., pp. 352-8; Muldoon, *Identity on the medieval Irish frontier* cit., pp. 144-68, for some discussion of these shortcomings.
- ³⁸ On all this, see S.G. Ellis, *Tudor frontiers and noble power: the making of the British state*, Oxford 1995, ch. 2; Id., *Civilizing Northumberland* cit., pp. 103-27.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beacon R., *Solon his follie, or, A politique discourse touching the Reformation of common-weales conquered, declined or corrupted*, ed. C. Carroll, V. Carey, Binghamton, NY 1996.
- Berry H.F. (ed.), *Statutes and ordinances, and acts of the parliament of Ireland. King John to Henry V*, Dublin 1907.
- Blockmans W., *Emperor Charles V 1500-1558*, London 2002.
- Bowes R., *Survey of the border, 1550*, in Hodgson J. (ed.), *A history of Northumberland*, 3 pts. in 7 vols., Newcastle 1820-25, III, ii, 171-248.
- Id., Ellerker R., *Survey of the east and middle marches, 1542*, in Hodgson J. (ed.), *A history of Northumberland*, 3 pts. in 7 vols., Newcastle 1820-25, III, ii, 171-248.
- Bradshaw B., *The Irish constitutional revolution of the sixteenth century*, Cambridge 1979.
- Brady C., *Comparable histories?: Tudor reform in Wales and Ireland*, in Ellis S.G., Barber S. (ed.), *Conquest and union: fashioning a British state 1485-1725*, London 1995, pp. 64-86.
- Id., *The chief governors: the rise and fall of reform government in Tudor Ireland, 1536-1588*, Cambridge 1994.
- Bruce J., Perowne T.T. (eds.), *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, D.D. Archbishop of Canterbury*, Parker Soc., Cambridge 1853.
- Carleton G., *The life of Bernard Gilpin*, trans. Freake W., ed. Wordsworth C., *Ecclesiastical biography*, 6 vols., London, 1810, 4.
- Curry A., *The first English standing army? Military organization in Lancastrian Normandy, 1420-1450*, in C. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England*, Gloucester 1979, pp. 193-214.

- Davies J., *A discoverie of the true causes*, ed. J. Barry, Shannon 1969.
- Davies R.R., *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles 1093-1343*, Oxford 2000.
- Id., *The twilight of Welsh law*, in "History", 1966, 51, pp. 143-64.
- Duffy S., *The problem of degeneracy*, in Lydon J. (ed.), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297*, Dublin 1997, pp. 87-106.
- Ellis S.G., *Centre and periphery in the Tudor state*, in Tittler R., Jones N. (eds.), *A companion to Tudor Britain*, Oxford 2004, pp. 133-50.
- Id., *Civilizing Northumberland: representations of Englishness in the Tudor state*, in "Journal of Historical Sociology", 1999, 12, pp. 103-27.
- Id., *Crown, community and government in the English territories, 1450-1575*, in "History", 1986, 71, pp. 187-204.
- Id., *From dual monarchy to multiple kingdoms: unions and the English state, 1422-1607*, in A.I. Macinnes, J. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Stuart kingdoms in the seventeenth century: awkward neighbours*, Dublin, 2002, pp. 37-48.
- Id., *Integration, identities and frontiers in the British Isles: a European perspective*, in H. Gustafsson, H. Sanders (eds.), *Vid Gränsen: Integration och identitet i det förnationella Norden*, Gothenburg 2006, pp. 19-45.
- Id., *Ireland in the age of the Tudors 1447-1603: English expansion and the end of Gaelic rule*, London 1998.
- Id., *Languages 1500-1800*, in Cunliffe B., Bartlett R., Morrill J., Briggs A., Bourke J. (eds.), *The Penguin Atlas of British and Irish History from the earliest times to the present day*, London 2001, pp. 152-3.
- Id., *Reform and revival: English government in Ireland 1470-1534*, London 1986.
- Id., *Tudor frontiers and noble power: the making of the British state*, Oxford 1995.
- Gillingham J., *Foundations of a disunited kingdom*, in Grant A., Stringer K. (eds.), *Uniting the kingdom? The making of British history*, London 1995, pp. 48-64.
- Haller W., *Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the elect nation*, London 1963.
- Herbert W., *Croftus sive de Hibernia liber*, ed. A. Keaveney, J.A. Madden, Dublin 1992.
- Hodgson J., *A history of Northumberland*, 3 pts. in 7 vols., Newcastle 1820-25.
- Jones J.G., *Wales and the Tudor state: government, religious change and the social order 1534-1603*, Cardiff 1989.
- Knecht R.J., *Francis I*, Cambridge 1982.
- MacCulloch D., *Thomas Cranmer: a life*, New Haven 1996.
- McKenna J.W., *How God became an Englishman*, in Guth D.J., McKenna J.W. (eds.), *Tudor rule and revolution*, Cambridge 1982, pp. 25-43.
- McNeill C. (ed.), *Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland*, in "Analecta Hibernica", 1931, 2, pp. 93-291.
- Muldoon J., *Identity on the medieval Irish frontier: degenerate Englishmen, wild Irishmen, middle nations*, Gainesville FL 2003.
- Otway-Ruthven A.J., *A history of medieval Ireland*, London 1968.
- Roberts P.R., *The Welsh language, English law and Tudor legislation*, in "Transactions of the Cymmrodorion Society", 1989, pp. 19-75.
- Scott A.B., Martin F.X. (ed.), *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, Dublin 1978.
- Smith B., *Keeping the peace*, in Lydon J. (ed.), *Law and disorder in thirteenth-century Ireland: the Dublin parliament of 1297*, Dublin 1997, pp. 57-65.
- Spenser E., *A view of the present state of Ireland*, ed. Renwick W.L., Oxford 1970.
- State papers, of the reign of Henry VIII*, 11 vols., London 1830-52.

Standen N., *Nine case studies of premodern frontiers*, in Power D., Standen N. (eds.), *Frontiers in question: Eurasian borderlands, 700-1700*, Basingstoke 1999, pp. 13-31.

Stanyhurst R., *The description of Irelande*, in Miller L., Power E. (eds.), *Holinshead's Irish chronicle*, Dublin 1979.

Vergil P., *Anglica historia*, ed. D. Hay, London 1950.

Vogler G., *Europas Aufbruch in die Neuzeit 1500-1650*, Stuttgart 2003.

Watt J.A., *The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland*, Cambridge 1970.

Williams G., *Wales and the Act of Union*, Bangor 1992.