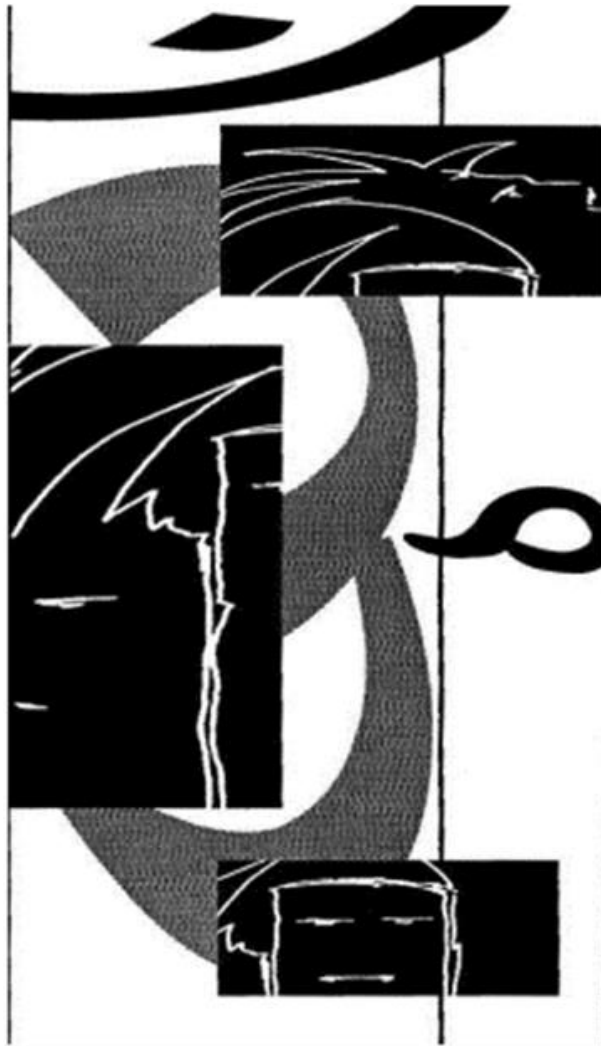


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Cover design by Jennifer McCaffrey and Nora McGillicuddy, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology. The cover incorporates the concepts of past, present and future, which is depicted, firstly by the use of the Buddhist symbol Aum. The idea is secondly represented by the illustrative heads looking in different directions. They symbolise the search for history by past, present and future historians.

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Foreword	v
Editorial	vii
Contributors	ix
Farnese's reconciliation process with Dutch cities, 1581-9: an analysis toward political innovation <i>Théo Wouter</i>	1
Tout se fait à la Maintenon: court and royal couple, 1700-15 <i>Sarah Nunan</i>	11
'O Tannenbaum, O Fanny's Baum': identity and ritual in the Viennese salon, 1814-15 <i>Charlie McEvoy</i>	23
Mountshannon County Clare: an eighteenth-century linen village 1738 – 1838 <i>Noel Murphy</i>	36
'To the winds of Heaven': the forced migration of Ulster Catholics to southeast Galway 1795-1850 <i>David Broderick</i>	53
The savage master-race: a history of 'Celtic identity' <i>Trevor Mark Hanley</i>	62

Foreword

Once again, it gives me great pleasure to welcome the publication of the twenty-fourth volume of *History Studies*. This year there are several contributions from advanced undergraduates, which recalls the original purpose of the journal to publish the best undergraduate and postgraduate work in history. Postgraduate contributions can sometimes outnumber those from undergraduates, so it particularly pleasing to see several published this year.

I am delighted that the 2022-3 Brian Faloon Final-Year undergraduate Project prize awardee, Sarah Nunan, has published her work on Madame de Maintenon. Similarly, Charlie McEvoy's examination of identity and ritual in Fanny von Arnstein's Viennese salon is the result of his research as part of his European Studies programme at Trinity College Dublin. Likewise, Trevor Mark Hanely's examination of Celtic identity and how it has been moulded and used across several centuries has been drawn from research conducted while he was an undergraduate at the University of Limerick.

It is also heartening to see how undergraduate students who have studied at the University of Limerick as part of the Erasmus programme have gone on to further study. Théo Wouters must be commended for not only his research presented here on the military and diplomatic strategies deployed by Alexander Farnese as Habsburg Governor of the Spanish Netherlands in the sixteenth century, but his continuing Masters research into King Richard II and Ireland in the fourteenth century.

We are also impressed by the publication of a number of recent graduates from our Masters programmes, such as Noel Murphy (MA Local History) and David Broderick (MA Public History and Cultural Heritage), whose work examines aspects of the history of settlement in East Clare. It strikes me that these articles raise many questions about identity, integration and legacy. These contributions will no doubt stimulate further work in these areas.

I would like to thank the editors, Rachel Beck and Lisa McGeeney for their excellent work in bringing to journal to publication, and for their dedication to the process. Finally, it gives me enormous pleasure to recommend this volume of *History Studies* to the reader, with its usual mix of themes, times and places.

David Fleming

Editorial

In our call for papers in Volume 24 we did not set a theme, and yet the articles presented herein are united by a focus on ethnic conflict and religious tension.

Two of the articles in this volume explore aspects of Irish local history. Another essay interrogates the broader concept of Celtic identity, while the other three deal with early modern European history. This volume opens with Sarah Nunan's exploration of the impact on life at the French court of the pious and philanthropic Françoise de Maintenon, and her influence on her husband, Louis XIV. Next, Charlie McEvoy introduces us to Fanny von Arnstein, the bourgeois Jewish salonnière who successfully navigated Christian ritual in early nineteenth-century Vienna. Théo Wouters' essay looks at how Alexander Farnese employed reconciliation strategies to pacify the Spanish Netherlands during the Eighty Years' War. Noel Murphy describes the eighteenth-century creation of the town of Mountshannon, Co. Clare as a linen village with the joint aims of economic development and promotion of the Protestant religion in Ireland. David Broderick, meanwhile, introduces us to the 'Ultachs', or Ulstermen, who fled religious persecution in the Ulster Borderlands in the late eighteenth century to find a new home in the Sliabh Aughty Mountains of southeast Galway. The final essay in this collection, from Trevor Mark Hanley, examines Celtic identity and how it has been used to create imagined glorious histories across many nations which claim Celtic origins.

We wish to sincerely thank each of the contributors to this volume. Through publication of historical research, analysis and writing we add, not only to our knowledge of the past, but to our understanding of our own time and place. Thank you to each of you for the diversity of your areas of interest. Thank you also to Dr David Fleming for all his guidance and support, especially in our first year as editors, and to Dr Robert Collins for sharing his knowledge and experience as a previous editor of this journal.

Rachel Beck and Lisa McGeeney

Contributors

Sarah Nunan is from Hook Head, Co. Wexford. She studied European Studies with French and Spanish at the University of Limerick and completed a year of study at l'Université de Lumière 2 in Lyon, France. She is currently working with the United Nations in Brussels. Sarah's research interests include Louis XIV's reign, female regents during the Ancien Régime, and religiosity at Versailles in the 1600s – early 1700s. In 2023, she was awarded the Brian Falloon prize for the best undergraduate final-year project for ‘The sun darkened by the shadow of an old woman’: Madame de Maintenon's role in demythologising Louis XIV’.

Charlie Mc Evoy is a final-year student of European Studies at Trinity College Dublin. Majoring in German, he spent the third year of his degree at the University of Vienna, where he began writing the article published here. Charlie's research interests orientate around cultural history, and the more unnoticed frames of European modernity. He recently completed his undergraduate dissertation on ecofeminist thought within the nineteenth-century antivivisection movement. In the Autumn, he will be pursuing a MSt in History at Oxford University, where he will be studying the writings of Victorian Jewish thinkers, Judith Montefiore, Grace Aguilar and Amy Levy.

Théo Wouters is a history student at UCLouvain, and a former Erasmus student at the University of Limerick. His research interests are based on political history during the late Middle Ages and early modern period, especially concerning England, Ireland, and the Low Countries. He is currently writing a master thesis that is entitled ‘1394-1399: Ireland and Richard II: A history through French chronicles’.

Noel Murphy lives in Mountshannon, Co. Clare, a village originally founded in the eighteenth century as a centre for linen production. A founding member of the Iniscealtra Historical Society, he has completed the Masters in Local History at UL and is a part-time lecturer on the Certificate in Local History. Noel's research interest in the eighteenth-century linen industry sprang from curiosity about his own local area and has now expanded to exploring linen centres north and south. In addition to part time lecturing, Noel is currently involved in a research project entitled 'Linen Links' exploring the connections between the successful linen industry in the north of Ireland and attempts during the eighteenth century to emulate that success for the benefit of the whole-island economy. The research is supported by the Royal Irish Academy under the R.J. Hunter Research Bursary.

David Broderick is from Lorrha in Co. Tipperary and is Chairman of Lorrha and Dorrha Historical Society. He also sits on the board of directors at the Irish Workhouse Centre in Portumna Co. Galway. In 2019 he published his first book *Finding Ogle, The Story of the Disappearing Workhouse Master*. He is currently researching his second book on the Great Irish Famine. In 2023 David graduated with an M.A in Public History & Cultural Heritage from the University of Limerick. He currently works with Laois County Council/Creative Ireland as a Creative Communities Engagement Officer.

Trevor Mark Hanley graduated from the University of Limerick with a first-class honours BA in History and Politics. His research interests include the ancient Mediterranean and Middle East, Europe from 1800 to 1914, and early Islamic history.

Farnese's reconciliation process with Dutch cities, 1581-9: an analysis toward political innovation

Théo Wouters

Transitional justice has been used during the twentieth century in major conflicts. It aims to stop deadly war and to promote a soft transition between political regimes.¹ The main example in the twentieth century is found in Spain's political transition after the death of Francisco Franco. Nevertheless, early modern societies also tried to find a way of reconciliation during war, such as Spain in the Low Countries during the Eighty Years' War.

The Spanish first used political reconciliation during the Dutch revolt. The revolt began in 1566 when Protestants destroyed religious images and buildings in the Low Countries. In response, Margaret of Parma, the governor of the Spanish Netherlands, signed the Compromise of Nobles with major political actors who demanded religious tolerance for Protestants. The failure of the Compromise put an end to Margaret's mandate and promoted the Duke of Alba as the Governor of the Netherlands. During his regime, he repressed heretics, established the Council of Troubles, and executed the earl of Egmont and the earl of Hornes. Besides the repression of heresy, he also promoted three global pardons, all of which failed to restore peace in the Netherlands. The next two governors, Luis de Requesens and John of Austria, despite the financial issues they had to face, successfully negotiated the Pacification of Ghent in 1576 and the Edict of 1577. Nevertheless, these treaties failed, and the war continued. In 1578, John of Austria died, and

¹ In this article, quotations of primary sources are cited in English, while the originals in old French are given in the footnotes.

Alexander Farnese became the governor of the Netherlands. He successfully managed to reconquer major cities by combining a powerful military campaign with political reconciliation. This article will focus on his political innovation concerning the surrender of a number of Dutch cities.

Between 1581 and 1589, Farnese enacted twenty-two treaties or capitulations with major cities in Brabant and Flanders, such as Ghent, Brussels, Oudenaarde, Tournai, etc.² Those cities were of geographic or economic interest for the Spanish Crown. Since the arrival of Alva in the Netherlands, Spanish governors had faced economic difficulties despite calling for financial help. In consequence, Alva and his successors had issues paying their troops which culminated with the Sack of Antwerp in 1576, where Spanish soldiers looted the city. Geographically, the cities conquered by Farnese were located near the coast or on the Scheldt watershed and thus represented an easier way to get supplies from Spain, compared to the continental roads that passed through France. Economically, these cities had been wealthy since the Middle Ages. The County of Flanders and its cities had close commercial bonds with England, especially concerning the commerce of wool that was woven in Flanders. Furthermore, Bruges became the economic capital of the Spanish Netherlands during the fifteenth century before Antwerp took the lead in the sixteenth. In addition, the Scheldt was also used in Tournai to develop water-based industries such as tanning, dyeing and brewing.³ This wealth made it feasible for Farnese to impose fines on the newly-conquered cities to recover the costs spent on sieges. The scale of the fines varied depending on the economic health of the town. Treaties showed some disparities between the cities: 100,000 guilders for Ypres, 30,000 for Oudenaarde, 60,000 for Dendermonde, and 400,000 for Antwerp, while Brussels was not fined because of its poverty.⁴ These fines

² Charles Terlinden, *Liste chronologique provisoire des édits et ordonnances des Pays-Bas : règne de Philippe II (1555-1598)* (Brussels, 1912), pp 168-239.

³ Françoise Thomas and Jacques Nazet (eds.), *Tournai. Une ville, un fleuve (XVI^e-XVII^e siècle)* (Brussels, 1995), pp 144-150.

⁴ 'Estant informée de leur povreté, et pour monstrier encor plus grande douleur en leur endroit, suivant les remonstrances et prières des députez, leur quicte, remect et es déporte entièrement de ceste prétention' 'informed of their poverty, and even worse pain in their city, following the admonitions and prayers of their deputies, I withdraw and completely deport this pretension' in Louis-Prosper Gachard, 'Analectes historiques, douzième série' in *Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire*, xii (1986), p. 412.

were immense; a regular worker earned 0.35 guilder a day.⁵ Imposing fines as a substitute for worse punishment was a common custom in the Netherlands, dating back in the Middle Ages. Urban justice could pardon a criminal in exchange for a payment called *paismaken* or *zoen* that dated back to the Germanic *wehrgeld*. This practice originated as an oral custom, but was recorded in writing during the centralisation of the powers by the dukes of Burgundy and the Habsburgs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁶ In this way, Farnese used a common practice to punish the revolt while addressing his financial issues.

Farnese did not only impose fines in the treaties, but also included a pardon and a perpetual forgiveness to the cities:

His Majesty, to make known his intentions and to prevent any misunderstanding, declares that he is pleased to receive the city and their bourgeois under the grace of the good king, his safeguarding and protection, forgetting and pardoning everybody and every offence done against him.⁷

The Duke of Alva and his successors always included large pardons in their treaties like the General pardons or the Pacification of Ghent.⁸ However, Farnese used it in a different way. First, the pardon only included the town and its inhabitants. Secondly, Farnese did not make the pardon dependent on any processes of *amende honorable*, an alternative to execution designed to publicly humiliate offenders, as

Regarding the fines: Louis-Prosper Gachard, 'Analectes historiques, 16^e série', in *Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire*, viii (1871) p. 141-316 (henceforth cited as *Analectes historiques, 16^e série*). Louis-Prosper Gachard, 'Analectes historiques, 17^e et dernière série' in *Compte-rendu des séances de la commission royale d'histoire, deuxième série*, xiii (1872), pp 9-176 (henceforth cited as *Analectes historiques, 17^e série*).

⁵ Wilfrid Brulez, 'Le commerce international des Pays-Bas au XVI^e siècle : Essai d'appréciation quantitative', in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, xlv, no. 4 (1968), p. 1218.

⁶ Jean-Marie Cauchies and Hugo de Schepper, *Justice, grâce et législation. Genèse de l'État et moyens juridiques dans les Pays-Bas, 1200-1600* (Brussels, 1994), pp 63-64.

⁷ *Traité de réconciliation de Tournai*, ed. Yves Junot, in *Dutch Revolt* (<https://dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/Français/sources/Pages/1581%2011%2030%20fra.aspx>) (22 October 2023).

⁸ The political innovation for Alva resides in the pardon granted to a large group of heretics. Before that, Charles V only pardoned specific heretics and for specific reasons like simple-minded people that were heretic because of the influences of other people. Agathe Desjonquères, 'Entre répression et pardon, l'usage des lettres de grâce pour rétablir le catholicisme dans les Pays-Bas espagnols au XVI^e siècle' in *Revue du Nord, Revue d'Histoire et d'Archéologie des Universités du Nord de la France*, cii, no. 434 (2021) pp 92-105; Violet Soen, 'La réitération de pardons collectifs à finalités politiques pendant la Révolte des Pays-Bas (1565-1598). Un cas d'espèce dans les rapports de force aux Temps Modernes?', in Bernard Dauven, Xavier Rousseaux (eds.), *Préférant miséricorde à rigueur de justice : Pratiques de la grâce (XIII^e-XVII^e siècles). Actes de la journée d'études de Louvain-la-Neuve, 15 octobre 2007* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2012), p. 105 (henceforth cited as Violet Soen, 'La réitération de pardons collectifs').

Alva's general pardons did.⁹ This tactic formed part of a strategy to ameliorate the relations between the rebels and the Spanish government. It also allowed the conquered cities to reorganise their industry and commerce, which had been severely impacted by the war. Farnese had to be sure that conquered towns would be able to pay the fines. Besides the treaty, letters show that Farnese secretly placed his agents in the city administration, unwilling to trust rebels, even the Catholics. His agents informed him of the willingness of Zutphen to return eighteen magistrates, but said that 'it is not possible to find twelve not revolted people that have enough money to be a magistrate'.¹⁰ Farnese preferred to be sure that the city would not revolt again rather than to let the city return to its previous regime.

Besides those negotiations, Farnese used a different approach towards the surrender of Ghent. Between 1577 and 1584, Ghent became a Calvinist republic as many Dutch cities did. But in 1584, Ghent and Bruges negotiated their reintegration into the Spanish Netherlands. If Bruges was successful, Ghent found it more difficult. Notwithstanding, Ghent started new negotiations with Farnese and a surrender treaty was signed in 1584. One major difference did exist between this treaty and the others: the way the pardon was proclaimed. The previous treaties negotiated by Farnese did not make extraordinary demands on the cities. However, Farnese asked Ghent to humiliate itself by enduring the *corde au cou* ritual:

Pardoning the generality and achieving even more gentleness, instead of twelve people being required, only six people whom three of those will remain alive and for the three other he will choose to whom she will grant life as she wants and that the deputies would humiliate and show submission and obedience, declaring that they accept everything that his Majesty would offer to them, but asking humbly to open the pardon and to grant life to the three men, his majesty using his great benignity and showing that he wants to be a father for corrupted children, granting life to them as he did to the three others.¹¹

⁹ The general pardons of Alva forced guilty people who wanted to be pardoned to humiliate themselves through the process of the *escondit* that consisted of a perambulation in penitent clothes around the city followed by a mass where the penitent confessed his sins and was pardoned. Catherine Vincent, 'Rites et pratiques de la pénitence publique à la fin du Moyen Âge : essai sur la place de la lumière dans la résolution de certains conflits' in *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*, xxxi (2000), pp 351-367.

¹⁰ Violet Soen, 'La réitération de pardons collectifs', pp 121-122. Violet Soen, 'Reconquista and reconciliation in the Dutch revolt: the campaign of governor-general Alexander Farnese (1578-1592)' in *Journal of Early Modern History*, xvi, no. 1 (2012) p. 12.

¹¹ Louis Prosper Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 17^e série* (Brussels, 1872), p. 108.

Farnese asked six bourgeois to represent the city. Three of them would be spared, but the three others would be punished according to the will of the governor. Furthermore, they had to humiliate themselves through the ritual of the *corde au cou*, a kind of *amende honorable*, that consisted of a penitent begging for forgiveness from the prince with a rope around their neck. The execution of the ritual restored the majesty of the king by symbolically killing the penitent with the rope.¹² Between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries, this ritual was commonly used in the region. Ghent was condemned twice to the *corde au cou* ritual in 1452 by Philippe the Good and in 1539 by Charles V.¹³ Therefore, the use of such a ritual by Farnese was in line with the punishment tradition that was necessary to symbolically restore the king's majesty. However, Farnese could not violently repress the city because he was engaged in his politics of reconciliation and such a decision would discredit his previous negotiations with Flanders and Brabant. Not only could Farnese use this common ritual to mark a specific punishment for Ghent; he could also to send a strong symbolic message to every town in the region and at the same time restore the majesty of Philip II.

Farnese's reconciliation strategy did not only include treaties with the cities but also with lords who controlled important towns. An example is the reconciliation treaty of Charles de Croÿ, prince of Chimay, signed on the same day as the surrender treaty of Bruges, the city he administered. Charles of Croÿ was from one of the most important families in the Spanish Netherlands established in the Brabant, Hainaut, Picardy, Artois and Champagne. In 1579, the father of Charles, Philippe de Croÿ, reconciled with Farnese. Nevertheless, Charles fled to Sedan, converted to Protestantism, and became governor of Bruges.¹⁴ On the

¹² The lèse-majesté crime normally required death.

¹³ Jean-Marie Moeglin, 'Le rituel de la corde au cou et le crime de lèse-majesté' in *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, clx, no. 2 (2016), pp 741-775.

¹⁴ Violet Soen, 'Les limites du "devoir de révolte" aux Pays-Bas. Les réconciliations de Philippe de Croÿ, duc d'Aarschot, et de son fils Charles, prince de Chimay (1576-1584)' in Violet Soen et Yves Junot (eds.), *Noblesses transrégionales : Les Croÿ et les frontières pendant les guerres de religion (France, Lorraine et Pays-Bas, XVIe et XVIIe siècle)* (Turnhout, 2021), pp 173-176. Yves Junot, 'Réconciliation et réincorporation dans la monarchie hispanique: l'exemple de Dunkerque au temps d'Alexandre Farnèse' in *Revue du Nord : Revue d'Histoire et d'Archéologie des Universités du Nord de la France*, iic, no. 415,(2017), pp 242-245.

5 May 1584, Farnese successfully reintegrated Charles de Croÿ into the region's nobility with a treaty that pardoned him:

Pardon and forget generally and perpetually everything that has happened since the last troubles, that they are extinct even if we maintained it as godly or human *lèse-majesté*, without any exception, their memory will remain extinct and void.¹⁵

This article did not ask Charles de Croÿ to perform the *amende honorable*, even if he was guilty of *lèse-majesté* by his treason to the Spanish crown. This shows two different approaches from Spanish authorities. It is highly possible that Farnese could not humiliate Charles de Croÿ because of his importance in the Low-Countries nobility.¹⁶ In particular, the reinstatement of Charles de Croÿ also led to a recognition of Flemish institutions. On 5 September 1585, the four Flemish members asked Charles to lead the provincial government. This recognition went against the central institutions that were established during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the dukes of Burgundy and by the Habsburgs.¹⁷

Besides the surrender of cities, Farnese negotiated specific capitulation treaties with the cities' garrisons. In Ypres the treaty first managed the fate of the prisoners: 'Le seigneur de Marcquette et deux ses capitaines telz que le seigneur de Werp vouldra choisir demeureront prisonniers de guerre, pour estre miz en liberté lorsqu'ilz auront satisfait à leur ranchon'.¹⁸ The garrison officers had to remain captive until the payment of a ransom. This demand for ransom was not unusual in early modern surrender negotiations. During the Middle Ages, prisoners were seen as an economic opportunity: soldiers were captured and then an expensive ransom was demanded of their families for their liberty.¹⁹ In this case it is not surprising that

¹⁵ Gachard, *Analectes historiques 10^e série*, p. 539.

¹⁶ However, Charles de Croÿ had to recognise Philip II as his king: 'et entendu le sédir qu'icelluy prince a de se remettre soubz l'obéissance de Sa Majesté' 'and the prince had to remain under the Majesty's obedience' (*Analectes historiques 10^e série*, p. 539).

¹⁷ Peter Stabel, 'Entre enclume et marteau. Les petites villes flamandes, les Membres de Flandre et le duc de Bourgogne' in *Publications du Centre européen d'études bourguignonnes (XIV^e-XVI^e s.)*, xxxiii (1993), pp 91-100.

¹⁸ *Analectes historiques, 17^e série*, pp 82-83.

¹⁹ Maurice Keen, *The laws of war in the late Middle Ages* (London, 2015), pp 156-185; Bertrand Schnerb, 'Sauver les meubles. À propos de quelques traités de capitulation de forteresses du début du XV^e siècle', in Gisela Naegle (ed.), *Frieden schaffen und sich verteidigen im Spätmittelalter* (Munich, 2012) pp 228-230.

Farnese asked a ransom to set free the prisoners because of the economic troubles he faced. However, the prisoners, especially the nobles, could have been an insurance policy against a possible betrayal of the treaty. In addition, Farnese blocked a possible military reinforcement from the General Estates. Both of those clauses originated in a military tradition from the Middle Ages and especially during the Hundred Years' War.

Besides the ransom, Farnese also organised some prisoner exchanges: 'The lady of Marquette, with her children, family and goods, may flee where she wants in exchange for the liberty of the lord of Himbremont and other prisoners that are under Lord of Marquette's orders in any places'.²⁰ The treaty allowed Farnese to exchange some of its imprisoned soldiers by releasing the families of the city's captains. That was not new for Farnese, as he had released Philippe-Christine de Lalaing, the wife of Tournai's mayor, in 1581 to let her meet her husband and his army.²¹ Those two cases show that Farnese adapted his strategy toward prisoners depending on their rank. For non-noble prisoners like in Tournai and Ypres, Farnese might release the prisoner with or without ransom. For high nobility he negotiated a proper reconciliation treaty like the one with Charles de Croÿ.²²

Other articles dealt with the surrender of soldiers and equipment. Treaties allowed regular soldiers and some captains to be released but without a part of their equipment:

The excess of captains, officers and soldiers from the country will exit with swords and without colours, drums and luggage. The foreign captains, officers and soldiers will exit with their sword, luggage, with extinguished wick and without colours and drums. And where, between the said soldiers, be they native and foreign, would be civil otherwise the

²⁰ (*Analectes historiques*, 17^e série, pp 82-83).

²¹ 'Ladicte princesse, que désirant la gratiffier et honorer en tous endroitz, il n'est besoing d'aulture traicté en son regard sinon que très volentiers elle luy accorde qu'elle puist sortir avecq tout son train et emporter tous les biens à son mary,' 'Regarding the said princess, out of a desire for honour everywhere, there is no need of a new treaty regarding her and we gladly permit her to flee with her train and take all her goods to her husband' (Traité de réconciliation de Tournai', ed. Yves Junot, in *Dutch Revolt* (<https://dutchrevolt.leiden.edu/Français/sources/Pages/1581%2011%2030%20fra.aspx>) (22 October 2023)); Léopold Devillers, 'Philippine-Christine de Lalaing' in *Nouvelle Biographie nationale de Belgique*, vii (Brussels, 2003) pp 119-124; Cécile Kiper, *Le siège de Tournai en 1581 et le rôle de Christine de Lalaing, princesse d'Epinoÿ* (M.A. thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 1955), pp 45-68.

²² Maurice Keen, *The laws of war*, pp 119-133.

city would be punished, except the number of soldiers will include magnates, cannons if they are foreigners. Those soldiers, strangers or not, will be led in a safe place.²³

Native captains, officers and soldiers could flee with their swords and their goods, but without their colours and drums, whereas foreign soldiers could flee with their equipment, weapons and goods. It was common during the Middle Ages to let soldiers leave with their goods and sometimes their weapons depending on the context. Nevertheless, sometimes they did not have the right to take anything with them.²⁴ Because Farnese faced economic troubles, the releasing of soldiers with their equipment was surprising: Farnese would have been able to equip his soldiers for free. Perhaps Farnese negotiated this to avoid a rebellion in the city: garrisons were composed of *bourgeois* militias on the medieval model. Allowing the bourgeois to keep their arms could improve the relationship between the city and the Spanish government.

As well as the prisoners' fates, the treaty also organised the seizure of the artillery: 'Every munition and artillery that is in Ypres will remain in the hands of the Lord of Werp'.²⁵ The cities' artillery had to be given to Farnese in its entirety. Cannon and ordnance were among the most effective and expensive weapons. In consequence, during the Middle Ages, capitulation treaties focused on their fate and even organised an inventory to monitor the fulfilment of this aspect of the treaty.²⁶ During the military campaign of Farnese, seizing artillery was essential to allow him to conquer new cities and avoid rebellion in newly conquered towns.

The capitulation treaty of Ypres's garrison also included a six-month truce: 'At the condition that the lord of Marcquette, his captains, officers and soldiers, non-native or not, will swear to not rebel against the Majesty'.²⁷ A truce was normal during the Middle Ages. In particular, a truce was enacted at the

²³ *Analectes historiques, 17^e série*, p. 83.

²⁴ Maurice Keen, *The laws of war*, pp 119-133.

²⁵ Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 17^e série*, p. 83.

²⁶ Bertrand Schnerb, 'Sauver les meubles', pp 227-230.

²⁷ Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 17^e série*, p. 83.

beginning of the negotiation and did not allow any military operations, siege movement, or defence maintenance. In case of renewed combat, the garrison was not allowed to take part in it.

To suppress any possible resistance and aid him in managing the city, Farnese installed his own garrison in the captured cities, such as Antwerp:

That, depending on the above, those from Antwerp will give their artillery, munitions and warships that belong to the city to his Highness who will install a garrison formed with two thousand soldiers and two battalions of horsemen, hosted with the least inconvenience as possible for the bourgeois.²⁸

The installation of the Spanish garrison in newly conquered towns made Farnese independent of the bourgeois who took part in the garrison of rebelled cities in particular during the Calvinist regime.²⁹ Furthermore, Farnese also reconciled with former garrison soldiers by allowing them to go back to the city and live in peace if they stopped being soldiers: ‘The Majesty grants that everyone that wants to abandon their weapons and go back to their houses can do it freely without any possibility of being prosecuted for past events’.³⁰ However, Phillip II insisted on monitoring the Spanish garrison that were installed in Antwerp.³¹ In particular, he wanted to prevent any exactions from Spanish soldiers that would compromise the reconciliation efforts. Philip II did not want a situation like the Sack of Antwerp in 1576, where soldiers angry at lack of pay looted the city and killed around seventeen thousand people. Such events had a negative impact on reconciliation because it discredited the capacity of the prince to protect his population.

To conclude, Farnese was not politically innovative in negotiating with surrendered cities; instead, he adapted existing medieval practices. He administered pardons to the cities like Alva did. However, if Alva made pardons dependent on the process of *amende honorable*, Farnese primarily wanted to send a

²⁸ Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 16^e série*, p. 296.

²⁹ Guido Marnef, ‘An experiment of social equality? The case of the Calvinist republic in Antwerp (1577-1585)’ in Bruno Blondé, Sam Geens, Hilde Greefs (eds), *Inequality and the city in the Low Countries (1200-2020)* (Turnhout, 2020), pp 184-188.

³⁰ Louis Prosper Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 16^e série* (Brussels 1871), p. 300.

³¹ On the 2nd of December 1585, Philip II sent to Farnese a letter about the monitoring of Spanish soldiers: ‘continuant audict effect l’observance du bon raiglement et discipline militaire entre les gens de guerre, ainsi que tousjours avez faict et sçavez estre chose que plus m'est à cœur’ (‘To continue to observe the regulation and the discipline of soldiers, and that I do not want something more’ (Gachard, *Analectes historiques, 16^e série*, p. 308).

strong symbolic message. Fines were also enacted based on medieval justice practices and were part of a strategy intended to solve monetary shortages. Nevertheless, Farnese sometimes chose to improve the reconciliations instead of reducing his financial problems. Even then, he did not trust newly conquered cities and negotiated articles that prevented residents from rebelling against the Spanish Crown such as the placement of his agents and garrison in the cities. As well as the capitulation of cities, Farnese reintegrated major political figures such as Charles de Croÿ in order to complete the city treaty and to recognise city decisions like in Bruges. Farnese relied on medieval concepts as he established truces, seized the artillery, and released prisoners in exchanges of ransoms or organised prisoner exchanges. All things considered, the reconciliation politics of Farnese oscillated between gentleness to prevent any new rebellion and harder repression and monitoring to reduce his financial difficulties and pacify rebellion.

Tout se fait à la Maintenon: court and royal couple, 1700-15

Sarah Nunan

Cet esprit de vertige et d'erreur
De la chute des rois funeste avant-coureur.¹

Madame Françoise de Maintenon, the morganatic wife of Louis XIV, rose in power to become one of the most influential figures at Versailles over the three decades of her relationship with the Sun King. Despite her humble beginnings, she possessed a sparkling wit, admirable piety, and an unshakeable demeanour that endeared the king to her. Maintenon was an enthusiastic patron of art, literature, education, and the theatre. She was indirectly responsible for a cultural reformation of the French court, transforming it from a palace of debauchery and opulence to a sanctuary of Catholic morality. The king held Maintenon's opinion in such high esteem that he allowed her to transform the atmosphere of his beloved Versailles, replacing festivities with masses. In the process, she reinvented Louis' image from a reflection of Apollo to a model of piety. By studying the court of Louis XIV through the person of Madame de Maintenon we can gain a richer and more subtle understanding of the period than that which has been conveyed by the traditional imagery of the Sun King. This article shall focus on the final season of Françoise and Louis XIV's lives and the satirical material they were subjected to as their popularity plummeted during a difficult time for France.

Current research has suggested a revival of the interest in female regency in the early modern courts of Europe. The most recent publication of *The Court Historian* details the portraiture of Margaret

¹ Translation: 'This spirit of dizziness and error is the harbinger of the fall of kings.' Jean Racine, *Athalie: tragedie* (London, 1796).

of Austria, queen of Spain, and of Archduchess Maria Antonia of Austria, whilst also paying particular attention to their political reach.² Ruth Kleinman has completed compelling research on the regency of Anne of Austria, detailing her substantial influence on Louis XIV in his formative years.³ Surrounded by powerful female figures for his entire life, ironically the most subservient woman in the king's inner circle was his first wife, María Teresa of Spain, united with Louis in a political marriage designed to support the French monarchy and contribute to her husband's glory, as uncovered by Linda Kiernan's work.⁴ Partly inspired by these works, this article will examine Maintenon's agency over Louis XIV.

Françoise d'Aubigné was born at Niort in November 1635 to Constant d'Aubigné and Jeanne de Cardillac, daughter of the Niort prison governor. Her unconventional upbringing saw her shuffled between the Villette family, where the Catholic Françoise was raised with Protestant values, to a period spent in the West Indies, to an Ursuline convent, and to her godmother's family, the de Neuillans, before she married the controversial poet Paul Scarron in 1652. The couple were prominent in the literary salons of the time, and Madame Scarron flourished in aristocratic society. Her infirm husband died in 1660, and the widow was soon introduced to Madame de Montespan, then mistress of King Louis XIV. Françoise worked as a royal governess for their illegitimate children, becoming closer to the king as he withdrew from Montespan. Following the Queen's death, Maintenon married the king in a secret ceremony in October 1683. In 1684, she established a school for impoverished, noble girls at Saint-Cyr, popularising the use of theatre in the classroom in her pursuit to create a class of mothers who would advance the Christian cause in France through their religious, maternal, and charitable work as wives of the provincial

² Luc Duerloo, 'Preface: Iberian queens and court portraiture in the seventeenth century' in *The Court Historian*, xxvii (2022), no. 3, pp 183-5.

³ Ruth Kleinman, 'Social dynamics at the French court: the household of Anne of Austria' in *French Historical Studies*, xvi (1990), no. 3, pp 517-35.

⁴ Linda Kiernan, 'The mistress and matrimony: attitudes to marriage at the court of Louis XIV' in Catherine Lawless and Christine Meek (eds), *Studies on medieval and early modern women: victims or viragos?* (Dublin, 2005) pp 142-59.

nobility.⁵

With the advent of the eighteenth century came new political and social challenges, a taxing schedule of audiences, epistolary correspondence, religious dissent, an expensive and hopeless war against a European coalition of allies, and succession crises. It would have been a trying experience for any royal couple, especially when both partners were in their seventies. Françoise and Louis clung to each other during these times of change, relying on divine providence and their few remaining friends at court for consolation and advice as they navigated a changing Europe. It is true that Louis XIV retained a significant amount of personal autonomy and would often go against the counsel of his wife and ministers. In public, he would continue to demonstrate the impassivity for which he was renowned. In private, however, he came to depend increasingly upon his stronger and more level-headed companion. With growing territorial losses and rising debt, ‘an old man and an old woman wept bitter tears in Madame de Maintenon’s rooms’.⁶ Françoise bore his pain and suffered stinging criticism, as did her husband, as France was hit by war and natural disaster.

As Madame de Maintenon and Louis XIV entered the autumn of their lives in the early eighteenth century, both felt the effects of their advanced age and a certain loneliness as their loved ones and trusted ministers died. In 1701, the king suffered the loss of his brother, Philippe d’Orléans, and his loyal valet, Alexandre Bontemps, who had witnessed his second marriage in 1683.⁷ In 1712, following the deaths of Madame la Dauphine and the Dauphin, Liselotte wrote that the king had lost everyone, apart from Françoise, that he had ever truly loved.⁸ Madame de Caylus felt that the palace was devoid of life, that the courtiers simply could not cope with the tragedies, and that her aunt was entirely overwhelmed.⁹

⁵ Virginia Simmons Nyabongo, ‘Madame de Maintenon and her contribution to education’ in *The French Review*, xxii (1949), no. 3, pp 241-248 [p. 242].

⁶ John B. Wolf, *Louis XIV* (London, 1968), p. 546; Colin Jones, ‘The king’s two teeth’ in *History Workshop Journal*, lxxv (2008), pp 79-85 [p. 8].

⁷ Nancy Mitford, *The sun king* (New York, 1966), p. 207.

⁸ Mitford, *The sun king*, p. 207.

⁹ Wolf, *Louis XIV*, p. 611.

Maintenon endured the bereavements of her brother Charles, and the original headmistress of Saint-Cyr, Madame de Brinon, in 1703, swiftly followed by her cousin Philippe de Villette, and her servant, Ninon, in 1706. Maintenon and Louis XIV also felt uneasy about the future of the government at Versailles without the pillars of Colbert, Louvois, Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. A new generation of ministers was ushered into power, but the royal couple took time to trust in their ability to fill the shoes of the great men before them.

Louis XIV's belief in his capacity to govern waned as he fell victim to self-doubt and depressive episodes.¹⁰ His wife stepped in as a shield from criticism and against the rumours which swept the court as the king's addiction to warfare left the country in dire straits. Louis was increasingly vulnerable as his emotions took over and he leaned heavily on Maintenon for support. She struggled with the mounting tasks she had to fulfil as her husband gradually withdrew from his role. It seems, from her correspondence, that she resented that her time was no longer her own, swallowed up by members of the court and by the king, who regarded her as an indefatigable machine, capable of listening to gossip, woes, military tactics, and petitions without it ever taking a toll on her.¹¹

Maintenon was witness to a more vulnerable side to Louis XIV than is usually understood; gone was the godlike persona crafted in the image of Apollo, and, in its place, the anxious and melancholic infirm man was revealed. Maintenon effectively served as a crutch for the king in the last decade of his life. Her private chambers effectively became a headquarters where she, the king, ministers, commanders, and other officials would meet to confer.¹² Having little to no experience or education in public affairs, Maintenon sought to expand her knowledge by consulting military commanders, who were rewarded with her patronage and protection. As Mark Bryant has noted, Maintenon held a position that, arguably,

¹⁰ Mark Bryant, *Queen of Versailles: Madame de Maintenon, first lady of Louis XIV's France* (Montréal, 2020), p. 261.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 272.

no other had before her. She was simultaneously a wife, matriarch of a great house, confidante, the unofficial queen consort, patroness, ambassador, and confessor.¹³ She was pitied by those who understood the extent of her responsibilities. The Abbé de Brisacier conceded to her that ‘it seems by God’s infinite mercy that the court is a real cross for you’. Her confessor, Godet, summarised the paradox of her position by recognizing that ‘you are infirm and often ill, and yet you have to do things that a twenty-year-old would be expected to do; you occupy the position of a queen, yet you have the liberty of a petite-bourgeoise.’¹⁴

It was understood that she was the most direct means of communication with the king and that her patronage and favour were immense, given her influence over her husband. Maintenon’s family, friends, and protégés received titles, lands, and benefits, yet she had to affect an air of ignorance and naivety when it came to official affairs. She suffered as she felt it was a necessary burden for a wife to bear, and Louis had habits that seriously irked her, such as throwing open the windows of her private apartments to let in the fresh air, which worsened her rheumatism and reminded her of the trauma of the storms she endured during her time in the Americas.¹⁵ However, overall, her marriage was successful, and surviving correspondence between the two exposes an affectionate, nurturing relationship.¹⁶ Louis’ admiration and devotion to his wife are evident in comments made to the portraitist Pierre Mignard relating to an official painting of her finished in 1694. It was reported that when Mignard asked Louis XIV if he should add ermine to Maintenon’s mantle, the king replied ‘*Sainte-Françoise le mérite bien*’ (Saint Françoise is worthy of it), and when asked if the artist should add a crown, ‘*elle l’aura au ciel*’ (she will have one in Heaven).¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., p. 274.

¹⁴ Both quotations in *ibid.*, p. 271.

¹⁵ Bryant, *Queen of Versailles*, p. 292.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp 289-90.

¹⁷ Virginia Simmons Nyabongo, ‘Madame de Maintenon and her contribution to education’ in *The French Review*, xxii (1949), no. 3, pp 241-8 [p. 243].

Louis XIV afforded his wife an astonishing amount of influence in state matters, which she applied with varied success. The Vatican held her in high esteem, and Pope Innocent XII granted her, Godet, and twelve other people of her choosing, special spiritual dispensations during the jubilee celebrations in 1700.¹⁸ The Abbé Maddot benefitted greatly from his service to Maintenon as he managed the affairs of her profligate brother Charles, in return for which she secured for him the bishopric of Belley in 1705.¹⁹

Other appointments instigated by Maintenon were ill-fated, such as the hopelessly incompetent Chamillart, Françoise's former protégé and the *ancien* superintendent at Saint-Cyr. He was appointed as head of the ministries of War and Finance in 1691. Overburdened, he begged the king to let him go in 1704, but hung on for another four painful years, by which time state affairs were in an impossible mess.²⁰ The French support for the reinstatement of James Stuart (son of King James VII and II of England, Scotland and Ireland, and Mary of Modena) was another fatal blunder that damaged the public's opinion of Maintenon.²¹ In March 1708, James embarked on a doomed expedition to Scotland, accompanied by 6,000 troops in thirty-three ships.²² Maintenon turned the Scottish invasion into a quasi-personal crusade that divided the court. Courtiers who refused to travel to Scotland felt the wrath of her disapproval, while those who encouraged the mission were held in her favour. She implored the king to take her side over that of Torcy, his foreign minister, and his entire council.²³ These examples challenge the notion of Maintenon as a martyr for whom peace was the only honourable pursuit and instead depict a strong-minded woman who sought to exert her significant political influence to promote her own agenda.

In the winter of 1708 to 1709, France endured extreme freezing, causing significant poverty in some parishes. Liselotte recorded that 'it has never been so cold in the memory of man....No one recalls

¹⁸ Mitford, *The sun king*, p. 208.

¹⁹ Bryant, *Queen of Versailles*, p. 303.

²⁰ Guy Rowlands, *The financial decline of a great power* (Oxford, 2012), pp 36, 39.

²¹ Wolf, *Louis XIV*, p. 515.

²² Philip Mansel, *King of the world: the life of Louis XIV* (Chicago, 2020), p. 392.

²³ Mitford, *The sun king*, p. 208.

a Winter like it', later complaining that the wine was freezing in the bottles.²⁴ Even in the sanctuary of Saint-Cyr, Maintenon's girls were feeling the effects of the famine as they saw their food rationed to provide for those in greater need.²⁵ A broadsheet distributed at the time displayed the extent of the disappearing faith in Louis XIV, his government, and in religion:

Our father who art in Versailles, your name is not hallowed, your kingdom is no longer great, nor is thy will done by land or sea. Give us this day our daily bread for we cannot afford to buy it. Succumb not to the temptations of Madame de Maintenon and deliver us from Chamillart.²⁶

A staggering 298 riots took place in 1710.²⁷ Père la Chaise, the king's confessor, died in early 1709 due to the bitter cold.²⁸

Louis XIV's addiction to warfare cost him his popularity and ruined him financially. By 1710, military and naval expenses were absorbing more than seventy-five per cent of the state budget. Humiliatingly, Huguenot bankers such as Samuel Bernard were called upon to bail out the country.²⁹ The king was criticised in several satirical pamphlets and plays, such as in *Le Mareschal de Luxembourg au Lit de La Mort*, in which the Luxembourg compels the king to dedicate the rest of his reign to promoting peace in France. Louis replies '*J'aime mieux y réduire le peuple, que de m'y voir réduit moi-même*' (I would rather reduce the people to this, than see myself reduced to it).³⁰ He was portrayed as a weak ruler, hiding behind the skirts of his wife. The critical author of *Lettres Galantes* deduced that the future of the state was decided in Maintenon's apartments and that the king consulted her before making every decision, noting that the result was always in accordance with Maintenon's advice. The Prince of Orange, William III, questioned Louis' wisdom in doing the opposite of royal tradition by selecting a council of young

²⁴ Liselotte to Electress Sophie, 10 January 1709, Elborg Forster (ed.), *A woman's life in the court of the Sun King: letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz, 1652-1722* (Baltimore, 1984), p. 170.

²⁵ Mitford, *The sun king*, p. 223.

²⁶ Mansel, *King of the world*, p. 401.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Mitford, *The sun king*, pp 221-2.

²⁹ Mansel, *King of the world*, pp 397-9.

³⁰ Anonyme, *Le maréchal de Luxembourg au lit de la mort: Tragicomédie* (1695, Cologne) Act I Scene V p. 23.

ministers and taking an older mistress.³¹ Madame de Maintenon was not spared either. A song bemoaning her influence was published, proclaiming:

One could without being satirical
Even find this regime comical
See how this holy whore
Directs this whole empire
If we were not dying of hunger
We would die of laughter.³²



Figure 1: Madame de Maintenon déguisée en moine, engraved c. 1690, Anonymous.

In a print produced circa 1691, Maintenon was portrayed unflatteringly. The text which accompanied it read: ‘Without question, I am a member of the League, I have built convents and Saint-Cyr is proof. From Scarron’s widow, I’m now the wife of a king. And if I succeeded, it was by my only plot’.³³ The inscription

³¹ Madame de C***, *Lettres historiques et galantes : Ouvrage Curieux* (1707, Cologne) Lettre IV : Réponse, pp 46-7.

³² Cited in Wolf, *Louis XIV*, p. 603.

³³ Anonyme, *Chansons historiques et satiriques sur la cour de France* (Paris, 1856) p. 72.

alludes to the false accusations that were hurled at Maintenon, holding her almost solely responsible for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It portrayed her as a scheming mistress who conspired to marry the king for her own religiously motivated reasons. She was cursed as a ‘creole abominable’, a crude reference to her youth partially spent in Martinique, and ‘infâme Maintenon!’.³⁴ *L’Alcoran de Louis XIV* was a satirical pamphlet that likened the king to a Machiavellian ruler, who had been instructed in the rules of *Realpolitik* by Mazarin. In its pages, Louis XIV affirms that it is more important for a monarch to be feared than loved, that cruelty is necessary and forgivable when it is for the greater good, and that a prince who showed kindness and humanity would only ruin himself.³⁵ Although Nicolas de la Reynie, Lieutenant General of the Police, had some success in stopping the production of pamphlets such as these, grumblings continued. François Fénelon, the Archbishop of Cambrai and one of the most outspoken critics of the king, proclaimed that the root of the country’s suffering was despotism.³⁶

In his later years, Louis XIV was the target of a series of attacks from satirical material that questioned his glory and absolutism. As the king grew increasingly religious, reclusive, and intolerant of the theatre, its forbidden nature only increased its popularity and stimulated an insatiable appetite amongst the nobles for political satire.³⁷ Bossuet accepted that ‘what is licit is off-putting and what is illicit becomes alluring’, and this rang true for the contemporary opera parodies that subtly targeted the very essence of what Louis XIV stood for, mocking the gods such as Apollo in whose image Louis had molded himself.³⁸ The caricatures turned the tactics of royal propaganda on their head, reversing and reducing the Sun King from the source of all life and warmth to a harbinger of a bitterly barren season. This also lent itself to

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gatién de Sandras de Courtilz, *L’Alcoran de Louis XIV. Ou le testament politique du Cardinal Jules Mazarin* (1695, Maurino) pp 34-5.

³⁶ Mansel, *King of the world*, p. 401.

³⁷ Don Fader, ‘The ‘Cabale du Dauphin’, Campra, and Italian comedy: the courtly politics of French musical patronage around 1700’ in *Music & Letters*, lxxxvi (2005), pp 380-413 [p. 382].

³⁸ Cited in Joseph Harris and Julia Prest, *Guilty pleasures: theater, piety, and immorality in seventeenth century France* (Connecticut, 2016) p. 3; Georgia Cowart, ‘Carnival in Venice or protest in Paris? Louis XIV and the politics of subversion at the Paris Opéra’ in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, li (2001), pp 265-302 [p. 272].

the transformation of Versailles from an abode of love and hedonism in the first twenty years of the Louis's reign to a cloister of conservative Catholicism from the mid-1680s onwards.³⁹ The aim was to undo the king's carefully constructed ideology, *the monarque de l'univers*, and expose him as a mere war-thirsty politician scrambling to revive the glory of his youth.⁴⁰ At the root of this challenge to the king's image was a culture of public morality for which Maintenon was largely responsible.

Maintenon contributed to a reversal of the tone at Versailles. When she first arrived at court in the late 1660s, Louis XIV had been dramatised as an Apollonian ruler, a second coming of Alexander the Great, comparable to famed Roman emperors Trajan and Augustus, portrayed even as a French Hercules. As her influence over the king increased, extravaganza was replaced with humility. Louis was compared to his ancestor Saint Louis rather than pagan gods, and the naked statues dotted throughout the gardens had strategically-placed fig leaves to preserve modesty and advertise that the court had become a sanctuary for morality, a shrine to renewed Catholicism.⁴¹ The figures of *Venus* and *Adonis*, depicted in a 1692 tapestry, received a similar treatment, their nudity replaced by swathes of fabric draped across their bodies.⁴² This re-appropriation of the artwork at Versailles to reflect the more sombre, pious overtone stood in stark contrast with the remnants of the sensual atmosphere Versailles had been known for in the past.⁴³ The historian Colin Jones has suggested that Louis's initial quest for *la gloire* had collapsed into a *folie de grandeur*.⁴⁴ In Maintenon's newly pious Versailles, the patronage that artists, sculptors, and writers had known in Louis' youth became emasculated by heavy censorship, and many served time in the Bastille for publishing works deemed treasonous. This was further referenced in the

³⁹ Cowart, 'Carnival in Venice or protest in Paris?' p. 276.

⁴⁰ Peter Burke, *The fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1994), p. 193.

⁴¹ Colin Jones, *The great nation : France from Louis XV to Napoleon* (London, 2003), p.19; Gérard Sabatier, 'La gloire du roi: iconographie de Louis XIV de 1661 à 1672' in *Histoire, Économie et Société*, xix (2000) pp 527-560.

⁴² James Parker et al., 'French decorative arts during the reign of Louis XIV 1654-1715' in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, xvi (1989), pp 1-64 [p. 28].

⁴³ Ragnhild Hatton, 'Louis XIV: At the court of the sun king' in A.G. Dickens (ed.), *The courts of Europe: politics, patronage and royalty 1400-1800* (London, 1977), pp 233-262 [p. 243].

⁴⁴ Jones, *The great nation*, p. 20.

correspondence of *Lettres galantes et historiques*, in which the ladies expressed their dream of being able to sing *la Maintenon & Noailles*, without fearing the Bastille.⁴⁵

There was a clear misalignment between the myth of grandeur and absolutism that Louis had sought to portray and the reality that the French people were facing. There was an abundance of ideological rifts at play: that between the royal couple and their younger court, between the youthful, bedazzling Sun King and the aging man behind the legend, and between the splendour of Versailles and the arduous existence of its hungry, impoverished subjects. Maintenon featured in all these and, through her pious exercise of influence in the king's name, became an easy target, blamed for the newly modest ambiance at Versailles and the political failures at the end of Louis' reign.

As has been explored throughout this article, Madame de Maintenon transformed the representation of Louis XIV and the court at Versailles. Her influence can be seen in the new symbolism of the monarch. Education for aristocratic girls was championed, and Louis' inner circle of high-ranking ministers saw new candidates proposed by Maintenon. The king stepped away from the Apollo-centred imagery he and Colbert heavily endorsed in the 1660s and repositioned himself amongst great Christian heroes like his ancestor Saint Louis.

Maintenon had a cooling effect on the hedonistic attitude exhibited by Louis XIV in his early reign and steered him into a spiritual way of life as he became a grandfather and great-grandfather. Louis was believed to embody divine right to a greater extent than any of his predecessors, due to his long-awaited birth after twenty years of a childless union between his parents. He was dubbed 'Louis le Dieudonné', and throughout his childhood, his mother drew comparisons between him and Saint Louis, recalling

⁴⁵ Madame de C***, *Lettres historiques et galantes*, p. 9.

how their fathers had both died young, and the two monarchs had strong, religious mothers.⁴⁶ One could say that this ‘cult of the king’ culminated in the sculpture of Louis XIV at the Place des Victoires in Paris, bearing the inscription *Viro Immortali* (to the immortal man).⁴⁷ Louis XIV capitalised on his alignment with Apollo and implied that he alone could see into the darkest shadows of men’s souls.⁴⁸ This omnipresent, godlike monarchical identity played into Louis’ desire for his subjects to realize that he missed nothing at Versailles, and that all behaviour was eventually either rewarded or punished by him.⁴⁹

Maintenon demythologized Versailles and redrew the boundaries between Louis XIV and God, which had become blurred in the first years of his reign. She encouraged her husband to submit to God and reconciled him with the belief that his reign was in the hands of the Lord and that the tragedies which befell him in the later years of his reign were divine punishment. Louis, naïve in spiritual matters, embraced his wife’s counsel and took steps to reform Versailles into a sanctuary of Christianity, into a home befitting the Defender of the Faith.⁵⁰ The French public was unimpressed with the change they saw in their king; from a godlike warrior residing in a golden palace to an old man relying on the advice of his would-be queen with her religious whims and her meddling in the country’s affairs.

⁴⁶ Philip F. Riley, *Lust for virtue: Louis XIV’s attack on sin in seventeenth-century France* (Westport, 2001), p. 8; Anne Betty Weinshenker, ‘Idolatry and sculpture in ancien régime France’ in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, xxxviii (2005), pp 485-507 [p. 494].

⁴⁷ Weinshenker, ‘Idolatry and sculpture in ancien régime France’, p. 493.

⁴⁸ Riley, *Lust for virtue*, p. 144.

⁴⁹ Jay M. Smith, “‘Our sovereign’s gaze’: kings, nobles, and state formation in seventeenth-century France’, in *French Historical Studies*, xviii (1993), no. 2, pp 396-415 [p. 408].

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

‘O Tannenbaum, O Fanny’s Baum’: identity and ritual in the Viennese salon, 1814-15

Charlie McEvoy

In the darkening winter of the Congress of Vienna (1814-15), a show of lights and merriment consumed the salon of the city’s first Jewish hostess, Fanny von Arnstein. This display was reported in the records of the Viennese secret police as follows:

Yesterday, there was, according to Berlin custom a multiplicitous Christmas tree fête at the Arnstein residence. All baptised and circumcised friends of the house...were there. All requested, invited persons [...] received gifts or souvenirs from the Christmas tree. Peculiar songs were sung as per the Berlin custom; Mrs von Münch sang songs from Kasperle. There was a great intercourse held throughout all the rooms with those items allotted from the tree. Prince Hardenberg amused himself endlessly.¹

At the centre of Arnstein’s gala stood a Christmas tree, which prompts several questions thus arise that probe existing conceptions of Jewish salonnières in this period. Why would an eighteenth-century Jewish woman rejoice in Christianity’s holiest festival? What did Arnstein find appealing about lighting a Christmas tree? And why adopt the vestiges of Christian celebration but reject that coveted *Entréebillett* - conversion - that so many of her class, generation and Berlin extraction took in hand?¹ To answer these questions is to challenge the dominant paradigms of German-Jewish cultural history. It is to take a microhistorical approach, one that seeks not to assimilate subjects into grand hegemonic narratives, but

¹August Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress: eine Auswahl aus ihren Papieren* (Vienna, 1913), p. 315.

¹ German poet and converted Jew, Heinrich Heine is commonly known for referring to baptism as a ‘ticket of admission’ for life in the arts and aristocracy. See Heinrich Heine, *H. Heines sämtliche Werke: Letzte Gedichte und Gedanken* (Hamburg, 1869) p.197. Elana Shapira, ‘Kunst und Repräsentation: Darstellungen jüdischer Salondamen in Wien um 1800’ in *Juden in Mitteleuropa* (2009), p. 34.

instead naturalise and elevate disparate and unfamiliar voices of the past.² In drawing upon a fleeting, and hitherto unnoticed, snapshot of private life in the Biedermeier era, this study not only frames such events as worthy objects of historical investigation but highlights the inherent value of Arnstein's subjectivity. How we conceive, position, and fashion ourselves into the fabric of life, irrespective of our surroundings, makes manifest the very condition of our being. In this sense, microhistory can detect the innate frailty of the institutions around which we so often construct history, illuminating 'the fragmentation, contradictions and plurality of viewpoints which make all systems fluid and plural'.³ The mundane and domestic lighting of a Christmas tree represented a microscopic event in the life and works of Fanny von Arnstein, but to untangle the web of assumptions and predilections that brought her to that point is to deconstruct and examine a network of ideas surrounding class, gender, nation, association and belief, and in doing so reveal some of the most intimate aspects of this salonnière's reality.

The *Verbürgerlichung* or embourgeoisement of Jewish communities in nineteenth-century Central Europe was central to Arnstein's perception of the *Christbaumfest* (Christmas tree fête) and its capacity for identity creation. In 1814, the idea of bringing an glistening, ornamental fir tree into one's home was not widespread.⁴ As alluded to in the police report and clarified by Prince Anton Radziwill: 'Here [in Austria] this celebration is not usual'.⁵ It was a decidedly 'Berlin custom' and one practised most commonly by the ruling aristocracy, whose 'invention and standardisation' of the modern Christmas emerged parallel to Arnstein's own salon and her ennoblement as a Baroness.⁶ Indeed, many contemporary Christmas traditions

² 'Microhistory and global history: Carlo Ginzberg in conversation with Francesca Trivellato, 23rd Annual Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Lecture in Judaic Studies,' *Herbert D. Katz Center for Judaic Studies University of Pennsylvania*, 2 March 2021 [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgHcSCXknnM>] (accessed 8 September 2023).

³ Levi Giovanni, 'On microhistory' in Peter Burke (ed.), *New perspectives on historical writing* (Pennsylvania, 1991), p. 107.

⁴ Bernd Brunner and Benjamin A. Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree* (New Haven, 2012), p. 8.

⁵ Hilde Spiel, *Fanny Von Arnstein: daughter of the Enlightenment* (New York, 2013), p. 265.

⁶ Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress*, p. 315. Brunner & Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 8, 16. Joe Perry, *The private life of the nation: Christmas and the invention of modern Germany* (PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 2001), p. 21. H.L Lund, *Der Berliner „jüdische Salon“ um 1800* (Berlin, 2012), p. 528.

remained in their nascent form.⁷ Even the classic carol, *O Tannenbaum O Tannenbaum*, from which this paper takes its title, did not appear until several years after Arnstein's death in 1818.⁸ These new customs highlighted the values and identity of the *Bildungsbürgertum* - the cultured bourgeoisie (fig.1).⁹ Evocations of nature and refinement, intimate storytelling and song, to 'exchange a jumble of gifts' and in doing so 'give each other so much joy' - these semi-private interactions not only modelled the sociability of the Enlightenment salon but the domestic aspirations of its habitués.¹⁰ Romantic trends subsumed the enlightened sociability and *politesse* of the *ancien régime* in sentimental rituals of bourgeois identity creation, which could be used by Arnstein to signify her ideological and class alliances.¹¹

The Christmas tree's status and capacity in the legitimation of one's station corresponded to Arnstein's aspirations for her own family and salon. The Christmas tree was a status symbol that spread from the court to the drawing room.¹² While the tree itself represented the humble fruits of nature, all that adorned it was opulent and expensive. Seemingly simple beeswax candles were costly dainties, meticulously fixed to each long, thorny bough.¹³ Though earlier trees were adorned with mere gilded fruits, decorations 'reached a new level of refinement' by the early nineteenth century, when trees began to boast bespoke novelty trinkets and luminescent glass ornaments.¹⁴ With an income outsizing even her most famous contemporaries, Arnstein had the resources and reason to make her salon 'the centre of all the vanities of the world [...] even more splendid than the emperor's'.¹⁵

⁷ Perry, *The private life of the nation*, p. 20.

⁸ Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, p. 6.

⁹ Joe Perry, *Christmas in Germany: a cultural history* (Chapel Hill, 2014), p. 24.

¹⁰ Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 17, 21. Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp. 13, 16. Glenda Sluga, *The Invention of international order: Remaking Europe after Napoleon* (New Jersey, 2021), p. 23.

¹¹ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp 17, 24; Chung-Mei Liu, *Die Rolle der Musik im Wiener Salon bis ca. 1830* (PhD Thesis, Universität Wien, 2013), p. 9.

¹² Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 8, 21; Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 31.

¹³ *Ibid*, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 42-43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 29, 36.

¹⁵ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 118; Sluga, *The invention of international order*, p. 170.

Lavish and generous gifts were central to this conspicuous display - one new guest, for example, received an illustrated book of Prussian battlements, valued at minimum of one thousand Thalers.¹⁶ Despite her embrace of contemporary aristocratic and bourgeois prototypes, Arnstein's salon and status continued to be defined in relation to her Jewishness; her salon took place after all in the rented mansion of her dispropertied Jewish family.¹⁷ The reputation and equality Arnstein constructed was always limited. Her 'mixed-company' was shunned by *vieux riche* of high-society. Fellow salonnière and 'enlightened' Princess, Elenore von Lichtenstein wrote to her daughter: '[your brothers] often visit *das Haus von Arnstein*, where it seems, they assume the repulsive principles, dandyism and pomposity, to which I am so opposed'.¹⁸ The politically ambitious saw Arnstein's salon as a mere footstool, from which to elevate their own professional interests. Austrian statesman Friedrich von Gentz disposed with 'the hideousness' of the Jewish economic elite once he gained entrance into the upper-echelons of Christian aristocracy, while German diplomat, Wilhelm von Humboldt, hoped that if emancipation were achieved: 'it would no longer be necessary, out of generosity, to go to Jewish houses'.¹⁹ The *Christbaumfest* is one example of Arnstein's persistent engagement with maskilic assimilationist etiquette (*nimosiyut*), whereby upwardly mobile Jews adopted the emblems and manners of the Christian majority.²⁰ Although Hannah Arendt theorised in her 1957 work, *Rahel Varhagen: the life of a Jewess* that the acculturation of Jewish salonnières only achieved

¹⁶ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp 26, 32; Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, p. 33; Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, pp 264-5.

¹⁷ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 121.

¹⁸ Martin Ebyl, *Sammlerinnen: Musikalische Öffentlichkeit und ständische Identität, Wien 1740–1810* (Bielefeld, 2022), pp 346, 347. Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 263.

¹⁹ Lund, *Der Berliner „jüdische Salon“ um 1800*, pp 420-1. D. S. Hertz, *Jewish high society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven, 1988), pp 280-1. H. L. Lund, 'Der Frühe Wilhelm Von Humboldt und die „Jüdischen Salons“ der 1790er Jahre' in *Zeitschrift Für Religions- Und Geistesgeschichte* 69/2 (2017), p. 189.

²⁰ Maskilic Jews (*maskilim*) were followers of the Jewish Enlightenment, 'Haskalah', that sought to modernise and acculturate traditional Jewish life during this period. See Yahil Zaban, 'Folded white napkins': The etiquette discourse in Haskalah literature' in *Prooftexts* 35, 3-2 (2015), pp 292, 302.

a superficial equality, Arnstein's *Christbaumfest* was nonetheless an attempt to break free from her entrapment in this 'self-preserving group'.²¹

The function of the Christmas tree as a class symbol is closely tied to the sociability of the Congress of Vienna. Convened in the wake of the Napoleonic wars, the international negotiations sought to redefine Europe's borders and restore power relations on the continent. Monarchs, princes, envois, and their entourages inflated the capital's population by one-third, with guests being entertained on a grand scale.²² Whilst Arnstein regularly hosted 'Musik und Tänzchen [litte-dances],' she devised a special programme of events for the festive season, beginning with the *Christbaumfest*.²³ This led into a mulled wine tasting on New Year's Eve and was topped off with a sumptuous soiree on 10 January, at which a familiar emblem impressed visitors: 'The rooms were decked with trees hanging heavy with rich fruits. It produced an extraordinary visual effect, in the midst of winter, cherries, peaches and apricots were being picked, as if in a garden in Provence'.²⁴ The negotiations were as much a celebratory as a diplomatic enterprise.²⁵ In a similar vein, the lighting of the Christmas tree and exchanging of gifts were much less an act of religious devotion than a work of dramaturgy, and, in turn, an appeal to the ritual and identity cultivated by Arnstein and her class.

The Christmas tree's appeal was closely related to the dual-enterprise of *Bildung* and Romanticism in the German-speaking lands. The tree emerged alongside the Romantic movement and coalesced with the tastes, values, and society of its proponents.²⁶ The ritualisation of Christmas helped fashion a sentimental

²¹ Jennifer Lauren Psujek, *The intersection of gender, religion, and culture in nineteenth-century Germanic salons* (Ph.D Thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2010), p. 28. R. S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the age of Franz Joseph* (Liverpool, 2006), p. 14.

²² Mark Jarrett, *The congress of Vienna and its legacy: war and great power diplomacy after Napoleon* (London, 2013) p. 94; Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 253.

²³ August, Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress*, p. 267.

²⁴ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, pp 260, 265.

²⁵ Jarrett, *The congress of Vienna and its legacy*, p. 94.

²⁶ Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, p. 19. Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 15. Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 121.

Weihnachtsstimmung (Christmas atmosphere) embodying a sense of *Gemütlichkeit*, *Innerlichkeit* and *Heimlichkeit* (cosiness, inwardness and domestic sanctuary).²⁷ The Christmas tree, with its beeswax scents, organic beauty and sweet confections, formed part of this standardised and nostalgic imagery.²⁸ When writing of the epoch from the late 1850s, Ernst Moritz Arndt wrote: ‘Pragst du schöner Weihnachtsbaum / meine Kindheit goldner Traum? [Don’t you pretty Christmas tree / impress my youth of golden dreams?]’.²⁹ The greats of Romantic literature likewise emphasised the emotional intensity of Christmas.³⁰ In *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), Goethe describes ‘die Erscheinung eines aufgeputzten Baumes mit Wachlichtern, Zuckerwerk und Äpfeln in paradiesische Entzückung [the image of a beautiful tree with wax lights, sugary confections and apples in paradisaical ecstasy],’ before detailing Werther’s suicide on 23 December.³¹ On Christmas 1793, friends recounted how Friedrich Schiller was found sat in front of ‘an enormous tree, lit by countless candles, with gilded nuts, gingerbread, and all sorts of little sweeties [...] eating of its fruits.’³² Friedrich Schlegel’s salon novella, *Die Weihnachtsfeier: ein Gespräch* (1806) similarly privileges the emotional intensity of its characters, as they seek to identify the true meaning of the homely German Christmas.³³ Moreover, all these writers were a part of Arnstein’s social circles in Berlin, whilst her notebooks, according to biographer, Hilde Spiel, gave voice to the ‘high waves of the Romantic period’.³⁴ The Christmas tree ritualised romantic sensibilities, cultivating feeling, a return to childish

²⁷ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp 15, 24. Perry, *The private life of the nation*, pp. 21, 28; Yaniv Feller, ‘Oy Tannenbaum, Oy Tannenbaum! The role of a Christmas tree in a Jewish museum’ E. P Klassen and Monique Scheer (eds), *The public work of Christmas: difference and belonging in multicultural societies* (Montreal, 2019), p. 146.

²⁸ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 44. Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 21, 42. J. P. Hebel, ‘Die Mutter am Christabend’ in *P. Hebel’s Sämtliche Werke. 1: Allemannische Gedichte* (Karlsruhe, 1834), pp 90-1.

²⁹ E. M. Arndt, *Gedichte von Ernst Moriz Arndt* (Berlin, 1865), p. 622.

³⁰ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 15.

³¹ J. W. Von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Mineola, 2004), p. 164. Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp. 19, 23.

³² Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, S. 35.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 18.

nostalgia, a bringing together of bourgeois society, and served to align Arnstein's salon with the most treasured imagery of the Romantic era.

Still, Romanticism emphasised embodiment. Outward signifiers were not enough; one had to become part of the performance, and gender roles were supporting actors in this orchestration of identity.³⁵ The decorating of a Christmas tree was regarded as a feminine activity.³⁶ The visuals and delicate scents of this domestic showpiece not only evoked a 'feminine softness', but were products of a caring mother's feminine touch: 'Di muetter goth mit stillem tritt, / sie goth mit zartem muetter-sinn, / und holt e baum in chämmerli d'inn [Mother goes with silent steps/she goes with sweet motherly intuition, / And takes the tree into the little snug].'³⁷ In *The sorrows of young Werther*, it is when the protagonist's love interest, Charlotte is at her most feminine (decorating the Christmas tree) that he approaches his emotional *crescendo*.³⁸ Indeed, the *tableaux vivant* staged by the Arnsteins in January 1815 was likewise characterised as a highly domestic and feminine form of entertainment.³⁹ Famously performed by Arnstein's guest Lady Emma Hamilton, the art of *tableaux vivant* was the bodily reproduction of 'living' images, physical evocations of dazzlingly pathetic attitudes from within.

These embodied fictions were bound up in romantic gender ideals, which, in Humboldt's words, held that '*alles Männliche zeigt mehr Selbsttätigkeit, alles Weibliche mehr leidende Empfänglichkeit* [Everything masculine shows more initiative, everything feminine more sufferable sensitivity]'.⁴⁰ Such models formed the rationale for a treacherous contemporary debate.⁴¹ Gender essentialism and the 'eternal

³⁵ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, pp. 107, 111. Jarrett, *The congress of Vienna and its legacy*, p. 84.

³⁶ Perry, *The private life of the nation*, p. 21; Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp 20, 90.

³⁷ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp 20, 21. J. P. Hebel, 'Die mutter am Christabend' in *J. P. Hebels sämtliche Werke* (Karlsruhe, 1834), p. 90.

³⁸ Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 27.

³⁹ Perry, *The private life of the nation*, p. 29; Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, p. 23.

⁴⁰ P. M. McIsaac, 'Rethinking tableaux vivants and triviality in the writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johanna Schopenhauer, and Fanny Lewald' in *Monatshefte* 99, 2 (2007), p. 152.

feminine' (*das Ewige Weib*) stood on the parapets of enlightened and Romantic discourses in individualism.⁴² Theories of innate knowledge (piori), previously challenged by John Locke and David Hume, contradicted notions of Romantic subjectivity.⁴³ The masculine 'self' was derived from the transcendence of a sublime nature, not the internalisation of its wild and inescapable impulses. Yet, feminine virtue continued to be measured and characterized according to essentialist, or innate, models. Contemporary gender roles were posited as the 'natural', unavoidable and inescapable state of womanhood, negating all possible claims to higher knowledge or transcendent subjectivity. The learned female subject was demonised and salonnières, such as Arnstein's guest Madame de Staël were characterised as 'monstrously' unfeminine.⁴⁴ The issue was manifold for Arnstein herself, who as both a salonnière and a Jewish woman lay at the intersections of an even more virile prejudice: '[Jews] possess everything individually, but not the art of uniting all the particulars [...] into a beautiful femininity.'⁴⁵ In this context, it was important for Arnstein not only to cultivate an 'enlightened' gender performance, but to assert a femininity that could have easily been denied to her. Through her *Christbaumfest*, Arnstein fashioned and negotiated the incongruous and interlocking identities of *mutterherz* and salonnière. As Enlightenment emancipation led into Romantic isolationism and the Napoleonic era drew to a close, Arnstein's *Christbaumfest* sought a tenuous harmony between the two.

All these factors – Jewishness, polity, femininity, Christmas – converged in the Congress of Vienna. Arnstein's Christmas tree, the emblem of an iconically Prussian mode of celebration, testified to her patriotism. As expressed by Caroline Rothschild, politically empowered women were not viewed kindly during the period: 'You may ask what has a woman to do with public affairs? Better she should write about

⁴² *Das Ewige Weib* was an Romantic gender archetype, first coined in Goethe's *Faust*.

⁴³ Peter Markie, and M. Folescu, 'Rationalism vs. empiricism' in E. N. Zalta, and Uri Nodelman (eds.) *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (2023), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2023/entries/rationalism-empiricism/> (accessed 8 September 2023).

⁴⁴ Lund, 'Der Frühe Wilhelm Von Humboldt,' pp 10, 24.

⁴⁵ Sluga, *The invention of international order*, p. 48.

soap and needles'. Yet, the slight overlap between romantic ideas of nationhood and femininity sanctioned a 'publicly performed femininity [...] in the name of patriotism'.⁴⁶ Being a patriotic Prussian woman meant espousing 'a passionate love for the Fatherland', fulfilling feminine duties, and maintaining German manners within the home.⁴⁷ The *Christbaumfest* is a clear example of this nationalistic performance. Indeed, in the book of Prussian battle scenes previously mentioned, Arnstein inscribed the words 'Vengeance d'une Prussienne' - a passionate statement of her own response to Napoleonic occupation. Police reconnaissance provides intimate details of Arnstein's convictions, detailing her *tableaux vivant* of Teutonic gods and her many dramatic outbursts: 'At Arnstein's, Méjean was asked, if he was not ashamed to be a Frenchman [...] Méjean replied, quite the opposite...[at which point] Mrs. Arnstein became irate and eventually worked herself up into a terrible state'.⁴⁸

Arnstein's salon was a meeting point for Prussian officials and the *Christbaumfest* was no exception.⁴⁹ Yet, the congress also took place during a crucial phase for Jewish emancipation with many German states threatening to abolish the expanded rights conferred to Jews under Napoleonic occupation.⁵⁰ Incendiary pamphlets, such as the *Berliner Abendsblätter*, published by Arnstein's baptised brother Edward Julius, promoted the image of a sectarian Christianised Prussia.⁵¹ A new anti-Jewish society, *die Christlich-deutsch Tischgesellschaft* further inflamed this exclusionary antisemitic movement.⁵² The *Christbaumfest* was for Arnstein a rebuke against the so-called 'impossibility of Jewish patriotism,' an embrace of the

⁴⁶ Glenda Sluga, 'Sexual congress: women, intimacy and international politics in Vienna 1814–1815' in *History Today* 64, 9 (2014), p. 35.

⁴⁷ Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress*, p. 86; Hagemann, 'Female Patriots,' pp 2, 10.

⁴⁸ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 167.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 266; Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress*, p. 438.

⁵⁰ Fournier, *Die Geheimpolizei auf dem Wiener Kongress*, p. 201.

⁵¹ Jarrett, *The congress of Vienna and its legacy*, p. 141.

⁵² Hertz, *Jewish high society*, pp 273, 274, 277.

feminine-identified *Kulturnation*, and an act of profound self-realisation for an uncompromising *Prussienne*.⁵³

The ultimate contradiction of Jewish belief and Christian practice underlies the curiosity of the *Christbaumfest* and this investigation. Yet, to presuppose the existence of such a distinct frontier speaks to an anachronistic perspective, oblivious to the fluidity and transformation that marked the European religious landscapes during this period. As previously discussed, the modern Christmas did not constitute a fixed or universal model. Reform Protestantism emphasised a ‘personal god’ and the individual’s relationship therewith.⁵⁴ Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher imagined these intimate links as forged within bourgeois domestic spaces under the auspices of a spiritual ‘eternal feminine’.⁵⁵ It was under these *Bildung*-emphasising influences that the Christmas tree gained traction, being rejected by Catholics for many decades.⁵⁶ Similar phenomena occurred with other Protestant artworks. As Naimark-Goldberg notes, church music was lauded for its edifying rather than religious significance.⁵⁷ Such secularisation enabled Arnstein’s sister and Berlin salonnière, Sara Levy, to perform Christian choral compositions in cathedrals without religious qualms.⁵⁸ ‘Christian’ modes of dress were likewise adopted by Berlin Jews during Arnstein’s lifetime.⁵⁹ In 1804, Arnstein was painted, dressed in a neoclassical chemise with an Indian

⁵³ Ibid., p. 273.

⁵⁴ Hagemann, ‘Female patriots,’ p. 398. M. A. Meyer, *Response to modernity: a history of the reform movement in Judaism* (Detroit, 1988), p. 59. Judith Marie Dror, *Reforming religions: the politics of the Protestant reformation and Reform Judaism* (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2000), p. 269.

⁵⁵ Meyer, *Response to modernity*, p. 17; Chaya Naor and Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment* (Philadelphia, 2011) p. 303.

⁵⁶ Naor and Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 303; Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, pp 18-21.

⁵⁷ Brunner and Smith, *Inventing the Christmas tree*, pp. 31, 35, 72; Perry, *Christmas in Germany*, p. 16; Perry, *The private life of the nation*, p. 31.

⁵⁸ Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, ‘Remaining within the fold: The cultural and social world of Sara Levy’ in Rebecca Cypess and Nancy Sinkoff (eds.), *Sara Levy’s world: gender, Judaism, and the Bach tradition in Enlightenment Berlin* (New York, 2018), p. 55. B. M. Baader, *Inventing bourgeois Judaism: Jewish culture, gender, and religion in Germany, 1800-1870* (PhD Thesis, Indiana University, 2002) p. 72.

⁵⁹ Naimark-Goldberg, ‘Remaining within the Fold,’ pp 54-56.

Kashmir shawl resting at her side.⁶⁰ Her hair is uncovered (contrary to custom) and carefully styled into a short up-do *à la Titus* (fig. 4).⁶¹

As enlightened and acculturated ideas and fashions moved through Berlin Jewry, the seeds of the Jewish Reform movement began to take root, with one of their earliest practitioners being David Friedländer, Arnstein's brother-in-law.⁶² Reformed circles criticised the customs and beliefs that 'alienated' Jews from their Christian counterparts and encouraged a one-sided exchange of practices and values in the service of both the 'essence of Judaism' and the 'true spirit of Protestantism'.⁶³ The personal and sentiment-based nature of reformed spirituality not only reduced the metaphysical distance between Jews and God, but between Jewish and Protestant belief.⁶⁴



Figure 4: Portrait of Franziska Arnstein, née Itzig (1804) by Vincenz Georg Klininger.

⁶⁰ S. M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish community: Enlightenment, family and crisis 1770-1830* (Oxford, 2019) pp. 45, 53; Shapira, 'Kunst und Repräsentation,' p. 13.

⁶¹ It was typical for traditional Jewish women to cover their hair during this period with scarfs or wigs; the fact that Arnstein did not was a conscious lifestyle choice. C. P. Tortora and S. B. Marcketti, *Survey of historic costuming* (London and New York, 2015) pp 309, 311, 313.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 316.

⁶³ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 74.

⁶⁴ Naor and Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, pp. 296, 303, 319.

This is reflected in Arnstein's writings, where she endorses the equality of religions advocated in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1783).⁶⁵ The values of reform Judaism, *Bildung*, edification, decorum, are likewise reflected in the polite culture of Arnstein's salon.⁶⁶ Nascent Reform discourses underlaid her approach to both Jewish and Christian tradition, with the *Christbaumfest* serving not as a mere totem of acculturation, but a genuine act of religious practice, that situates *glückseligkeit* (spiritual happiness) not in uniquely Jewish commandments (*halakah*) but a universal love of humanity, as Arnstein herself wrote: 'If you honour not God in man / how will you honour him in the temple?'.⁶⁷

The case of Fanny von Arnstein transcends many pervasive narratives of European cultural history. Instead of orientating itself around standard calibrators of modernity and tradition, the historical context and idiosyncrasies of Arnstein's existence point to the complex entanglements and negotiations of 'selfhood' as a German-Jewish woman on the bridge of an epoch. Leaving a legacy of few letters, she has been regarded as the least intellectual, and hence least important, of Central Europe's Jewish *Salondamen*. Microhistory, however, opens new possibilities for the interpretation of Arnstein's identity and the assumptions and understandings of 'self', available and accessible to her. August Fournier's *Geheimpolizei auf der Wiener Kongress: eine auswahl aus ihren papieren* (1913) in particular offers unrivalled insight into the otherwise forgotten details of her salon and personage. While Germanic cultural studies have typically cast the modern Christmas as a ritual of bourgeois Christian identity creation alone, Arnstein's case shows the extreme specificity and diversity in which such symbolism could be employed, developing a more nuanced dialogue surrounding the *taufepidemie* (baptism epidemic) among Berlin and Viennese

⁶⁵ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. xii.

⁶⁶ Baader, *Inventing bourgeois Judaism*, p. 74.

⁶⁷ Spiel, *Daughter of the Enlightenment*, p. 74.

Jews of the early nineteenth century.⁶⁸ Such occasions did not interpret conversion or otherwise as the rejection or acceptance of social hinderance, but as a personal response to an ever-expanding circle of religious, ideological, and moral approaches. The *Christbaumfest* is not a testament of Arnstein's susceptibility to contemporary attitudes and prejudices, but evidence of her ability to fashion belonging in a Europe, dominated by the swinging pendulums of ambition, identity, and change.

⁶⁸ Many Jewish women active in salon sub-culture, such as Henriette Herz, Rahel Levin Varhagen, and Dorothea Mendelsohn Schlegel converted to Christianity, spurred by a deep commitment to the Romantic literary movement. See Deborah Hertz, *Jewish high society in old regime Berlin* (New Haven, 1988).

Mountshannon County Clare: an eighteenth-century linen village 1738–

1838

Noel Murphy

The foundation of the village of Mountshannon in east Co. Clare in the mid-eighteenth century, and its development as a linen centre, were driven by powerful political, religious, social and economic forces at both national and local level. The foundation and development of Mountshannon Mountshannon serves to illustrate trends and structures in the eighteenth-century society that impacted on history both locally and nationally for centuries to follow. Mountshannon as a village did not grow organically through the interaction of people with the landscape. It was designed and constructed, in both the social and material senses, as part of the landowner’s desire for improvement and more effective use of land, people and resources.



Figure 1: Mountshannon village in 1839 showing the original long narrow plots at the back of each house with a frontage on the main street. *Ordnance Survey Historic 6"*, copyright Government of Ireland.

The project was in line with a countrywide government-policy initiative designed to

further the joint aims of economic development and promotion of the Protestant religion in Ireland.

In the eighteenth century the civil parish of Iniscealtra, in which Mountshannon is located, was divided between Co. Galway (10,599 acres) and Co. Clare (684 acres).¹ From the early years of the eighteenth century the parish was owned by the Daly family of Dunsandle, Co. Galway. The Dunsandle estate comprised over 30,000 acres.² James Daly of Dunsandle (c. 1716–1768) was a member of the Irish House of Commons for Athenry between 1741 and 1768.³ In April 1738 the Limerick linen draper, Alexander Woods, rented the parish of Iniscealtra from James Daly and his sister-in-law Catherine, who held one third of the parish in her own right.⁴ In this transaction we see an instance of ‘... the emergence of a forceful class of entrepreneurial middlemen’⁵ from a commercial rather than landowning background. Thus, the linen enterprise, and the foundation of the village to support it, moved from the hands of the landlord to those of a commercial developer. This differs from the development of some linen villages at the time such as nearby Monivea, where the resident landlord, Robert French, took a direct, personal interest in the enterprise and invested his own capital in the project.⁶

The landlord’s influence on the Mountshannon enterprise was implemented mainly through the terms of the lease to Woods. The lease, signed on 11 April 1738, provided for a nominal rent for the first four years on condition that fifty houses be built to attract ‘tradesmen and manufacturers’.⁷ Each of these ‘good Protestant Freeholders’⁸ was to have a holding valued at forty shillings, thus entitling them to a vote in parliamentary elections. The lease also specified the establishment of a Charter School, Market House,

¹ *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* (Dublin, 1846).

² NUI Galway, *Irish Landed Estates Database*, <http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/estate-show.jsp?id=876> (4 Apr. 2018)

³ H. Hansard, *Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. Members of Parliament: Return to two orders of the honorable The House of Commons, Dated 4 May 1876 And 9 March 1877* (London, 1878).

⁴ Copy of indenture, Denis St. George Baron Dunsandle to Philip Reade and Mary Tandy, 24 March 1857 (private collection).

⁵ David Dickson, *New foundations: Ireland, 1660-1800* (Dublin, 2000), p. 140.

⁶ Denis A. Cronin, *A Galway gentleman in the age of improvement* (Maynooth, 1995), p. 29.

⁷ Dunsandle to Reade and Tandy, p.2.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.3.

and Presbyterian Meeting House. These arrangements illustrate the various strata in eighteenth-century Irish society and their relative power and position.

Dunsandle, as landlord and member of the ascendancy and the Established Church of Ireland at the top of Irish society, rented a peripheral parish of relatively poor land from his vast estate to a middleman. The middleman, Woods, was contractually obliged to recruit Protestants to populate the village and develop both agriculture and the proto-industrial enterprise of linen production. Families moved to the new village of Mountshannon to become ‘... a colony of Protestants formed into a village ...’⁹, to be given decent houses and small but adequate land holdings. It was expected that, by dint of their characteristic work ethic and perseverance, the village would become an example of hard work leading to prosperity. Gregory describes an attitude to work whereby ‘Man not only served God in his work but by his work’.¹⁰ Protestant workers were viewed as much more diligent, trustworthy, and loyal than their ‘Papist’ counterparts, who were perceived as slovenly, drunken, and unreliable as subjects of the crown due to their devotion to Rome.¹¹ As a result, many Anglo-Irish landlords held the view that Catholics were of little use in the linen manufacture. The only means of exploiting the potential of the Catholic majority was to initiate a system of educational institutions to convert their children to Protestantism and to instil a Protestant work ethic, through re-education in the Charter Schools.¹²

Since linen was to be the dominant industry in Mountshannon, the project attracted support from the Linen Board which had been established in the Linen Office in Dublin Castle in 1711 to promote the countrywide development of the industry. This was to be achieved through grants of money and equipment, and by presenting prizes for innovation. In its execution of this brief the Board was not beyond

⁹ Conrad Gill, *The rise of the Irish linen industry* (Oxford, 1925), pp 84-5.

¹⁰ Dwight T. Gregory, ‘The Protestant work ethic today’ in *The Asbury Seminarian* (1971), pp. 20-39.

¹¹ J. Hansard., *A sermon preached at Christ-Church, Dublin, on the 10th Day of May, 1752: before the Incorporated Society, for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland. By William, Lord Bishop of Derry. ... with a continuation of the society's proceedings, to the twenty-fifth of March* (Dublin, 1752).

¹² *Scot's Magazine*, 19 March 1766.

criticism for administrative inefficiency, patronage and profligate disbursement of its generous finances.¹³ The Board's own inspector, Robert Stephenson, complained in 1757, of how the Board had disbursed

... through the kingdom half a million, yet ... there was not any person sent to inquire into the titles of the multitudes of claimants: some for spinning schools and flax shops never opened; others for bleach yards or flax mills in ruins or never built; ... and multitudes for utensils never made or delivered.¹⁴

Developers like Alexander Woods faced significant challenges. Woods would stand to forfeit £1,000 for failure to fulfil Dunsandle's expectations.¹⁵ Woods continued for some years to post advertisements in newspapers such as *Pue's Occurrences*, with a view to attracting the skilled artisans he needed.¹⁶ He clearly met with some success in this endeavour, for his work was recognised well beyond the local area. The *British Evening Post* described Woods as '... the first introducer of the linen manufacture in that part of the kingdom'.¹⁷ Thus was established the linen village of Mountshannon with the aim of participating in the boom in that industry and promoting the Protestant interest.¹⁸

A big boost came for Woods in 1745 in the form of a major contract between him and the Linen Board 'to supply a great quantity of yards of coarse linen ... to be exported... for the use of his majesties plantations abroad'.¹⁹ The type of linen to be produced in Mountshannon, and other such enterprises outside Ulster, was the so-called 'brown linen' described by the Linen Board as 'fit for the use of servants and negroes, in the British colonies and plantations.'²⁰ Woods himself appears to have prospered to the point of processing 'yarn brought from the lower parts of Galway', presumably including Mountshannon,

¹³ Dickson, *New foundations*, p. 85

¹⁴ Robert Stephenson *Inquiry into the state and progress of the linen manufacture of Ireland, 1757* cited in Gill, *The rise of the Irish linen industry*, p. 82.

¹⁵ Dunsandle to Reade and Tandy, p.4.

¹⁶ *Pue's Occurrences*, 4 April 1747.

¹⁷ *St James Chronicle or British Evening Post*, 30 January 1766.

¹⁸ Desmond Keenan, *Eighteenth century Ireland 1703 – 1800: society and history* (Dublin, 2014).

¹⁹ Gerard Madden, *Mountshannon portraits* (Mountshannon, 2012), p. 1.

²⁰ House of Commons, *Reports from Committees of the House of Commons Reprinted by Order of the House, Miscellaneous Subjects 1738-1765, Vol. 2* (London, 1803), p. 315.

at his ‘small Bleach-Yard’ in Meelick.²¹ Woods was living in Limerick city in 1741 in a ‘commodious house’, though by then that house was available for rent, which suggests that he had vacated it.²² By February 1762 Alexander Woods had established a shop in Dame St. in Dublin,²³ and in the following year he moved the business to the corner of Parliament St. and Essex St.²⁴ The expansion of the linen industry had been encouraged by Linen Board promotion, and was further boosted by a combination of reduced supply from the continent due to British protectionist tariffs, increased imperial demand, and the growing military.²⁵

All sources agree that the growing and processing of flax was an onerous and highly labour-intensive activity, especially before the onset of mechanisation. A system combining small landholdings with flax growing and linen weaving was seen as ideal for Mountshannon, as for many other villages in Ireland, since much activity in linen production was done in the winter months when farm work was minimal, and the extra cash from the linen sales might supplement income.²⁶ Flax grows well in most soils and the limestone soil of the ground of the shore of Lough Derg was considered suitable. The crop is nutrient-hungry, and soil needs to be replenished with great quantities of manure. In Mountshannon this was provided by a cess pit for toilet waste from the village, as well as marl, which is a rich layer of sediment found in great quantities in Lough Derg.²⁷

²¹ Robert Stephenson, *The reports and observations of Robert Stephenson made to the right honourable the trustees of the linen manufacture for the years 1760 and 1761* (Dublin, 1762), p. 49.

²² *Munster Journal*, 11 August 1741: ‘To be set, immediately by John Taverner or Thomas Alley for any term of years the commodious house wherein Mr. Alexander Wood, linen draper now lives, ...’

²³ *Dublin Courier*, 1 Feb. 1762.

²⁴ *Dublin Courier*, 29 Aug. 1763.

²⁵ Dickson, *New foundations*, p. 139.

²⁶ Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson, *A history of Irish farming 1750 – 1950* (Dublin, 2009), p. 169. See also W.H. Crawford, *The impact of the domestic linen industry in Ulster* (Belfast, 1988), p. 87.

²⁷ Gerard Madden, *For God or king: the history of Mountshannon, Co. Clare, 1742–1992* (Tuamgraney, 1993), p. 55.



Figure 3: 'Weaver's Shed' Mountshannon. Photo: N. Murphy

Before sowing, soil was ploughed several times, preferably in autumn to let winter frosts reduce soil pests. Seed was sown in April and laborious hand weeding, performed by women and children on hands and knees, was necessary until the plants reached six to eight inches in height. Mature plants were pulled up by hand and seeds were removed by pulling bunches of plants through a comb in a process termed 'rippling'. The seed was saved for linseed oil or animal feed.²⁸ The next stage was steeping the sheaves of flax in a retting pond for approximately fourteen days.²⁹ This softened the fibres and permitted their separation from the woody part of the stem.³⁰ Madden tells us that such a pond existed in Cloonamirran townland until the 1980s.³¹ There are a number of ponds in a likely area near the ruins of the bleach mill in the townland of Cloonamirren. The Flaggy River, which enters Lough Derg just north of Mountshannon

²⁸ David Shore, *From flax to linen* (<https://cplhs.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/from-flax-to-linen.pdf>) (21 Apr. 2018).

²⁹ Shore, *From flax to linen*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Madden, *For God or king*, p. 55.

has a widened pool known locally as the ‘flax hole’, and a field near the former scutch mill (Bugler’s Mill) at Bow River is also known as the ‘flax hole’. When removed from the pond the plants were dried in the open air and stacked to await the next stages of processing. These are ‘breaking’, beating the plants with wooden mallets, and ‘scutching’ which involves beating the plants against a board. These actions separated the fibres from the woody stems and were performed manually by women.³² Madden tells us this was one of the dirtiest parts of the whole process and ‘was usually done in an outhouse’.³³ A number of these outhouses survive at the rear of dwellings in the village to the present day. They are known locally as ‘weavers’ sheds’. A good example is to be found at the rear of the building known sometimes as ‘Ivy House’, currently the property of the Liddane family (Fig. 3). In this building we see good quality stonework, a brick chimney and evidence of a slated roof (later replaced by asbestos sheeting). With a supply of free turf from nearby bogs in Bohatch or Glenwanish townlands, this accommodation would be very suitable for the winter work of weaving. As time went on mills were built to mechanise aspects of the process. Three scutch mills are mentioned by Madden in the local area: at Cregg, in the village at the back of Bouchier’s house and Bugler’s Mill on the Bow River.³⁴ The latter two mills were converted for corn milling during the nineteenth century after the collapse of the linen industry.³⁵

Further stages in the linen production process of crimping and hackling separate the fibres into hanks of smooth long strings like ‘flaxen hair’ leaving the long fibres to be used for spinning into yarn by twisting the fibres together and winding the resultant yarn onto a bobbin. This process used a foot-pedal-powered spinning wheel supplied by the Linen Board. The weavers were the next to become involved in the process. Weavers were highly valued in the eighteenth century for their skills and their essential contribution to the developing linen industry and the economy. The weavers were the skilled Protestant artisans for whom

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, p. 56.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Alexander Woods was searching in his advertisement in *Pue's Occurrences* in 1747, offering very favourable terms, including free or subsidised looms and spinning wheels, good quality housing and leases forever, at very favourable rates, on land holdings between one acre and 100 acres.³⁶ The houses to be provided for the weavers were substantial for their time and 'Winty's Cottage' on the main street of Mountshannon is a very fine example (Fig. 4).



Figure 4: 'Winty's Cottage' Photo: N. Murphy

Now the property of the Lyons family, the cottage contains an original hearth and some related ironwork from the period. The building illustrates the dimensions specified in the lease between the Dalys and Woods and is a very important piece of the industrial heritage of the village. The weavers of the mid-eighteenth century in Mountshannon, as everywhere else in Ireland, worked on a hand loom. This was a wooden appliance on which the threads of the cloth were set up, initially vertically (the warp) and then the horizontal threads of yarn (the weft) were passed back and forth across the warp by hand, using a wooden holder called a shuttle.³⁷ The manual threading and re-threading of the weft strands was time-consuming, and weaving involved a high degree of concentration and skill. The addition of the flying shuttle to looms

³⁶ *Pue's Occurrences*, 4 Apr. 1747 cited in Madden, *For God or king*, p. 51.

³⁷ Weaving on Mount Vernon's eighteenth-century loom (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnbUF0wgIfw>) (21 Apr 2018).

meant that the weaver simply had to pull a cord to pass the weft strands over and back.³⁸ This was reputed to increase production speed by one third.³⁹ The flying shuttle is recorded as having come to Ireland from England (where it had been developed for the cotton industry) and being used for the first time in Ballymena, Co. Antrim around 1778.⁴⁰ It seems likely that the weaving in Mountshannon for the most part was performed on the traditional hand loom. Next, the cloth was bleached by boiling it in water containing potash and other chemicals. The cloth was then spread on a bleach green, an area of grass giving exposure to the sun for long periods. From 1728 bleach mills and washing mills began to be used in the north of Ireland. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of Mountshannon, surveyed in 1839, shows a 'Bleach Mill (in ruins)' in Cloonamirran townland near the area reputed to contain retting ponds.⁴¹ Such a mill would have most likely been water-driven and a stream runs by the location. A small part of the mill remains and has been marked with a plaque and preserved by the owner. The surrounding pasture is gently sloping and south facing and is typical of illustrations of bleach greens from the eighteenth century, such as the William Hincks print of a bleach green in Co. Down, in 1791.⁴²

Once the processing had been completed the product was offered for sale. The building of a Market House had been provided for in the deed establishing the village in 1738, and Figure 5 shows the Market House as it is today.

³⁸ Weaving with a flying shuttle, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7fWH2jzkrQ> (21 Apr. 2018).

³⁹ Crawford, *The impact of the domestic linen industry in Ulster*, p.129.

⁴⁰ *Belfast News-Letter*, 1 Sept. 1778.

⁴¹ Ordnance Survey Historic 6" (<http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/maps/#>) (22 Apr. 2018).

⁴² William Hincks, *Perspective view of bleach green taken in the county of Downe* (London, 1791).



Figure 5: The Market House, Mountshannon Photo: N. Murphy

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage dates the building at c.1740.⁴³ The arches have been blocked up but initially they would have provided an open arcade where buyers could park their carts out of the rain while conducting their purchasing standing on wooden forms outside the building.

The charter schools movement, under the auspices of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Erecting and Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, began with the official ‘launch’ in February 1733 in Dublin Castle in the presence of many of the country’s political and ecclesiastical elite.⁴⁴ The primary aim of the Incorporated Society was the conversion of Roman Catholic children to Protestantism. This was seen as necessary because many parts of the country were inhabited exclusively by Catholics ‘... who are kept by their clergy in great ignorance of the true religion and bred up in great disaffection to the government.’⁴⁵

⁴³ ‘Mountshannon market house’, National Built Heritage Service, <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/niah/search.jsp?type=record&county=CL®no=20300503> (accessed 22 Apr. 2018).

⁴⁴ J. Hansard, *A brief account of the proceedings of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Erecting and Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland* (Dublin, 1735).

⁴⁵ J. Hansard., *A sermon preached at Christ-Church, Dublin, on the 10th Day of May 1752: before the Incorporated Society, for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland. By William, Lord Bishop of Derry. ... with a continuation of the Society's proceedings, to the twenty-fifth of March* (Dublin, 1752), p.21.

The Incorporated Society attracted significant funding. By 1824, when the Westminster Parliament investigated the finances of the Society, it had received in excess of half a million pounds of public money. The Society also boasted some very high-profile private benefactors both in Ireland and England.⁴⁶ The Linen Board and the Incorporated Society had developed a special relationship whereby the Linen Board consistently supplied charter schools with ‘... flax seed, spinning wheels, hackles and looms’.⁴⁷ The connection was mutually beneficial since the schools aimed to teach the skills of linen work, thereby providing a viable opportunity for future employment. Similar concurrences of linen development and charter schools occurred in the nearby market towns of Eyrecourt, Loughrea and Monivea, all in Co. Galway.⁴⁸ The Monivea development included a regional ‘nursery’ where children were initially placed before being removed to schools distant from their home areas. This practice of ‘transplantation’ was one of the reasons why the charter schools became ‘objects of raging detestation to the people’ as described by Judge Gerald Fitzgibbon in a letter to the House of Commons in 1868.⁴⁹

The Mountshannon charter school was provided for in the 1738 lease which underpinned the founding of the village. Alexander Woods was required to set aside twenty acres for the school which was to be established by James Daly.⁵⁰ Such land holdings attached to the schools was the norm, allowing them to grow crops and train the children in the skills of agriculture and the cultivation and processing of flax.⁵¹ Physical remains of the school in modern Mountshannon have proved difficult to identify with certainty, so the evidence of its existence is documentary. James Daly announced his intention to develop a Charter School as part of the Mountshannon project at a meeting of the Incorporated Society in December of

⁴⁶ Kenneth Milne, ‘Irish charter schools’ in *The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, viii, no. 1 (1974), pp 3-29.

⁴⁷ J. Hansard, *A brief account of the proceedings of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Erecting and Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1742), p. 43.

⁴⁸ Cronin, *A Galway gentleman in the age of improvement* (Maynooth, 1995).

⁴⁹ Helena Kelleher Kahn, ‘“Objects of raging detestation”: the charter schools’ in *History Ireland*, xix, No. 2 (March/April 2011), pp 24-27.

⁵⁰ Dunsandle to Reade and Tandy, p. 4.

⁵¹ Kenneth Milne, *The Irish charter schools, 1730 – 1830* (Dublin, 1997).

1737.⁵² The school was built in 1748 to accommodate ten children, some nine years after it was first announced.⁵³ Despite receipt of direct funding from England by way of a donation of £100 paid from the London branch of the Incorporated Society via the Archbishop of Dublin directly to the new charter school in Inishcaltra,⁵⁴ the school only lasted for a little over three years. This might not have been a great loss to community relations in the area, considering the ill feeling these schools sometimes aroused. The charter schools movement has been described as ‘a social experiment that did more than anything else to poison Catholic-Protestant relations in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’.⁵⁵ Following his preaching visits to Ireland in 1773 and 1785, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, ‘complained to the Incorporated Society about the grossly neglected state of the children’.⁵⁶ In 1749 it had been considered necessary to introduce legislation to punish masters who ‘had carnal knowledge’ of female pupils.⁵⁷ In 1825, the Church of Ireland newspaper the *Christian Examiner* described the principles on which the schools were based as ‘erroneous in theory and defective in practice’.⁵⁸

Surnames of some of the early linen workers have found their way into the local placenames around Mountshannon. One of the earliest families to arrive in the area in connection with the linen enterprise were the Logans. Madden records the arrival of Matthew Logan as a linen weaver and farmer, who was a forty-shilling freeholder in the village and had a vote in the parliamentary election of 1768.⁵⁹ A bridge in the village near the old schoolhouse is known as Logan’s Bridge. Members of the Winter family were

⁵² *Dublin Newsletter*, 10 Dec. 1737.

⁵³ Hansard, J. *A brief account of the proceedings of the Incorporated Society in Dublin for Erecting and Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland* (Dublin, 1750); Irish Architectural Archive, *Dictionary of Irish architects, 1720-1940*, Co. Galway, Mountshannon Charter School, Architect unknown. <https://www.dia.ie/works/view/56481> (16 May 2020).

⁵⁴ Incorporated Society in Dublin for Promoting English Protestant Schools in Ireland, Incorporated Society: correspondence, Manuscripts & Archives Research Library, Trinity College Dublin Item No.: IE TCD MS11413/1.

⁵⁵ Helena Kelleher Kahn, ‘Objects of raging detestation: the charter schools’ in *History Ireland*, xix, No. 2 (March/April 2011), pp 24-7 [p. 24].

⁵⁶ Kelleher Kahn, ‘Objects of raging detestation’, p. 26.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Milne, *The Irish charter schools*, p. 301.

⁵⁹ Madden, *For God or king*, p. 189.

weavers and spinners. The house known as Winty's (Fig. 4) was the home of the Winter family.⁶⁰ There is evidence of a John Bloxham leasing land at the back of St Caimin's Church of Ireland around the end of the eighteenth century.⁶¹ A later member of this family was one of four Protestant men attacked and beaten on their way home to Mountshannon from a fair in Woodford, Co. Galway.⁶² At the lakeshore near Mountshannon at Ryne Point, is a wooded area which is named on the Land Registry map as 'Gorrybloxham'.⁶³ It seems likely this piece of land was at one point owned by a member of the Bloxham family and became known locally as 'Garraí Bloxham' or Bloxham's garden or plot.

Dating the end of the linen enterprise in the village is of necessity, somewhat vague. A visitor to Ireland in the 1790s, Le Chevalier DeLatocnaye, mentions 'Walking through the ruined town of Mount Shannon ...'⁶⁴ suggesting that by 1796-7 Mountshannon had hit a low point in its development. The English clergyman, Rev. James Hall, is more informative in 1813:

At Mount Shannon, where was once a linen-factory, the inhabitants are all Presbyterians. The manufactory was, however, some time ago, given up, and the village is going to ruins; he who set it going, being dead, and the property squandered by his son and heir.⁶⁵

'... [H]e who set it going' was Alexander Woods whose death was reported in the *British Evening Post* of 30 January 1766 as having occurred '... a few days ago at Dublin'.⁶⁶ In the same publication that announced his death we hear the tolling of the death knell for his linen enterprise, with disquieting reports from the largest of the British plantations, the American colonies. The paper speaks of '... The present alarming situation of affairs in America ...' and '... the melancholy train of distress, which must spring from a rebellion in that part of the world.'⁶⁷ Eventually the American War began in 1775 and brought an

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

⁶¹ Madden, *For God or king*, p. 53.

⁶² *Dublin Evening Post*, 15 July 1824.

⁶³ Historic 25'' map, <https://osi.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=bc56a1cf08844a2aa2609aa92e89497e> (accessed 25 April 2024).

⁶⁴ Jacques Louis de Bougrenet and Chevalier de Latocnaye, *A Frenchman's walk through Ireland 1796-7* (Dublin, 1984).

⁶⁵ Rev. James Hall, *Tour through Ireland* (2 vols., London 1813), i, p. 315.

⁶⁶ *St James Chronicle or British Evening Post*, 30 January 1766.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

embargo on the linen trade to America. This embargo, combined with a general depression of the economy due to a severe drop in the price of farm produce and especially linen,⁶⁸ must have made for very difficult times in Mountshannon. Even in 1773 there was a significant decrease in the linen trade in the southern part of Ireland, where coarser, brown linen was the main product. The fall in demand at that time was mainly in these lesser quality cloths and, according to Gill, the linen industry in the south of Ireland never fully recovered from what he describes as ‘the crisis of 1773’.⁶⁹ He concludes that in most areas in the south of Ireland, flax growing, and weaving had ceased to be significant economic activities by the end of the eighteenth century. This would appear to be particularly true in the case of Mountshannon since the Linen Board’s list of flax growers for Co. Galway for 1796 does not list one grower in Mountshannon.⁷⁰ Combined with the observation by Le Chevalier, we can, with relative confidence, say that by 1797 the Mountshannon linen industry had ceased.

Challenges in the wider economy had combined with financial difficulties within the Woods family to bring about the end of Mountshannon’s linen production. Within months of Alexander Woods’ death, his son and heir Alexander Woods Jnr. mortgaged two thirds of the parish of Iniscealtra to George Tandy for the sum of £3,000.⁷¹ From January of 1766 for several months, Alexander Jnr. had been placing ads in the *Dublin Courier* stating that he intended to quit the retail business at Parliament St. ‘on account of an unforeseen alteration that lately happened in his family’ (probably the death of his father) and planned to sell ‘his entire stock in trade’⁷² Disputes about inheritance followed the death of Alexander Jnr. in 1785, leaving the Woods family with large debt problems by 1790. In 1792, they handed over their remaining

⁶⁸ Dickson, *New foundations*, p. 163.

⁶⁹ Gill, *The rise of the Irish linen industry*, p. 125.

⁷⁰ ‘Flax growers of Ireland, 1796 - County Galway’ (<http://www.failteromhat.com/flax/galway.php>) (Accessed 3 May 2018). Mountshannon was in Co. Galway until the 1898-99 Local Government Act.

⁷¹ Madden, *Mountshannon portraits*, foreword, p. ii.

⁷² *Dublin Courier*, 31 Jan. 1766.

interest in the parish to George Tandy and William Francis Reade, neither of whom appears to have had any connection with the linen industry.⁷³

The consequences of these events for the Protestant weavers and their families were significant. A ‘farmer-weaver’, as Gill describes them, might be working a holding of eight acres.⁷⁴ In Monivea for example, the weaver James Lewis signed a lease in 1753 for a plot for his house of 300 ft by 50 ft, and an area of eight acres outside the village.⁷⁵ Such a holding was capable of producing a good living if it was based on flax growing and some self-sufficient farming, but without the income from the flax it was simply uneconomic.⁷⁶ After the collapse of the linen industry locally, Mountshannon farmer-weavers either looked for alternative employment to supplement their income or, in many cases, emigrated. Nor were economic considerations the only pressure on the Protestant population in and around Mountshannon.

During the early nineteenth century, relations between the Catholic and Protestant neighbours were at times strained, sometimes erupting into violence.⁷⁷ Agrarian unrest had been growing in southeast Galway, having spread from Roscommon. The barony of Leitrim, in which Inishcaltra and Clonrush lie, was proclaimed a disturbed area under the Peace Preservation Act on 8 February 1820.⁷⁸ In 1819, the local Protestant Minister, James Martin, wrote to the Earl of Bathurst (President of the Board of Trade 1807-12) on behalf of ‘... ten families of Protestant loyalists’ from the parish seeking financial assistance for them to emigrate to Canada.⁷⁹ Many Protestant families who wished to emigrate were so impoverished that they found themselves unable to do so when the government refused to assist them.⁸⁰ Instances of violence against Mountshannon Protestants prompted Major George Warburton, Inspector General of Police for

⁷³ Madden, *Mountshannon Portraits*, foreword.

⁷⁴ Gill, *The rise of the Irish linen industry*, p. 49.

⁷⁵ Cronin, *A Galway gentleman*, p. 34.

⁷⁶ Dickson, *New foundations*, p. 141.

⁷⁷ Madden, *For God or King*, pp. 77-82.

⁷⁸ 54 George III, c.131; David Ryan, ‘Ribbonism and agrarian violence in County Galway, 1819-1820’ in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, lii (2000), pp 120-34.

⁷⁹ Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish migrants in the Canadas: a new approach* (Montreal, 2004), p. 87.

⁸⁰ Elliott, *Irish migrants in the Canadas*.

Connaught based at Castlegar, Co. Roscommon, to observe in 1828 that ‘as there is a small Protestant colony in Mountshannon, there has always been more of party mixed up with these disturbances than in any other part of that district’.⁸¹

Even after Catholic Emancipation in 1829, sectarian division remained alive in the parishes of Inishcaltra and Clonrush. Previous friction between the parishes, centring on claims to an area of mountain, had developed a further layer of division based on religion. The attempt to remove the fair from Mountshannon to Gweeneeny near Whitegate caused upset for Mountshannon residents and added to the rivalry. In August 1830, seventy-three inhabitants of Mountshannon requested an investigation into the removal of their fair from Mountshannon to Gweeneeny near Whitegate.⁸² The issue was still troubling the magistrates, Huleatt and Reade, who addressed a letter from Mountshannon Petty Sessions to Lord Haddington at Dublin Castle in March 1835. Their letter stated that the Mountshannon fair had been running for a hundred years, but now another one had been set up in opposition to it on the same day only a few miles distant. The magistrates stated that Mountshannon was inhabited mainly by very poor Protestants and was surrounded by an exclusively Catholic population, ‘so hostile’ that they have set up the new Gweeneeny fair ‘for the sole purpose of doing injury to a few Protestants’.⁸³ The magistrates’ letter of 1835 stated that many of the area’s Protestants had emigrated as a consequence of the hostility they were encountering around them.⁸⁴ In May 1835 in a reply from Dublin Castle the request for military protection was refused on the grounds that too many troops were needed for duty overseas.⁸⁵ This must have left the Protestant residents feeling exposed. The phrase used by Major Warburton to describe the inhabitants of the village as ‘a small Protestant colony at Mountshannon’ gives a sense of the

⁸¹ Major George Warburton to Francis Levison Gower, 27 Oct. 1828 (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/708/4).

⁸² Memorial signed by seventy-three inhabitants of Mountshannon, County Galway, asking for an investigation into the move of their fair to the lands of John Burke, magistrate at [Gunnerny], 21 Aug. 1830 (NAI CSO/RP/1830/1694).

⁸³ Hugh B. Huleatt and Philip Reade to Lord Haddington, Dublin Castle, 10 March 1835 (NAI CSO/RP/1835/1477).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

precariousness of what remained of the eighteenth-century social experiment that the government in Dublin could no longer see its way to support by a military presence.⁸⁶

The establishment of the village of Mountshannon exemplified eighteenth century optimism for the future of linen industry and the Protestant interest. The new entrepreneur class represented by the village founder, Alexander Woods, worked in conjunction with the landowner, the Linen Board, and the Incorporated Society. Token rental payments at the beginning of the lease, combined with generous treatment by the Linen Board and a generally benign attitude on the part of government, must have appeared propitious to a businessman such as Woods, suggesting significant profit potential. The exploitation of the work ethic of the Protestant workers and their families provided the best available guarantee of diligence in a gruelling industry. Exploitation of ‘Papist’ children, under the pretext of converting them to Protestantism in the Charter School, added further opportunities for reward. But, ultimately, the social policies on which Mountshannon was built made for friction and sectarian distrust. This contributed to tensions in Mountshannon during the early nineteenth century, adding to the distress of the linen workers and their families, even at a time when their industry and way of life had collapsed around them. Nevertheless, despite the emigration, evidence of these hardworking people can still be seen throughout the fabric and topography of the village, and echoes of their names can be heard in the placenames.

⁸⁶ Major George Warburton to Francis Leveson Gower 27 October 1828 (NAI, CSO/RP/OR/1828/708/4).

‘To the winds of Heaven’: the forced migration of Ulster Catholics to southeast Galway 1795-1850

David Broderick

The intriguing story of the ‘Ultachs’ or Ulstermen from the Ulster borderlands who fled their homes from 1795 as part of an internal and forced migration is one that still remains largely untold. Some have pieced together segments of their story in different parts of Connaught and North Munster where many of these religious refugees appear to have settled. There remains much to be written on the wider story of the Ultachs but primary sources, essays, lectures, folklore and newspaper accounts have helped to add another piece to their story. This article will draw upon these sources to uncover the history of these people.

On the uplands of the Sliabh Aughty Mountains which run between South Galway and East Clare, the legacy of the Ultachs remains strong today, with physical features that appear on the landscape along with numerous Ultach family names such as Brady, McEaney and McKeon. In the surrounding area of North Tipperary and East Galway, folklore suggests that these Ulster names were descended from soldiers who settled in these areas while marching back North after defeat at the Battle of Kinsale 1601. But modern-day researchers such as Dr Christy Cunniffe differ, placing the arrival of these Ulster people onto the Sliabh Aughty Mountains after the Battle of the Diamond in 1795 and sometime before the Primary Valuation of Co. Galway in 1855.¹

¹ Dr Christy Cunniffe, ‘From the Ulster borderlands to the Sliabh Aughty uplands: the cultural legacy of the Ultach migrants’, Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group, *Valuing the local: the significance of cultural heritage of the post-medieval period* (conference), 4 February 2018.

This article will focus mainly on the East Galway region of Woodford and Ballynakill, where high numbers of Ultach names appear. The complexity of their story will be discussed along with the chain migration that followed, emigration to America, and even the return migration of some of these families during the Great Famine.

The story of the Aughtys and the Ultachs is one of many different examples of Irish internal migration. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, disposed Munster landowners were pushed into Connaught which would have in turn forced many of the landless Connaught people onto the most inhospitable of the uplands, including the Sliabh Aughtys. In Ulster during the same period the Plantation of Ulster was well underway, with thousands of English Protestants and Scottish Presbyterians settling on the lands of Ulster Catholics.²

After the easing of the Penal Laws in 1791, Catholics could again purchase land. This new freedom for Catholics to acquire and possibly outbid their Protestant neighbours added much tension to an already strained relationship between the Ulster Catholics and the Protestant settlers. The formation of sectarian secret societies was already well underway, and it was the ‘Peep O Day Boys’ who inflicted the lasting damage and destruction on the Catholics who fled the borderlands. The background to the naming of these societies is unclear. Martyn J. Powell states ‘further research will obviously be necessary before the exact origins of labels such as ‘Peep of Day Boys’ and ‘Break of Day Men’ can be determined.’³ But most historians agree that the tactic of attacking the houses of Catholic farmers in early morning raids and breaking their looms (used in manufacturing linen) while also taking their firearms was behind the naming of these societies. The Catholics responded by organising under the name of Defenders. Conditions reached boiling-point when a battle was arranged in the Armagh town of Loughgall in what would become known

² Brian Fanning, *Migration and the making of Ireland* (Dublin, 2018), p. 46.

³ Martyn J. Powell, ‘Popular disturbances in late eighteenth-century Ireland: the origins of the Peep of Day Boys’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, cxxxv (2005), p. 263.

as the ‘Battle of the Diamond’ in 1795. This battle ended in disaster for the Catholics as, despite having superior numbers, they were not armed with firearms unlike their opposition. Accounts differ in the number of Catholic casualties of between thirty and forty-eight. The result might have been different if ‘Defenders’ from other parts of the country had been able to support their Armagh counterparts, but they were blocked by local militia.⁴ Ultimately the defeat at the Battle of the Diamond started a forced migration of thousands of Ulster Catholics to Connaught and North Munster.

One of the first to write about the Ultachs on the Sliabh Aughty Mountains was Rev. Patrick Egan, a noted historian, in 1954. He states that they packed up all their belonging and even shod their cattle for the long journey ahead.⁵ Egan also states that some of these migrants were treated hospitably while travelling through Co. Tipperary. He goes on to give a curious account of some of them having their legs put into a stock while in bed to prevent them from stealing from their hosts.⁶ The fact that Egan states the Tipperary people received them with kindness, although with some caution, suggests that they might not have been as well received in the other counties they travelled through. Even the fact that they were travelling through Tipperary to get to the Sliabh Aughty Mountains raises questions as to why they would take such a long and indirect route. The Connemara Landlord Richard Martin also known as ‘Humanity Dick’ for his humane outlook on the livestock trade was an example of one of the more hospitable landowners. In 1796, a newspaper reported:

The persecution in the county of Armagh is not yet exhausted - although it has featured thousands of miserable victims in every direction, and left them to the winds of Heaven. A computation may easily be formed of the extent of this mischief from the fact that a single gentleman (Col. Martin, of the co. of Galway) has given asylum to more than a thousand souls on his own estate, all peaceable, inoffensive, and living by the labour of their hands. The number of unfortunate emigrants [is] hourly increasing. It is astonishing that no remedy has been derived by Administration for an evil which is such a reproach to subordination and government.

The priest has said a good deal on this subject. We have seen a proof fleet of a Print of the Refugees going from the North to Connemara, displaying more misery and wretchedness than a man of ANY

⁴ Cunniffe, ‘From the Ulster borderlands to the Sliabh Aughty uplands’.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

religion would wish to see fall to the lot of a fellow creature - and yet this is the enormity which the religious civil magistrates of Armagh wink at on the score of conscience.⁷

This was a sympathetic reaction to what had happened and the hardship in which the ‘refugees’ had endured. There are other instances of landlords ‘welcoming’ these religious refugees. Given that these Ulster people were used to hard work, landlords with ambitions to improve their estates may have welcomed these industrious people. There is tradition in East Galway of an advertisement offering to let lands belonging to Thomas Burke of Marble Hill, Ballynakill but efforts to date in finding this reference have been fruitless.⁸

Many of these farmers were involved in the production of flax. It is likely that the Ultachs sought out mountain land as it was affordable and available to a large migrant community, as well as being suitable ground for flax-growing. The mountain and boggy terrain of Sliabh Aughty appears to have been suitable to the growing of flax and linen production. There is evidence of flax-growing on these mountains, recorded in the Schools Folklore Collection (Tynagh National School).⁹ There are several other accounts of flax being grown on the mountain or bog; the high degree of acid in the peat soil aided in the growing of flax and the production of linen. Also, the fact that these Ultachs on the Sliabh Aughty Mountains continued to come southwards from the Ulster Borderlands from what is believed to be from the late 1790s right up to at least the 1830s would suggest these people knew exactly the type of land they were being offered.

While we know little about how life would have been for these farmers initially, we do have archaeological evidence that was uncovered by Dr Christy Cunniffe in 2017. While surveying sites on the mountains, Dr Cunniffe uncovered several circular stone enclosures that were initially thought to have been bronze age hut sites, but their style did not conform to similar sites of that period. Further investigation indicated that these were temporary buildings or ‘refugee camps’ as Dr Cunniffe labelled them.¹⁰ The

⁷ *Dublin Evening Post*, 27 Aug. 1796.

⁸ Cunniffe, ‘From the Ulster borderlands to the Sliabh Aughty uplands’.

⁹ The Schools’ Collection, Tynagh National School, volume 53 page 90 (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>) (3 Apr. 2021).

¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 19 August 2017.

discovery of another site on a separate part of the mountain backed up the theory that when these migrants arrived on the Sliabh Aughty Mountains they built a series of temporary structures to provide themselves with shelter and protection until they had the means and materials to construct their own individual homes.

The mountain appears to have been covered in wood during the mid-eighteenth century and an advertisement in *Pue's Occurrences*, 15 August 1758 describes 'several full-grown woods in the area' that would be available to run the iron works industry in Woodford.¹¹ The landscape that faced the Ultachs would have been a mixture of wood, blanket bog, and heavy scrub, mostly made up of gorse, which is abundant on the mountain today. The Ultachs may have worked together to clear the scrub and woods from the mountains with hand tools when they erected their makeshift camps. There are numerous old houses dotted all over the mountain. One example is the ruined site of the Hughes family who built their own house and farmstead on Airy Hill. Family tradition suggests that the Hughes family comes from Co. Monaghan, and were builders. Their excellent stonework with the natural mountain sandstone is still in good preservation today.¹² The Ultachs settled in dispersed settlements on a 'ladder' system which was different to the local 'clachan' type settlements. Each family built their home with their parcel of land rising up the mountain behind their dwelling, the next family then built their own settlement and so on. There are also several other features on the landscape relating to the Ultachs. Sweat houses, an architectural feature more common in the north of Ireland, are plentiful, and so too are isolated graveyards such as in Curragh West and Drim. These would have been traditionally known as children's burial grounds, but Dr Cunniffe suggests these may also have been Ultach burial grounds. There is a dolmen known as 'Altoir Ultach' which folklore claims was named after an Ulster priest who celebrated mass there in the eighteenth century because

¹¹ *Pue's Occurrences*, 15 Aug. 1758.

¹² David Broderick, 'Interview with Cathal Fahey', Lorrha (30 April 2022).

the ‘nearest magistrates were more tolerant than those of the north’.¹³ Interestingly there is a monument of the same name in Louisburg in Co. Mayo another area associated with Ultachs.¹⁴

There are other features in the landscape relating to the Ulster settlers, such as the ‘Bleach River’, which is a direct reference to the bleaching process of the flax growers on the mountain. Another feature on the landscape is the abundance of limekilns. These kilns were used to burn the lime from limestone which in turn was spread on the land to help reduce the acidity of the soil so other crops such as potatoes could be grown. There would have been little or no lime available on the mountains, so limestone would have to have been carted up from the lowlands.

It is accepted that flax growing was the main industry of the Ultachs and a well-suited crop to the lands of the Aughtys. A list of flax growers from 1796 from Co. Galway confirms the huge number of flax growers in the Ballynakill area and also returns many Ultach names. This list is possibly the most valuable primary sources available that places the Ultachs in the region shortly after the Battle of the Diamond.¹⁵ The following Ultach names appear on the list: Connolly, Fallon, Farrell, Keon, Lawless, Lennon, Leonard, McDaniel, McEneny, McHegar, McLoughlin, Mooney, Murray and Sheil. In total, the list comprises 640 flax growers from all over the entire county who have received funding from the Irish Linen Board. The list includes ninety flax growers from Ballynakill which is over fourteen per cent of the total from the entire county which returned names from forty-five different areas. Excluding Ballynakill, the average return was 12.5 flax growers in each area, compared to ninety in Ballynakill. The economic impact on this area due to the arrival of the Ultachs must have been extremely positive; not only were they bringing business to the local merchants and paying rents to the local landowners, but they were also improving the land which they

¹³ Thomas Johnson Westropp, ‘A folklore survey of County Clare: rocks, caves and stones’ in *Folklore*, vol. xxiii, no. 1 (1912), pp. 88-94.

¹⁴ ‘Photo of Altoir Ultach (Wedge Tomb), 2000 B.C. Louisburgh, Co Mayo, Ireland’, (<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-altoir-ultach-wedge-tomb-2000-bc-louisburgh-co-mayo-ireland-14927997.html>) (3 April 2021).

¹⁵ Eileen Keane, ‘Flax growers in this area’ in *Abbey and District Heritage*, 2021 (<https://abbey.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/topics/new-contributions/flax-growers-in-this-area>) (11 Apr. 2021).

were given and in turn produced a much sought-after crop in high quantities. This large influx of Catholic families would also have impacted the church and increased their financial takings.

A feature of the Sliabh Aughty uplands is several ruined schoolhouses that were built in parts of the mountain which are sparsely inhabited today. It would seem plausible that these schools were built to provide education for the new mountain settlers. Another account from the Schools Folklore Collection proved vital in tying this theory together. An account for Aille school from 1938 gave the following valuable information.

The School in Aille One Hundred Years Ago

In olden times there came from the North of Ireland a teacher named Bernard Linskey. There did seven or eight families come with him namely Shadville, McGormy, Burns, McBride, Sheanon, Reilly and Rafferty. In the North of Ireland, they are called Shadville but here they are called Shalvey's. He taught school in what is now Shalvey's old barn. The walls of this building were standing about forty years ago and the Shalvey's made a barn of it. It is still used as a barn. The first time he came he had no steady home. He used to go home with the scholars each night in their turn. After some years, the neighbours built a thatched house for him. Then his sister came to live with him... He was not thirty years when he came to this parish. He stayed all his lifetime in it, and he was buried in Killnadeema. He was born in Donegal. He used to teach them Irish history and Irish geography. The scholars had to talk Irish to him when they would meet him on the road. My grandmother's mother went to school to him. My grandmother told me this story.¹⁶

This account, if accurate, not only tells of a Donegal teacher being brought from the North to teach the Ultach children; it also names some of the families that accompanied him down. The fact that this child's great-grandmother was taught by Mr. Linskey gives a clue as to when these Ultachs arrived. There are very few accounts of the arrival of the Ultachs on the Aughtys, so these folklore records can be of vital importance.

Those families of Ultach stock in the region of Woodford and Ballyinakill are today firmly rooted into the local community. Many families are even unaware of their unique heritage. Local tradition suggests

¹⁶ The Schools' Collection, Aille National School, vol. 59, p. 363 (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>) (3 Apr. 2021).

that the Ultachs were not fully accepted into the local community. Another account from the folklore collection hints at local animosities:

While ‘faction’ fighting survived it was not unusual to ‘wheel’ (or shout) for ‘an Ultach’ or against ‘an Ultach’. The Ultachs were considered settlers by the other people of the neighbourhood. Something of a hostile spirit seems to have existed, or at least was easily stirred up between them & their neighbours. As far as we can see that has all died away but the term ‘Ultachs’ remains.¹⁷

During the land wars of the 1880s, the Sliabh Aughty mountains was a hotbed of resistance to the rents of the local landlords. The dispute between these tenants and major landlord Ulick Burke of Portumna made national and international headlines. Many families were evicted and forced to live in barns and huts along the mountainside. Beside Douras Church there was a camp set up for these evicted tenants.¹⁸ These Ultachs who had fled their homes following religious persecution in the North of Ireland had, over only a few generations, improved their land to the point that they could not now afford the rent, and many found themselves homeless again. Socially, the arrival of the Ultachs to this region must have made a big impact with locals viewing them with mixed feeling of sympathy and suspicion but, as the years passed, they merged, mixed and married with the ‘local’ people.

The story of the Ultachs is complex and to follow their journey is a challenge as many continued to migrate. Passenger lists of those arriving into New York from Ireland during the Famine years (1845-52) returns a large amount of Ultach names from Co. Galway. Interestingly there is a reference in the Schools Folklore from Ballynakill of Ultach families travelling back to ‘the North’ to flee the worsening conditions of the famine in Galway.¹⁹

The story of Catholics Ulster did not stop in the era of the Battle of the Diamond but continued right up until the twentieth century. Fanning states that when the ‘troubles’ reignited in 1969 that up to 10,000

¹⁷ The Schools’ Collection, Foilycleara National School, vol. 519, p. 311, (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>) (3 Apr. 2021).

¹⁸ Cunniffe, ‘From the Ulster borderlands to the Sliabh Aughty uplands’.

¹⁹ The Schools’ Collection, Irish Wastelands Society School, vol. 51, p. 203 (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes>) (3 Apr. 2021).

people fled their Ulster homes and many of these Catholics again came south for sanctuary. Fanning also states that ‘a pattern of chain migration emerged whereby those displaced from particular Northern areas settled alongside one another in particular Southern towns’.²⁰ This quote could have been used almost two hundred years earlier to describe the plight of earlier settlers who made the harrowing journey from the Ulster borderlands to the Sliabh Aughty Mountains in search of a better life.

²⁰ Fanning, *Migration and the making of Ireland*, p. 170.

The savage master-race: a history of ‘Celtic identity’

Trevor Mark Hanley

Historians today have increasingly debated the merit of the term ‘Celtic’ to describe such a vast amount of territory across Europe and the various societies that lived there. Compared to their Greek and Roman contemporaries, relatively little is known about the ancient people(s) we call Celts. As the Reverend Powers put it in 1927 during the twilight of the Gaelic Revival in Ireland; ‘Few seemingly can give an intelligent answer to the question: Who were the Celts?’.¹ Yet despite this vagueness, or perhaps because of it, Celtic identity has been claimed by a variety of different groups, both national and political, to justify various different movements and ambitions. To quote Katie Trumpener: ‘claiming Celtic origins has enabled people to fabricate whatever version of the past seemed nationally expedient’.² This article seeks to chart the multitude of ways Celtic identity has been interpreted by a variety of groups for often contradictory causes, and the various forms that Celtic identity subsequently took. It is ultimately unimportant whether or not ‘Celt’ is a fitting name, or if these ancient peoples saw themselves as one civilisation. In fact, this uncertainty allows vastly different groups, from the Third Estate of the French Revolution to the white supremacists of the American South, to apply whatever meaning they wish to the Celts. What mattered was that the term, vague and thus malleable, offered a suitable ‘Glorious Past’ for anyone looking for it, which many social groups aspired to control in order to add tradition and continuity to their contemporary needs.

¹ Patrick Powers, ‘The problem of the Celts, in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, xvi (1927), p. 99.

² Euan Hague, Benito Giordano and Edward H. Sebesta, ‘Whiteness, multiculturalism and nationalist appropriation of Celtic culture: the case of the League of the South and the Lega Nord’, in *Cultural Geographies*, xii (2005), p. 154.

From medieval times to the early modern period, all that was known about the people we now know as the Celts were the accounts left to us by Greek and Roman writers. The Greco-Roman world held the general view that all non-Greco-Roman ‘barbarians’ were inferior to their civilised ways, and this bias was extended to the Celtic tribes, which are traditionally considered to have inhabited a sprawling domain from the British Isles, through Iberia and Central Europe, all the way to Turkey. While some Greeks wrote somewhat fondly of the ‘Keltoi’ and their romantically simple barbarism – a vision of the ancient Celts which would return with force in the nineteenth century – others, like Plato and Aristotle, wrote disapprovingly of their alien ways.³ Roman writers, like Pomponius Mela, were even more critical of the tribes north of the Alps, declaring that Ireland’s inhabitants ‘[are] savage beyond other races’. As J.F. Killeen puts it: ‘The stock ancient view of the north was a world of savagery, cannibalism, sexual depravity and shamelessness’. Killeen also makes clear that despite some of the claims of these writers (like Mela), practically none of them actually journeyed to the places they wrote about.⁴ While clearly biased and often simply fabricated, these descriptions of the Celtic peoples were all historians had to go on. As the Roman Empire in the west fell, the Germanic Franks swiftly invaded their former province of Gaul. The Franks now applied the same analysis to the natives of their new territory as the Romans did, creating a trend of conquest and vilification which became a standard theme of Celtic history. It wasn’t until the French Revolution that a new, more romantic view of the Celts began to truly emerge on a large scale.

Before the French Revolution, some believed the three estates that were used to differentiate French society had not social but ethnic origins. The conquering ‘Germanic’ Franks, after whom France is named, were the ancestors of the First Estate. This Germanic tribe had conquered what was the Roman province of Gaul during the fall of the Roman Empire and thus, through right of conquest ruled the nation. The lower two estates were the descendants of the Romans and Gauls, defeated and submissive. The revolution

³ Philip W.M. Freeman, ‘The earliest Greek sources on the Celts’ in *Études Celtiques*, xxxii (1996), pp 24-25, 30-32.

⁴ J.F. Killeen, ‘Ireland in the Greek and Roman writers’ in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, lxxvi (1976), pp 207-10.

challenged these theories that allowed for the rule of the First Estate, with some, like the Abbé Sieyès, arguing that the lower working classes were the true nation of France, going so far as to paint the First Estate as ‘invaders’ who should be driven out of Gaul.⁵ But who were the Third Estate? As Eric Hobsbawm might say, a new tradition needed to be invented. The Revolution took ‘[Our] ancestors, the Gauls’, particularly their history of subjugation, and used it to rally the lower classes - subservient to the First Estate - into action.⁶ By comparing the First Estate to foreign invaders, the Abbé Sieyès would thus associate the ‘barbaric’ Celt with the noble humility of the working classes. While Roman imagery was also retroactively glorified, most famously by Napoleon, it was the humble Gauls, whose struggle against both Roman and Frankish oppression better symbolised the equal nation revolutionaries were trying to establish. This is all despite the rigid, hierarchical caste systems present within most ancient Celtic societies.⁷

Interest in the Celts now surged as the French began to harken back to a new ancestry they had just discovered, and new societies for the studies of the Celts were established. As the French began to enforce their revolutionary ideals throughout the continent, claims that the Celts were not just the progenitors of the French, but the ancestors of all Europeans abounded. Napoleon now had an excuse to (re)conquer the ancient territories of the Gauls and unite all Celts in a single empire as brothers in arms, albeit subservient to the French, who claimed to be the first Celts and were thus more Celtic than the others.⁸ The supposed pan-European expanse of Celtic society was used by the French to assert dominion over the continent, painting a very different image of Celtic France to the lowly-yet-noble one presented by Sieyès, as will be seen.

⁵ Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce le Tiers-Etat?* (Paris, 1798).

⁶ Michael Dietler, ‘Our ancestors the Gauls’: archaeology, ethnic nationalism, and the manipulation of Celtic identity in modern Europe’ in *American Anthropologist*, xcvi (1994), pp 587-88.

⁷ Mark Williams, *Ireland's immortals: a history of the gods of Irish myth* (Princeton, 2016), pp 99-100.

⁸ Dietler, ‘Our ancestors the Gauls’, p. 588.

The pursuit of Celtic studies expanded across Europe during the nineteenth century, transforming the Celt from a violent barbarian to a 'noble savage'. Napoleon III, the emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, took great interest in France's Celtic past. He commissioned excavations at Gergovia, Bibracte, and Alésia, three sites of immense significance to Gaul's struggle against Roman conquest. It was at Alésia, the site of the last stand against Rome, in 1865 that Napoleon III commissioned a large bronze statue of the great Gallic warlord Vercingetorix; a statue which happened to bear the emperor's face, for lack of a more fitting model. Yet despite his clear admiration for the ancient Gauls, he wrote that the subjugation of the Celts by the Romans was ultimately the better outcome, as the more 'civilised' ways of the Romans ultimately bettered the lives of the Gauls. This is an unorthodox take on the conquest of a people - France, like most nineteenth-century European powers, was in the process of forging a new colonial empire across North Africa and East Asia.⁹ The Emperor's claim that France's progenitor benefitted from a foreign, civilising conquest was meant to mirror the contemporary European policy of 'civilising' the non-white barbarians to justify exploiting them. While French revolutionaries had used the Celts and their belittlement at the hands of greater powers to rally the Third Estate against their 'conquerors', later French commentators romanticised them as a necessary evil to vindicate colonial objectives.

Much later, Vercingetorix, the Gallic hero, was again used to shape contemporary opinion. The Vichy leader, Philip Petain, sought to liken himself to Vercingetorix. He declared that as Vercingetorix had surrendered to Rome, he had to submit to the overwhelming power of the Wehrmacht to save the French people, sacrificing himself like the Gallic martyr. The French resistance instead portrayed Vercingetorix and his insurrection against Rome as the first resistance fighter.¹⁰

The growing interest in the Celts throughout the nineteenth century coincided with wider nationalist movements across Europe, and by the end of the century, a revival of waning Celtic traditions emerged

⁹ Ibid. p. 592

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 22.; Dietler, 'Our ancestors the Gauls', p. 592.

across the ‘Celtic periphery’. The Gaelic Revival in Ireland would see a resurgence in the popularity of Irish culture and national identity, but how this was supposed to interlink with the other Celtic revivals was a constantly troublesome question. Williams notes how the emergence of Celtic nationalism in the late nineteenth century led to a rise in fascination with an imagined Celtic past which influenced each movement’s rediscovery of national music, art, literary themes and folklore. The result was a mess of contradictions: ‘The more fashionable the concept became, the less clear its outline and implications seemed to be’.¹¹ Yet this did not stop some from trying to present these movements as a unified, pan-Celtic resurgence in the modern age, despite all of the evidence to the contrary.

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, both England and France tried to replace the local cultures of the six modern Celtic nations (traditionally said to be Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Brittany) with more civilised ‘Englishness’ or ‘Frenchness’. Benedict Anderson gives the example of the efforts of the English and lowland Scottish, who spoke English, in wiping Gaelic Scotland from the Highlands and replacing it with a more agreeable Anglo-Scottish identity, a process he named ‘official nationalism’.¹² The result was a severe diminishing in the practice of Celtic traditions, and a sense of backward ignorance became synonymous with those who maintained earlier customs. Yet, there were contradictions. In an increasingly industrialised world, many Victorian writers wrote of their longing for a simpler, more-natural world, which an imagined Celtic past, with its dense groves and timber-built settlements, satiated. The emphasis on cultural revival very much played into the imagery of the Celt as ‘old’. Backward became rewritten as authentic and enlightened; James Cousin’s *The Wisdom of the West* attempted to combine Irish mythological belief with the more popular phenomenon of ‘oriental’ spirituality.¹³ Moireen Fox used this ‘spirituality’ to highlight the incompatibility of English and Irish

¹¹ Williams, *Ireland’s immortals*, p. 279.

¹² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 2006), pp 88-90.

¹³ Williams, *Ireland’s immortals*, p. 416-17.

culture. The industrial societies of Britain and France, ‘the successors of Rome’, were too impure for Fox, considering them harmful to the ‘purer’ spirituality of Celtic societies.¹⁴ This had different interpretations, however; the Irish had taken the term ‘revival’ to mean bringing the old cultures and identity into the twentieth century, but the Welsh and Scottish were eager to revive the imagined past of druids and fairy-folk, which in Ireland, only held interest for the Protestant elite, who used Ireland’s mythology to reconnect with a land which was increasingly side-lining their waning influence.¹⁵

Anderson notes that nationalism has ‘its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism’.¹⁶ This was a major theme shared by all of the movements. Solidarity among one another usually revolved around the common struggle against more powerful neighbours. The *Celtica* journal, founded in Dublin in 1901, proclaimed its purpose to preserve ‘those characteristics which distinguish the Celtic nationalities from their more powerful neighbours’.¹⁷ This strength-in-numbers approach took its ultimate form in the concept of an independent Pan-Celtic Union incorporating the six modern ‘Celtic nations’. The idea was conceived in the mid-nineteenth century, during that golden age of nationalist movements, by Charles de Gaulle (not to be confused with the general of the same name). In the early-twentieth century, Welsh politician Edward Thomas John championed the concept. The idea of a Celtic Union caught on, and between 1901 and 1925, congresses discussing the notion of such a union were being held across the Celtic periphery. While the Irish Revival was generally uninterested in the developments of the rest of the Celtic world, some of its leading figures were not completely opposed to the notion of Celtic unity, including Padraig Pearse and Douglas Hyde.¹⁸

¹⁴ Moireen Fox, ‘Some aspects of the Celtic movement’ in *The Irish Review*, 2 (1912), p. 554.

¹⁵ Caoimhín De Barra, ‘“A gallant little ‘tírín”’: the Welsh influence on Irish cultural nationalism’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, 39 (2014), 58; John B Davenport, ‘The coming of the Celts AD 1860: Celtic nationalism in Ireland and Wales by Caoimhín De Barra’ in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, cviii (2019), p. 361; Williams, *Ireland’s immortals*, pp 288-89.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 141.

¹⁷ Justin Dolan Stover, ‘Modern Celtic nationalism in the period of the Great War: establishing transnational connections’ in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, xxxii (2012), pp 291-2.

¹⁸ Davenport, ‘The coming of the Celts’, pp 361-2.

But such a union was never really feasible as, just like the French before them, each movement within the Celtic Revival had rather exclusionary and self-centred views of who was the most Celtic. Hugh Trevor-Roper recounts how in the eighteenth century, well before any Celtic Revival, Scottish writers attempted to furnish their nation with a mythological past and to do this, writer James MacPherson went to impressive lengths to hijack Irish folklore and peddle it as Scotland's own native Celtic mythology, even going as far as to present Ireland as the cultural usurper.¹⁹ Justin Stover notes that while some were keen to present these movements as a united front, affording them more leverage both culturally and politically on the global stage, the reality was much more divisive. As foreshadowed by MacPherson, some within each movement sought to monopolise Celtic imagery for their own usage, and even undermine other movement's usage of the term. The Reverend O'Donovan proclaimed that most Celtic literature, even when written in other countries, can be traced back to Ireland. This was certainly a view favoured by Fox, who called Ireland the 'pre-eminently Celtic country'.²⁰

Societies and journals, founded to further explore and support Celtic culture, often held no real interest in activities outside of their home country. Alexander MacBain, editor of *The Celtic Magazine* (1875), which focused primarily on Scottish issues, presented the penchant for 'the Celt at home and abroad.' But whatever MacBain meant by 'home' was up for debate and could never be fully realised. A letter from Henri Guidoiz, expressing Celtic solidarity, appeared in the first issue, but comes across as a rather desperate attempt, when he tries to dismiss what divided the Celts 'the Irish by their religion, Welsh by their dialect, the French Bretons by their religion and their dialect'.²¹ Celtic languages are divided into the Goidelic and Brittonic branches, but both are practically incomprehensible to one another. Language, particularly the written word, was instrumental to the origins of the concept of 'nation' during the fifteenth

¹⁹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The invention of tradition: the highland tradition of Scotland', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds) *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, 1983) p. 17.

²⁰ Fox, 'The Celtic movement', p. 554.

²¹ Stover, 'Modern Celtic nationalism', pp 298-91.

century, which coincided with the invention of the printing press. This allowed for issues pertaining to certain peoples to be written about in their language, fostering a sense of community.²² In order for a Celtic Union to exist, one language would have to be selected above the others. This was the issue which faced many Irish linguists who exalted the Welsh for the preservation of their language, but wished for Ireland to be the Celtic Periphery's cultural powerhouse, as seen by one anonymous Gaelic Leaguer who wrote that Irish is the leading Celtic language. 'It is the best preserved, the most capable and expressive, and endowed with the best and most abundant literature'.²³ Religion too, offered a sense of unity to its congregation long before nationalism emerged, yet by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, religious divisions were well entrenched, and Catholicism and Protestantism divided the Celts more than any murky, ill understood ancient past could unite them.²⁴

There were plain political divisions, too. Several enthusiasts were supportive of attempts at pan-Celticism, but they were ultimately more concerned with promoting national endeavours first. While post-1916 Irish activists increasingly sought full independence from the United Kingdom, Welsh activists were more content with Home Rule.²⁵ Some Irish Nationalists may have even seen Scotland and Wales as effectively 'British' and playing their own role in Ireland's misfortunes.²⁶ A clash of what 'Celtic' meant in political terms occurred at the end of the Irish War of Independence, when David Lloyd George and Eamon DeValera met for peace talks at Downing Street on 14 July 1921. Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1922, was an avid supporter of Welsh revival groups, yet oversaw the bloody campaign in Ireland during the War of Independence. His lack of concern for Irish affairs led Kevin O'Shiel to lambast his 'fellow Celt': 'He was a Welshman, a Celt, with all the emotionalism, the

²² Anderson, *Imagined communities*, pp 37-38.

²³ De Barra, "A gallant little 'tírín'", pp 58, 61.

²⁴ Davenport, 'The coming of the Celts', p. 361.; Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 42.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp 361-62.

²⁶ Witness statement of Captain Seamus Kavanagh, 9 September 1957 (Bureau of Military History, Ref #: 1670, p. 14); Witness statement of Captain E. Gerrard, 3 February 1950 (Bureau of Military History, Ref #: 348, p. 2); BMH WS 1670 (Captain Seamus Kavanagh, p. 14), p. 14.

excitability, the tendency to hyperbole and a very liberal share of the trickery and unreliability of his race'. Yet he did not support Welsh independence either, and disagreed with the notion of simply granting independence to regions on the basis of difference, regardless of 'definite and clear nationality'.²⁷ During the negotiations, Lloyd George noted that De Valera's speech, delivered in rather poor Irish, had called his new country a 'saorstát' (free state) as opposed to a republic. He then consulted his personal secretary, in fluent Welsh, for several minutes, astonishing DeValera, who had not considered that his people's 'British' oppressors could be led by a Celt. Lloyd George then announced in English 'We Celts don't have a word for a Republic, because we've never had one'.²⁸ By delivering his speech in (amateurish) Irish, DeValera was conveying through tradition his people's separate identity, which was justification for separation from Britain. Through a better understanding of that 'shared' tradition, Lloyd George argued against such a concept, citing a lack of precedent.

The Celtic Revival was only really a unified movement in name. While inspirations were taken from one another, and pleasantries given in exchange, each country was more concerned with what the term 'Celt' could do for them. More importantly, the term Celt became more useful as a tool of differentiation from former oppressors. Comically, the struggle between national and international revivals somewhat reflects the modern concern over who the Celts were. Perceived as a singular civilisation, the peoples in fact shared similar cultural attitudes, but differed in most other respects.

Today, the Celts have only become more confusing to us as they were to the Greco-Roman writers who first encountered them. As alluded to briefly in the introduction, a common rebuttal against Celtic scholars is that the Celts never labelled themselves collectively as 'Celts'. Instead Keltoi and Celtae were just vague terms used by the Greeks and Romans to refer to the peoples of the alien north. Julius Caesar seemingly disputed this claim in the very first chapter of his writings on the Gallic War, when he refers to

²⁷ Stover, 'Modern Celtic nationalism', pp 289, 299-300.; House of Commons debate 31 March 1920, vol. 127, col. 1323.

²⁸ Norman Davies, *Vanished kingdoms: the history of half-forgotten Europe*, (London, 2011), pp 654-65.

‘those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls’.²⁹ However, the statement could simply be referring to just the Gauls, strangely validating those during the French Revolution who saw the Gauls as ‘the true Celts’. This possibility is backed up by a second common argument pertaining to the British Isles; that the term ‘Celt’ did not appear as a label for any of the peoples there until some point in the early modern period and that no ancient writer associated the term with the peoples of the isles, as noted by Reverend Powers as far back as 1927.³⁰ Yet the lack of evidence for any ‘ethnic’ Celtic connections did not stop others from trying to appropriate the Celts for racial purposes. After all, the notion of a white, pan-European civilisation was too tempting for some to pass up on.

By the late nineteenth century, the classic interpretation of the Celtic peoples as ‘lesser’ had firmly entrenched itself in the American psyche: At the turn of the century, the popular image of the backward, buffoon-like Irishman was a favourite of American newspaper cartoonists.³¹ Yet by the 1930s, American eugenicists were desperately searching for a means to connect themselves with Ireland’s glorious Celtic past. In the 1930s, more solid genetic evidence of ‘Celtic ancestry’ was sought out in Ireland. A decade after independence, a large-scale eugenics study was carried out by Harvard researchers, determined to uncover ‘a mainspring of American culture’ and ‘a major source of [our] racial inheritance’. The study aimed to prove that the Irish were genetically descended from the now noble and Aryan Celt, and came at a time when eugenics was gathering influence in American politics. Lobbyists in Washington DC were then campaigning for Congress to close America’s borders to certain peoples based on their racial profile, fearing that their inherent ethnic and racial ‘deficiencies’ would taint American society.³² As a ‘mainspring’ from which white America emerged, it was imperative for the Harvard team to prove the

²⁹ Julius Caesar, *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*, (Rome, 58-49 BC) Translation by W.A. McDevitte & W.S. Bohn (Virginia, 2009) (<https://classics.mit.edu/Caesar/gallic.1.1.html>) (4 September 2023).

³⁰ Powers, ‘The problem of the Celts’, p. 107.

³¹ Carew, ‘The Harvard mission’, pp 38-40.

³² Mairéad Carew, ‘The Harvard mission, eugenics and the Celts’ in *Archaeology Ireland*, xxvi (2012), p. 38.

Celtic link genetically, so that the white man of America could lay claim, through the Irish and others, to a great Aryan past. Regardless of the American intentions with the research, DeValera was in full support of the study, and the Harvard teams worked closely with Irish authorities.³³ This white, Celtic identity may have been beneficial to a young European country in a racially divided world, but most importantly of all, it would have also added a biological divide between an independent Ireland and the British empire.

By the twentieth century, Celtic heritage, in all of its uncertain, malleable glory was to be the shield of white Americans uncomfortable with the shifting demographics of late twentieth century America. Founded in 1994, the League of the South began to use ‘Anglo-Celtic’ iconography to defend white Christian America against the threat of multi-culturalism. A study done on the phenomenon of Celtic identity and white supremacy in 2004 suggested that Celtic identity was utilised for the purpose of combating multi-culturalism because, while the Celts had become a staple of ‘white America’, their legacy as the poor, oppressed victims of greater powers had not been forgotten. Groups like the League of the South could thus liken themselves to the much-celebrated activists of the Celtic Revivals who fought to protect their heritage(s), a move which would consequently present those encouraging multi-culturalism as aggressors, and themselves as sympathetic victims.³⁴

Similarly in Italy, an even more interesting group emerged, which adapted the Celtic past in the late twentieth century. The Lega Nord was founded in support of Northern Italy, defined by the League as ‘Padania’, with the aim of seceding from the Italian state, when resentment emerged due to the central government’s supposed favouring of Southern Italy. The League used geography to justify their Celtic origins. They claimed that their closer proximity to central Europe, where the Celts once thrived, made them separate to the ‘lazy and corrupt’ inhabitants of southern Italy, whom they claimed had stalled the economic development of the hard-working north. But this proximity to ‘white’ central Europe was also

³³ Ibid. p. 40.

³⁴ Ibid, pp 156-57.

emphasised to separate northern Italians from the south's more multi-cultural society, which had emerged in the 1990s when it became a key destination for Middle Eastern immigrants.³⁵ The Lega Nord's perception of the exclusionary Celts emerged in Europe at a notable time, when other, more inclusive ideas of the Celts were being perpetuated on a more official basis. From the 1980s, exhibitions sponsored by several European states and focusing on ancient Celts sprang up across the continent. These exhibitions generally mixed and matched archaeological artifacts from various countries to promote the impression of a singular Ancient Celtic society. Exhibitions with titles such as 'An Early Form of European Unity' and 'The Celts: The First Europe' clearly expressed the modern ambitions of the European Union, the continent's latest imagined community. They sought to utilise the imagined sprawling scale of Celtic civilisation to justify further cultural integration by EU member states. As Michael Dietler notes, the dialogue surrounding the exhibits is very telling, with one boldly stating 'The history of Europe starts with the Celts'. The introduction to a 1991 exhibition in Venice praised those who 'united Western Europe'.³⁶

The appropriation of Celtic identity by often diametrically-opposed groups is filled with countless contradictions. Not only did different groups have varying interpretations of a glorious Celtic past to suit their own needs, within certain groups, there was clear failure to forge cohesive ideas on what it meant to be a Celt. The 'conqueror' image of the Celt as uncivilised, underdeveloped and barbarous was repurposed by many different interests: as an example of lower-class solidarity, as victims of oppression and even of pure, natural, anti-industrial living. Oppression was repainted by Napoleon III as a cruel, but necessary intervention to help civilise the Gauls, just as he sought to civilise (and exploit) the peoples of his new empire. The prevailing myth of one, cohesive pan-European identity was used to perpetuate the image of an Aryan 'master-race', quite opposite to the 'northern barbarians' of antiquity. Supra-national organisations, like the EU, have also ignored the more probable reality of Iron Age Europe to promote

³⁵ Ibid. pp 162-65, 154.

³⁶ Dietler, 'Our ancestors the Gauls', pp 595-6.

their agenda of European unity, as did the less egalitarian Napoleonic France. The ambiguous nature of ancient Celtic history, regardless of whether such a thing can ever be said to have existed, has made it uniquely suited to serve a multitude of groups, with many different, conflicting opinions of the past, allowing for the invention of many new traditions to justify various modern ambitions.