

## The Borough of Thomastown in Irish History, 1520-1652

Marilyn Silverman

The town of Thomastown, on the river Nore in what today is County Kilkenny, was founded as a military stronghold and a trading depot in about the year 1200 as part of the Norman conquest of Ireland. Over the next few centuries, the town survived—through the political turbulence caused by factionalism among the ruling elites, Gaelic resistance to the Anglo-Normans, the decline of central direction from the English Crown and the growth of the regionally-based ascendancy of the Ormond family.<sup>1</sup> Such persistence was largely because Thomastown, as an inland river port and the head of navigation on the river Nore, was a marketing town and a node in international mercantile networks. As a result, the town was a focus for the activities of numerous merchants and traders and thus had a diversified urban economy which was propelled by the merchants, artisans, millers, farmers, fishers, boatmen and workers who resided there.

The Irish mercantile economy, which centred mainly on the ports in the south and east of Ireland and which dated from the 13th century, only peaked in the 15th and 16th centuries.<sup>2</sup> During that time, in 1485, the Tudors became monarchs of England. With their ascendancy came an ever-increasing penetration into the Thomastown area of the agents and structures which were associated with an expanding and centralising English state. What happened in Thomastown?

### The Centralising State, The Integrity of the Town, 1520-1603

The history of the English in Ireland from 1496 to 1520 is mainly Irish history, that is, it is focused on activities by Anglo-Irish rulers...both inside and outside the English Pale. But the years 1520 to 1534 is increasingly the history of relations between the ruler of the Dublin administration, whether he was one of the Anglo-Irish magnates or an Englishman, and the English king.<sup>3</sup> For by 1529, "King Henry had set up the beginnings of the

bureaucracy which was to become increasingly a mark of Tudor government in Ireland." By 1539, "the English monarchy became a decisive force in Irish politics."<sup>4</sup> In the meanwhile, the future importance of the new order had been heralded by the bloody defeat of an armed rebellion which indirectly reached Thomastown in 1534.<sup>5</sup>

Silken Thomas and his following invaded Kilkenny with banners displayed and plundered the lands of the Earl of Ossory [Ormond] and encamped in an island in the river [Nore] near Thomastown. After some skirmishing he sent a message offering to hold Ireland with the Earl of Ossory [Ormond] which offer was declined. The next night the battle in which Lord Ormond was wounded took place.<sup>6</sup>

The rebellion was crushed. However, it had coincided with the English reformation which led to the dissolution of Irish monasteries.<sup>7</sup> Jerpoint Abbey was no exception, despite the request in 1539-40 from the Lord Deputy that six houses, including Kells and Jerpoint, be exempted. He argued that "royal officials and others travelling on the King's business" had been well lodged "at the costs of the said houses" and that a school in one of the houses ensured that "young men and children [were] brought up in virtue, language and in the English tongue." These houses had also "provided their 'men of war' when called on and paid their taxes promptly."<sup>8</sup>

Clearly, Jerpoint Abbey had been a means of maintaining and spreading Anglo-Norman culture in the Thomastown area. Towns too performed a similar function. For although the support towns to which Thomastown was connected were part of a European trading network and thus had a good deal of independence, they also maintained "allegiance to the English Crown, notwithstanding the necessity for trading with the Irish inhabitants in their immediate hinterlands."<sup>9</sup> This acculturative role performed by the towns expanded under the Tudor state. In 1537, in Kilkenny city, although "the King's writ ran in the county, the [rural] inhabitants... used the Brehon law between themselves...[and]...in cases arising between them and the inhabitants of the town." However, "in cases entirely between townfolk...the common law was used." Then, by about 1547, Brehon law had virtually disappeared

from County Kilkenny, displaced by the law of the towns and by the "reassertion of the authority of the Crown after the suppression of the Kildare [Silken Thomas] rebellion."<sup>10</sup>

Governance within these trading towns in the early 16th century fell mainly to the resident, wealthy merchants, a fact bolstered because their prosperity, and that of their towns, had increased in the 15th and 16th centuries.<sup>11</sup> That trade and prosperity existed in Thomastown too is apparent from a charter granted by Queen Mary in 1553. In recognition of its trading function, the charter gave the town a market day every Monday and an annual fair in early May. Of utmost importance though, it reaffirmed Thomastown's legal status as a corporation. At least from that time, Thomastown borough had local officials – a sovereign and portrieve selected from among the corporation's burgesses and freemen. It also had a court. Also crucial was that the borough gained the right to elect two members of parliament – a prerogative which it maintained until the Act of Union in 1800.<sup>12</sup>

The integrity of Thomastown as a legally-defined locality was thus re-stated through the 1553 charter. Indeed, its financial position could improve as a result. In 1566, for example, when the portrieve, commoners and inhabitants of the town of Gowran were given an exemption from paying the county cess (military tax), it was noted that the towns of Kilkenny and Thomastown had already received such a benefit.<sup>13</sup> Thus, corporation status could yield financial advantages which were important to the growth and independence of the locality.

At the same time, Thomastown's corporate status had another important feature. Its formal structure allowed the agents of the Tudor state to increase their presence and control in the locality. This became especially apparent during the reign of Elizabeth (1558-1603). Indeed, because of the polarised political climate surrounding her accession and because of her policy to re-conquer and pacify Ireland, the English state became more visible than ever before, often entering the Thomastown area through its corporation. An early example was on Elizabeth's accession in 1558 when a commission was sent to muster forces in County Kilkenny to counter possible rebellion. How was this done? The corporation

sovereigns of Kilkenny city, Callan and Thomastown were among those ordered to carry out the orders.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, both the penetration of the English state and the maintenance of a locality's autonomy and integrity were mutually inter-dependent processes at the time. This was reflected in the Crown's more general goal of finally pacifying Ireland – of re-establishing control from the centre and for the Crown. Thomastown was directly affected by three policies which came out of this goal: plantations, increasing coercion and expanding bureaucracies.

**The plantation policy** was to confiscate lands from the Irish and introduce English colonists: "sturdy agricultural communities that would establish and defend their own economy" with an English system of local organisation and law enforcement. The policy had begun during Mary's reign in 1557 when the midlands north of County Kilkenny, in Leinster province, had been shired: Queen's and King's Counties were thus established and Maryborough made the nucleus of a town. As a result, "pressure on the Pale was...reduced [and] communications between Dublin, the Ormond lordship, and, eventually, south Munster were made more secure" even though "the efforts of the dispossessed to eject the newcomers did not cease until the end of the century."<sup>15</sup>

In the Thomastown area, there is evidence of only one expropriation to make way for new settlers. It related to key property: church and transport. In 1563, a "licence was given to the... occupiers of the ferry of Waterford...to alienate to any of the English nation said ferry...and the rectory of Thomastown."<sup>16</sup> The plantation policy then, from Thomastown's perspective, was important largely for the direct communication links which were established from Dublin southwards and for the way in which these links penetrated the Ormond hegemony. Equally important though, and related to these plantations, was the increased presence in and around the town of the **coercive and military agents of the central authority.**

A rebellion in Munster (1567-69) barely touched Thomastown and, like the rest of south-east Ireland, the borough avoided the worst effects of the Elizabethan wars. A small uprising may have taken place in the Thomastown

locality in 1570, but it was easily resolved because the only documentation is the fact that the sovereign and burgesses of Thomastown were pardoned after paying a £5 fine.<sup>17</sup> However, if actual armed rebellion was minimal in the area, the coercive presence of the Elizabethan state in its efforts to prevent such rebellion was not. In 1571, a commission was sent to Ormond and five others, including Thomas Den, landlord of Grenan, to execute martial law in County Kilkenny. In 1572, a commission was sent to the sovereigns of Kilkenny, Callan and Thomastown corporations and to the provost of Inistioge to assess the inhabitants of the corporations for the men and horse to be supplied. In 1577, when land in Thomastown was leased – “late the lands of Thomas Quermerford, attainted”<sup>18</sup> – it was clear that the Crown’s agents harboured suspicions of rebellion in the area. In 1579, the Lord Lieutenant ordered a post house to be kept in readiness at Thomastown.<sup>19</sup> In 1591, the state papers, presumably as part of an intelligence system, listed the “men of power” in the “towns of note in County Kilkenny” along with their presumed loyalties.<sup>20</sup> In 1598, Thomastown had a military garrison. In 1599, the Lord Lieutenant certified from Thomastown that Lord Mountgarrett “stayed all boats and threatened to kill the boatmen that passed along the Barrow to Waterford.”<sup>21</sup> The tension culminated in May 1603, after the death of Elizabeth, in both the religious and political domains.

There is no doubt that the vast majority of inhabitants adhered to the old religion and when Queen Elizabeth died, they assumed that King James...would favour them and took possession of the churches, not only in Waterford, but also in Thomastown. But the Government reacted strongly and the Lord Deputy (Mountjoy) marched south with a force of 1,200 foot and 200 horse.<sup>22</sup>

Mountjoy went from Leighlin to Thomastown. He wrote: “In Thomastown...they had set up the mass with as much insolency as the rest” and, it was while in Thomastown, that he “received the letter and libel from Waterford.” However, Thomastown was

a poor incorporate town, yet not free from the disorders of the richer and greater towns. But because the

inhabitants were poor and simple people and seemed to have been drawn to offend by the example of their neighbours, they were only commanded to confess their faults and to forbear the like attempts against the law hereafter and it was thought punishment enough that the army was lodged in the town one night.<sup>23</sup>

In Waterford, Mountjoy was initially refused “entry on the basis of immunities conferred by a 400-year-old charter.” However, “throughout his progress, ...he briskly disposed of municipal presumptuousness in Kilkenny, Thomastown, ...Waterford.” In so doing, he stressed “the jurisdictional implications of the townsmen’s activities:” that he could “prevent the unauthorised profession of catholicism and...place garrisons where he wished” whilst permitting “private worship until he received firm instructions in the matter from James.”<sup>24</sup> In 1603, Thomastown’s church was reported as “reconciled.”<sup>25</sup>

The penetration of the state through coercive measures had been related to the political and religious upheavals of the Elizabethan period, the plantations and the policy of reconquest. It was accompanied by another, and related, policy: **the expansion of bureaucracy**, both in estate management and government. In this context, and in response, people in localities such as Thomastown tried to retain their political integrity and independence by using a manoeuvrability which came out of their links to wider trading networks.

The plantation process had provided an impetus to mapping and to more bureaucratic domination, both from regional and national sources. During 1566 and 1567, all of Ormond’s lands were listed along with precise measurements of what they contained.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the transactions published as part of the *Ormond Deeds* show the concern at the time with establishing legal continuity and precedents in landholding. Thus, in the numerous leases from the Thomastown area, lands were well-defined and clearly measured. They therefore could be conveyed intact from lease to lease and from tenant to tenant. In 1584, for example, three Thomastown merchants, Nicholas Den, John Roth Fitz David and James Broder leased land in Thomastown from Ormond. The deed shows that these were the precise lands formerly held by Oliver Grace, gentleman, at £5 per annum for 21 years.<sup>27</sup>

This detailed approach reflected efforts by landlords to regularise and bureaucratise the administration of their estates. In 1585, landlord Thomas Den of Grenan was amongst those appointed as “attorney” for letting Ormond’s lands for 21-year terms at rents which “said attorneys should think reasonable.” The attorneys also were given “full power” to “hear and determine complaints of tenants, ...to call to account all the Earl’s officers,” and to measure his lands.<sup>28</sup>

Such bureaucratic style and intervention also came from the state. A few years before Ormond mapped his lands, Elizabethan courts had entered the locality. From the so-called manors of Thomastown, Grenan and Jerpoint, the number of charges which they heard increased over time.<sup>29</sup> In only two of these cases were the issues described. In 1560, a Thomastown boatman was charged with “conveying stolen sows across the river at Ross” and, in 1561, a Dublin man was charged with the death of a Thomastown boatman. The courts, therefore, were seemingly concerned with everyday offences and, importantly, with raising funds through fines. These were recorded for three of the offences in 1571: a “gentleman” was fined £3 and two others were fined £4 and 20 shillings respectively (their offences were not recorded). Finally, the occupations of people who came before the court, when given, suggest that the court incorporated people from all levels of society, although it emphasised members of the elite and their dependants as well as farmers. Of those charged whose occupations were given, seven were gentlemen, five were husbandmen and four were horsemen. There was also one groom, one widow and one labourer.<sup>30</sup>

In this context of increasing state vigilance, coercion and bureaucracy, corporate boroughs continued to assert their political integrity, at least in relation to each other and to trade. In fact, “the monopolistic trading rights of the burgesses and inhabitants were jealously guarded, and improved wherever possible.”<sup>31</sup> So, for example, in 1579, the sovereign of Kilkenny Corporation wrote to Thomastown’s sovereign forbidding him to take tolls for the passage of townsmen of Kilkenny.<sup>32</sup>

Partly because of such rights, the citizens of Waterford were described in 1577 as having “an abundance of wealth”

derived from their trading links with south-west England, Spain and France: “There belongeth more ships to the cities of Waterford and Wexford than to all Ireland besides.” As of 1600, Waterford “remained an important and prosperous port town.” In such a context, “inland communication...by road [remained] notoriously bad” and Thomastown, as a result, retained its important position as an inland trading depot on the river Nore. This position was enhanced by the colonial nature of the trade at the time: primary goods, only occasionally processed (fish, hides, wool, linen, wax, tallow, timber and staves), were collected in inland depots and sent on for export. In turn, imported goods (salt, coal, iron, wine and luxury commodities) were received and distributed inland.<sup>33</sup> It was this location – on the Nore, at the head of navigation within a mercantile economy – that enabled Thomastown’s merchant enterprises to persist over the entire period, as they traded along the Waterford-Thomastown axis and as members of such families located themselves in both trading centres. Data from several conveyances in the *Ormond Deeds* show the outlines of such a mercantile enterprise in Thomastown: its kinship base, its continuity over the 15th century and its location along the trading network (see Case 1, below).

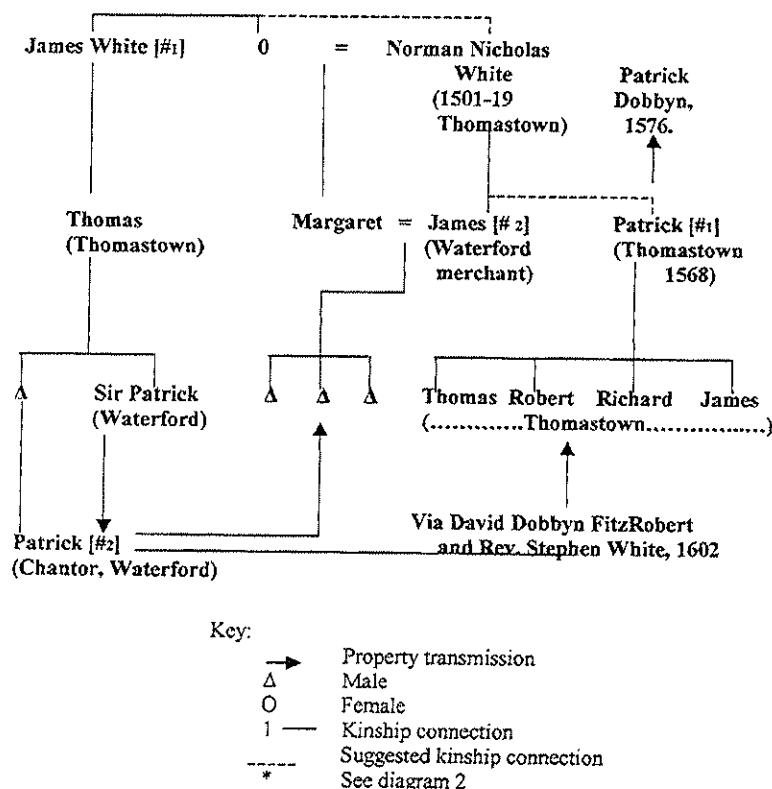
\*\*\*\*\*

#### Case 1: Data on the White Family Enterprise, 1501-1602

Between 1501 and 1519, Nicholas White of Thomastown (Diagram 1, below) gave evidence at an inquisition. In 1568, burgess Patrick White of Thomastown leased a Waterford property to a Waterford merchant for 150 years at 4s. per year. Eight years later, in 1576, an alderman (Patrick Dobben), a chaplain and a merchant (all of Waterford) “recovered against Patrick White all his lands in Waterford.” Then, in 1602, a Patrick White (designated #2 in Diagram 1), chantor of Holy Trinity Cathedral in Waterford, nephew and heir of Sir Patrick White, “late of Waterford, surviving feoffee [heir] of the lands that belonged to Thomas White Fitz James, late of Thomastown, in the city and suburbs of Waterford...as well as in Thomastown and elsewhere in Ireland,” granted to David

Dobben Fitz Robert, Waterford, merchant, and Stephen White of Waterford, clerk, professor of divinity, a series of properties in Waterford and Thomastown (including a weir and bakehouse) "with the intent that they shall be...[held for]...the use of four brothers (Thomas, Robert, Richard and James White Fitzpatrick), all of Thomastown, and to the male heirs of James White Fitz Nicholas, late of Waterford, merchant, by his wife Margaret Norman, cousin germain of Thomas White, the elder, late of Thomastown."<sup>34</sup>

Diagram 1



From the above data, we can see that the White enterprise continued for at least 100 years – through the entire 16th century and its dislocations. The main features of the enterprise were that it was rooted in extended kinship ties which remained located, over the entire period, in two key nodes of the trading network – Waterford and Thomastown. The White kinship network also had two further features. First, it was tightly-knit by virtue of cousin marriage. Second, the property rights of the White women were circumscribed. This emerges from the 1602 deed. Here, the male children of Margaret Norman White were said to be entitled to an interest in the estate of Patrick White #2 because she was his grandfather's niece, not because her children were descended in the White male line (via Nicholas White). However, the fact that she had married her cousin (James White) meant that any property which she inherited as a niece stayed within the White family enterprise. Cousin marriage thus allowed the men of a family to retain control over women's property and over any rights which they might have to such property. Moreover, the fact that only Margaret's sons (and not her daughters) were willed property suggests that her rights as an heir were only guaranteed because she was related both by blood *and* marriage to the Whites.

All this suggests that the White family, as merchants, followed several strategies. They limited the number of kin by practising cousin marriage; they constrained the dispersal of family property by such marriage; they controlled the rights of women to family property; and they extended their kin net into the key localities which made up the trading network. Such strategies were likely aided by the facts that segments of the White family were upwardly mobile and their enterprise was economically diversified. The White kinship net extended into the clergy and the minor aristocracy while their merchant-based interests extended to rural agricultural properties, bakehouses and weirs. Finally, the White kinship net linked them to other merchants' enterprises and families. Particularly visible were members of the Dobbyn family who had likely intermarried with the Whites given Patrick Dobbyn's quarrel with Patrick White in 1576 and given that Stephen White was a trustee of the 1602 will (Case 1). The

Dobbys, too, were Thomastown merchants who straddled the Waterford-Thomastown trade axis and who achieved long-term longevity in their trading enterprises during the 16th century (Case 2).

Case 2: Data on the Dobbyn Family, Thomastown Merchants, 1501-1602

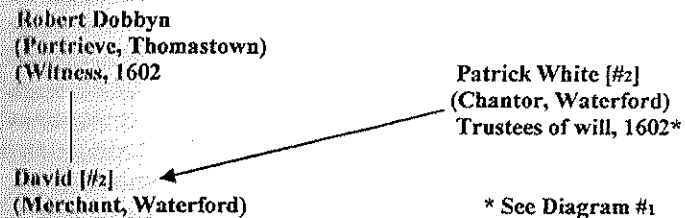
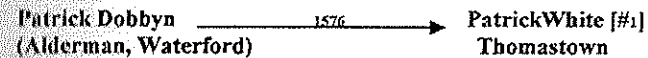
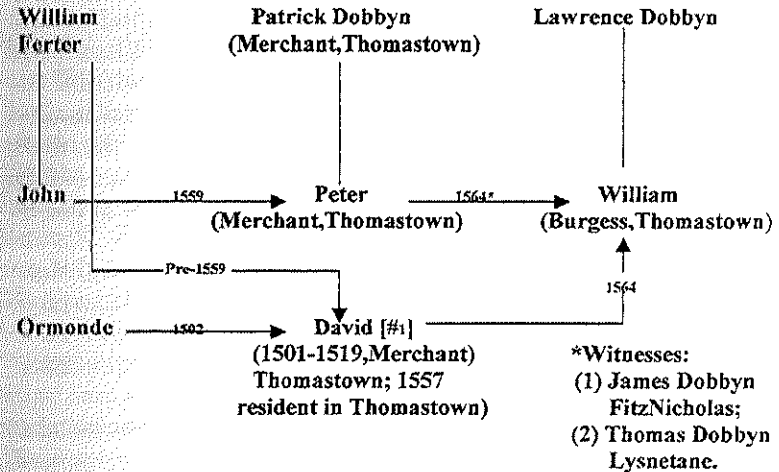
David Dobbyn (see Diagram 2, below) gave evidence at an inquisition, along with Nicholas White, between 1501 and 1519.<sup>35</sup> He also was said to be a merchant of Thomastown when he received a grant of a tenement and garden from Ormond in 1502 (for a term of 49 years "at 2/- of good and usual money"). He also was mentioned in 1557 as resident in Thomastown.

In 1559, Peter Dobbyn (son of Patrick), designated a merchant of Thomastown, received property in Thomastown borough for "the use of William Dobben Fitz Laurence, burgess of Thomastown," for 41 years beginning in 1564 when "the old indentures made of said lands between [an earlier grantor]...and David Dobbyn shall expire."

It was a Patrick Dobbyn, a Waterford alderman, who recovered the lands of Patrick White of Thomastown in 1576 and it was a David Dobben Fitz Robert, a Waterford merchant, who was a trustee of Patrick White's will in 1602 which was witnessed by Robert Dobbyn, portrieve of Thomastown.<sup>36</sup>

The data for the Dobbyn kinship net and enterprise are far poorer than those for the White family. Yet, the data suggest that the Dobbyn family was far larger and more dispersed than was the White family and that their enterprise was more localised in the Thomastown area although it, too, was sited in Waterford. More generally, though, both cases illustrate that the political and economic conditions at the time favoured long-term continuity for at least some merchant enterprises

Diagram 2



\* See Diagram #1

and for some of their kinship segments. Indeed, almost a century later in 1693, Thomastown's Corporation Book listed Dobbys and Whites as freemen and burgesses.

By 1598, County Kilkenny was described "as having 'the most show of civilitie of any of the border counties, in respect of the fayre seats of houses, the number of castles and Inglysh

manner of inclosure of their grounds.’<sup>37</sup> In the context of this Anglo-centric viewpoint, the situation in 1603 is especially relevant. For Thomastown was indeed an Anglo-Norman town. Of the 54 people who were brought before Elizabeth’s courts between 1560 and 1601, 16 came from within the borough walls of Thomastown; 16 came from Grenan manor, directly across the river Nore; and 22 came from the more rural locality of Newtown-Jerpoint, near the the former Abbey. According to their surnames, the ethnic backgrounds of the 54 were:

	Irish	Anglo-Norman	Total
Thomastown	2	14	16
Grenan	4	12	16
Newtown-Jerpoint	15	7	22

Clearly, residence in Thomastown borough was associated with Anglo-Norman descent, as the town had remained, throughout its history thus far, an English settlement. Moreover, areas adjacent to the borough (Grenan) were far more Anglo-Norman than more rural areas (Jerpoint).

In the context of such continuity, the town also had experienced the penetration of numerous agents and institutions of the English state. In fact, the town’s persistence over this period had not been inevitable. For the late 16th and early 17th centuries saw major changes in Ireland’s urban landscape. In addition to the newly-planted towns in Munster and Ulster were “wild fluctuations in the fortunes of the older towns.”<sup>38</sup> Such fluctuation was manifested, not in Thomastown however, but in Newtown-Jerpoint. In about 1603, the borough was last mentioned as an inhabited town and, when the area was again mapped in 1656, nothing was shown of either the town or its bridge. Sometime after 1603, Newtown-Jerpoint had been deserted.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, there had been a rebellion in Ulster. With its collapse in 1603,

not only was lordship [e.g. Ormond] everywhere abolished as a basis for power, and the exclusive sovereignty of the crown everywhere vindicated, but, for the first time in Irish history, all the inhabitants of the island were made subject to the authority of one government. ...But it was ...pregnant with consequence

that the century of struggle had decided that the authority was to be an English one.<sup>40</sup>

### The English State and the Conquest, 1603 -1652

The process of state penetration into local areas continued during the Stuart period. It was reflected in even greater efforts at bureaucratic domination and revenue collection. Tithes, parliamentary representation, court jurisdictions, licencing, military burdens and public works were all features through which the organisational and monetary interests of the English state were increasingly experienced by people in Thomastown. Thus, in 1606, after Thomastown church had been “reconciled,” the tithes payable from the rectory of Thomastown and Columkille were listed: “40 pecks of wheat, 80 of oats and 30 of beans, peas and barley, Kilkenny measure and valued at £12 per annum.”<sup>41</sup> Also reconciled was Thomastown borough. In 1613, it was one of the five boroughs in County Kilkenny to send burgesses to Parliament.<sup>42</sup> In 1616, yet another royal charter was granted to the town, this time from James I. It “confirmed the rights and privileges granted by the previous charters.” It also authorised “the Sovereign and Burgesses to appoint a Recorder learned in the law, one or more sergeants at mace and such other inferior officers as to them might seem expedient.” The reason for these officials was because “authority was given to hold a weekly court” each Tuesday and “to try all cases arising *within the town, but not elsewhere.*”<sup>43</sup> Thus, at one and the same time, Thomastown Corporation was permitted to broaden its legal bureaucracy while, simultaneously, its jurisdiction was narrowed. The town had more officials who could wield the law but a smaller locality within which they could do so.

In the same year as the charter, a licence was granted to a Thomastown inhabitant (Pierce Dodd) and his son (George) to sell wine and spirits.<sup>44</sup> Both Pierce and George Dodd had been convicted in court in 1601 but this apparently did not interfere with their licence. Instead, both the charter and the licence reflected the interests of the state in expanding its own jurisdiction by licencing certain actions while, at the same time, limiting the jurisdiction of constituent units such as corporations. The state also was concerned with collecting

revenue, billeting on the public purse and carrying out public works. In 1627 and 1628, the boroughs of Thomastown, Gowran, Callan and Inistioge were jointly ordered to maintain troops for three months.<sup>45</sup> In 1634, an act was passed "empowering royal justices and justices of the peace in quarter sessions, with the assent of the grand jury, to levy charges on localities for building and repairing bridges and causeways on the king's highways."<sup>46</sup> A year later was passed "the first Irish act requiring sellers of drink to be licensed by magistrates."<sup>47</sup> In 1637, a troop of horse were garrisoned in Thomastown and the inhabitants, along with those of Callan, Gowran and Inistioge, were made responsible for the costs.<sup>48</sup>

This billeting foreshadowed the next political crisis. By 1641, "there was almost universal discontent in Ireland." Catholics had been "exposed to various discriminations" and, although the "Old English Catholics as a body still retained their property, ...they had received clear warning... that they too might face confiscation." Their "fears had [also] been raised by their steady exclusion from public office." Finally, "the old Gaelic aristocracy...had not been able to adjust to a society where hereditary status was no longer impregnable." In the "hopes of undoing the plantation and all its consequences," a rising took place in Ulster in October 1641. "By the summer of 1642, the revolt had spread to all Ireland and was having repercussions in Europe." Earlier, in mid-April of 1642, the towns of Waterford and Limerick had admitted Irish garrisons; papal intervention had secured the return of trained, Irish military officers serving in Spain; and the Irish clergy had declared the war a "just one," excommunicating all Catholics who supported the Dublin (English) administration and who did not join the war. Finally, by the spring of 1642, the various interests in Ireland had decided that there was a need for systematic organisation amongst themselves and for "nation-wide authority."<sup>49</sup>

This authority was established at a meeting in Kilkenny city in June 1642. An "oath of association" was drawn up; distinctions between Old Irish and Old English were declared ended; and the Catholic Confederacy of Ireland was established. An executive council was set up and an assembly established. By the time the assembly met in October 1642 at

the home of a Kilkenny city merchant, civil war had erupted in England between royalists and parliament. This "helped to clarify the issues and unite the confederate Catholics" who, at the assembly and in their oath, undertook "to defend the king's rights." For "they were well aware that what toleration they had enjoyed in recent years had been because the laws against them had been suspended by the exercise of the royal prerogative." The Kilkenny Confederacy, by implication, affirmed that the sole authority "was the king and his Irish parliament."<sup>50</sup>

With Kilkenny city the locale of a central government and central administration, Thomastown was inevitably brought into the confederacy. Ormond himself was unable to keep his own estates out of the rebellion. Indeed, most of his kin were key participants. They "believed that all their possessions were in jeopardy." Kilkenny city, moreover, "was a stronghold of the Catholic faith. ... Nearly every merchant and local gentleman had a member of his family in the priesthood."<sup>51</sup>

Ormond was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1643 and, therefore, the king's representative for negotiating with the confederacy. It had become a situation in which "monarchy and papacy could no longer succeed in tolerating one another in practice under legal systems theoretically in conflict". The confederates were caught between these two intolerant systems. In such a context, complex negotiations and intricate strategies were carried out by the numerous interests. There was Ormond, usually as the king's representative; the various factions among the confederate Catholics; papal agents; the clergy in Ireland; the English parliament; and the English army. Thus, for example, in 1646, "the confederate delegates in Dublin signed a peace with Ormond. ...On certain points it was satisfactory, especially to the Old English, for it safeguarded their right to a place in public life and reversed [earlier] confiscations." A "synod of the clergy" rejected it, supported by the Old English in the towns.<sup>52</sup> In other words, a division existed between the landed class and the merchants; and the immediate outcome of the incident was to highlight this political rift.

All this points to the complexity of political life and of the factions at the time. For if Kilkenny city was a centre of



government and administration, it also "was a hotbed of intrigue and rivalry, fuelled by...unresolved tensions."<sup>53</sup> Yet, what is striking about the little that is known of Thomastown's experience during the ideological, political and military struggles of the day is the way in which local life simply went on. One bureaucracy simply replaced another, at least in relation to tax collection. In 1644, "receipts for the funds of Confederate Catholics in Ireland," a sum of £19.15.19, were signed by Dr. Owen Fennell for the excise of Thomastown. At that time, Nicholas Dobbyn, of the merchant family, along with James Walsh (both Old English), were "farmers of the excise." In November 1646, they sent £2.18.10 to the Court of Revenue and, exactly a year later, they lodged the same amount for the April 1 to August 8th period.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, the military – except that now it was the confederate army – continued its exactions. The commander of the Thomastown garrison wrote to confederate General Preston from Thomastown in May 1647: "I am distracted by orders and counter-orders about provision for men in this town. ...I hope you will send us orders to march to you if there be means of subsistence there." Indeed, Thomastown was one of the headquarters for the confederate army. The others were Kilkenny city, Gowran, Castlecomer and "where the council and general shall think fit." Thus, in July 1647, General Preston went to Thomastown to "receive from its sovereign certain powder to be brought into the store." A receipt was issued for 75 kegs "which have been given him by Edmund Arland, sovereign of Thomastown." Although there is no record that he was paid for the powder, merchant Arland was given 40s. "for carriage of same."<sup>55</sup>

In January 1649, an agreement was finally negotiated by which "the confederate government was dissolved." But it was already too late. Two weeks later, Charles I was executed by parliament. In July, the English garrison in Dublin was reinforced, Ormond's army was routed and "Oliver Cromwell was able to land unopposed...on August 15 with the main army of 12,000 men for the conquest of Ireland."<sup>56</sup>

Wexford was besieged by Cromwell's commonwealth forces during early October and was taken amidst great slaughter. Cromwell marched to New Ross; it too was taken. His generals

"occupied Inistioge without fighting, but found the bridge at Thomastown broken down and the walled town garrisoned" by Ormond while "the bulk of Ormond's army retired towards Kilkenny." Because "the road to Tipperary was open, Cromwell wheeled off to Carrick," taking Knocktopher as he went towards Waterford. The following February, Cromwell approached Kilkenny where plague was decimating the defenders. Along the way, he took Thomastown.<sup>57</sup> Wrote Cromwell:

Our men attempting to take Thomastown the enemy made no great resistance, but by the advantage of the bridge, quitted the town and fled to a castle [Grenan Castle] about half a mile distant. That night...we summoned the said castle and it was surrendered to us; the enemy leaving their arms, drums, colours and ammunition behind them and promising never to bear arms against the Parliament of England.<sup>58</sup>

In March, about 130 Commonwealth soldiers of various regiments and troops were billeted in Thomastown. A petition was sent to Ormond from the town's "sovereign and commoners" complaining that the "poor corporation of Thomastown, besides their proportion of the winter quarter," were being assigned the 130 soldiers who were "appointed to get lodging" with their "full means being...paid out of the county [funds]. Yet notwithstanding, they take meat and drink and lodging in the said poor corporation and pay nothing for the same" while they "exact for every soldier nine pence per week for their lodging." Moreover, "some...by stealth and otherwise do take from the inhabitants of said corporation all such foods as they can light on." A few nights before, apparently, several "took away one barrel of herrings of the goods of Michael White of the said town, value 24/-, and broke and carried away with them the most of 3 other barrels and wasted and consumed all the roots and herbage of the said town to the utter ruin and undoing of the said inhabitants." In addition, two disbanded troops, although having been paid, "distrainted upon lands of the said town, exacting and demanding means after this disbanding." Their cost, "for lodging, fire and candlelight only," amounted to £7.2.6." The petitioners asked that Ormond "require the said soldiers,

troops and officers to remove out of the said town into their quarters;" that he "compel their officers to make satisfactions...of their past damages;" and that he "require the two troops to restore the said distress by them wrongfully taken, and not to exact more means within the said corporation." Ormond, in turn, ordered "that satisfaction be forthwith made unto the petitioners of what shall appear by proof to have been exacted from them ...beyond their dues."<sup>59</sup>

It also has been recorded that, in 1650, 50 of Thomastown's inhabitants were hanged by a Colonel Axtell. Pilsworth, however, writing in 1953, was "unable to obtain confirmation of this" and argued that we know little of the fate of the inhabitants.<sup>60</sup> However, the Cromwellian administration remained. In January 1651, orders were given to the governors of Carlow, Leighlin, Kilkenny, Thomastown and Ross "to put Commonwealth boats lying in their towns in repair".<sup>61</sup> Then, in 1652, the "act for the settling of Ireland" was passed by the English parliament.<sup>62</sup> Ireland had been "reduced to the status of a conquered colony and preparations were made for a vast settlement of the country".<sup>63</sup>

### **Thomastown 1200-1652: The Market and the State**

After the mid-13th century, urban places which were marketing and trading depots in the European and international mercantile economy gradually achieved, and then maintained, a high degree of autonomy from central authority. This was associated with local economic prosperity, improving urban infrastructures, an accumulation of merchant capital, and the emergence of local political control by resident merchant families. In Thomastown, as in other towns, royal charters underwrote the legal basis and urban functions for this urban autonomy and for the merchant class. These towns also remained centres of Anglo-Norman culture and the sources out of which acculturative influences spread into the Gaelic countryside.

The importance of these centres, their wealth and their merchant classes, had survived the disturbances associated with elite factionalism, the Gaelic revival, the withdrawal of the Crown's authority after the mid-13th century and the establishment of local and regional lordships. They also

persisted through the decline of feudalism in the late 15th century. In an inland place such as Thomastown, integrity and prosperity were maintained, politically, by the security provided by the hegemony of the Ormond lordship in Tipperary and Kilkenny and, economically, by the role which the town and its merchants played in international trading networks. In Thomastown, too, urban prosperity and merchant wealth was associated with the persistence of landed families and a continuity in the town's complex division of labour and internal class distinctions.

Then, in the early 16th century, the Crown and the state came back. The independence of towns was enhanced as the state strengthened and used their urban structures in order to infiltrate. Corporation status became a key component in this two-sided process whereby urban autonomy increased as the state penetrated. There also was a cultural dimension to this process. Trading towns were centres of Anglo-Norman culture, language and legal forms as well as centres of trade and commerce. For all these reasons, corporate towns could be used as beachheads for launching the re-conquest of Ireland by the English state. Plantations, coercion and bureaucratisation were the mechanisms. The Protestant reformation, however, separated these towns from the interests and agents of the English state. English politics and Irish factionalism fomented rebellion and, in response, a bloody and complete military conquest ensued.

Between the founding of Thomastown in about 1200 and the Cromwellian conquest in 1649, the town and its commercial role on the river Nore, in the south-eastern region and in international trade, had persisted. So, too, had the nature of Irish commercial activity which, up to 1660, had "formed part of a simple colonial trading pattern in which a...small range of primary products was exchanged for manufactured goods, luxuries, and some essential raw materials."<sup>64</sup> Thomastown's urban functions, in trade and defence, had persisted alongside while, at the same time, the town had added other functions along the way: administrative, local marketing and cultural ones. At least some of the town's merchant families had endured as had the borough's autonomy; and both occurred in association with a centralising

state. Thus, as a small centre of so-called civilised existence,<sup>66</sup> Thomastown by the mid-17th century illustrated how physical location, the political history of Ireland and the course of European commerce had been intertwined over the centuries.<sup>66</sup>

### Notes

1. This early history of Thomastown is described in Silverman 1998.
2. Butlin 1977:65.
3. Quinn 1987c:687.
4. MacCurtain 1972:14, 20.
5. The elite factionalism underlying this rebellion has been described in detail (e.g. Quinn & Nicholls 1976 and Quinn 1987a, 1987b, 1987c and Lydon [1973]). "Silken" Thomas Fitzgerald, a son of the Earl of Kildare, "enraged at the treatment of his father, whom he mistakenly believed to have been executed, ...renounced his allegiance to King Henry VIII, enlisted support in the Pale and hinterland, and...laid siege to Dublin Castle. ...The rebels...failed either to intimidate Dublin or to take the castle, and support for Silken Thomas had already declined when Sir William Skeffington...took Maynooth Castle, the Fitzgerald stronghold, in March 1535. ...The summary execution of its defenders provided a demonstration of power and a presage of the further use of force. ...The ruin of the Fitzgeralds [also] foreshadowed something that Ireland had not previously experienced, [- -]the effective exercise of centralised authority" (Hayes-McCoy 1976a:40).
6. Pilsworth n.d., citing *The Earls of Kildare*, 1858. Pilsworth called the Thomastown affray a "pitched battle" (1953:12); Bagwell termed it a "skirmish" (1885, i:167). Regardless, the rebellion "gives a romantic flavour, spiced with tragedy, ...to the last days of a period in which feudal autonomy and aristocratic licence were...about to give place to the prosaic working of the expanding bureaucratic English state" (Quinn 1987c:687).
7. MacCurtain 1972:20.
8. Pilsworth 1953:49. Bagwell also noted that education was almost entirely in the hands of monasteries, including the fact that "boys were cared for by the Cistercians of...Jerpoint" (1885, i:299-300).
9. Butlin 1977:76.
10. Nicholls 1972:48-9.
11. Butlin 1977:76.
12. Pilsworth 1953:12. Although no Corporation or borough records survive for Thomastown prior to 1693, Pilsworth concluded that the corporation was set up by Thomas Fitzanthonys original charter. He no doubt took this from a British parliamentary inquiry in 1835 which stated that "the borough appears to have been incorporated by a charter of Thomas Fitz-Anthony, without date, which is preserved on the patent roll. (Rot. Pat 32, 33 Henry VIII., p.1, m.9, d)."
13. Pilsworth n.d., citing James Morrin (ed.), *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Ireland, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I*: 501. The cess was levied to pay for the English army; it was objected to everywhere. Landholders in the Pale and in Anglo areas argued that "fair prices for food for the army,

- which they were willing to supply, should be fixed" by parliament. However, "the cess, by which provisions were taken up 'at mean and low prices'...was no better than the coyne and livery that successive statutes had proscribed" (Hayes-McCoy 1976c:103).
14. Pilsworth n.d., citing James Morrin (ed.), *Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Ireland, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I*:412.
  15. Hayes-McCoy 1976b: 78-79. The varying aspects of re-conquest and pacification, its association with the Protestant reformation and the rebellions generated in many parts of Ireland, were discussed in, for example, Hayes-McCoy (1976a, b and c) and MacCurtain (1972).
  16. Pilsworth n.d., citing Elizabethan Fiants in *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records of Ireland*:4133.
  17. Pilsworth 1953:12 and Pilsworth n.d., citing Elizabethan Fiants from *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Ireland*:2070. Similar fines were paid by Cashel (£5), Callan (£13.6.8), Carrick-on-Suir (£3), Gowran (£4), Inistioge (£3), Fethard (£10), Knocktopher (£4) and Clonmel (£10).
  18. Pilsworth n.d., citing Elizabethan Fiants in *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records of Ireland*:1831; 2117; 3012.
  19. Pilsworth n.d., citing *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* xi:270.
  20. The towns listed were Kilkenny, Callan, Thomastown, Jeryponde (Jerpoint) and Inistioge. Included on the list were Ormond, Mountgarret, various Butlers, "the Walshes, a great sect at the Earl of Ormond's command, Graces, Shortalls, ...Dennes and Sweetmans. All faithful save the Graces who do often break out" (Pilsworth n.d., citing *Calendar of State Papers*, 1509-1603).
  21. Pilsworth n.d., citing *Calendar of State Papers*, 1509-1603.
  22. Pilsworth 1953:13.
  23. Pilsworth n.d., *Calendar of State Papers*, Ireland [C.S.P.I.], 1603-1606:37, 39.
  24. The other towns that Mountjoy entered were Clonmel, Wexford, Cork, Limerick and Cashel (Clarke 1976b:189).
  25. Pilsworth n.d. citing *Carrigan's History* vol. i:78.
  26. Curtis 1932-43, vol. v, no. 146. This concern with measurement formed a logical part of the plantation schemes but "assumed greater significance as frequent rebellion during Elizabeth's reign brought complete conquest of the island in sight." There also was a growing concern to build roads. (MacCurtain 1972: 95, 98, 100).
  27. Curtis 1932-43, vol. vi, no. 6.
  28. Curtis 1932-43, vol. vi, no. 18.
  29. There was one case in both 1560 and 1561. No further cases were recorded until 1571 when there were eight cases. In 1575, one was recorded and three in 1577. In 1582 there were eight. In 1600 and 1601, however, 20 and 11 cases respectively were heard.
  30. Pilsworth n.d., citing Elizabethan Fiants in *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records of Ireland*:255, 257, 352, 1831, 1905, 1906, 1917, 2028, 2043, 2044, 2699, 3937, 4341, 6179, 6323, 6440, 6447, 6537, 6564, 6565, 6704 and 6706.
  31. Butlin 1976:161-2.
  32. Pilsworth n.d., citing *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society*

- xi:273.
33. Butlin 1977:92, 162-3, 165.
  34. Curtis 1932-43, vol. 111, no. 301; v, no. 155, 287. It is provocative that of the four burgesses who appealed to the treasurer in Dublin for a tax abatement in around 1331, one was named Richard le Whyt (Pilsworth 1953:10, citing "a deed hitherto unpublished in the MSS Collection of the Rev. James Graves").
  35. Curtis 1932-43, vol iii, no. 301. Provocatively once again, as with the Whites, there also had been a David Dobbyn in Thomastown in 1375 (Curtis 1932-43, vol ii, no. 207).
  36. Curtis 1932-43, vol. iv, no. 67 (appendix); vol. v, nos. 67, 69, 287 (1576) and vol. vi, no. 145 (1602). Also recorded in the *Ormond Deeds* pertaining to Thomastown and vicinity were the following Dobbyns who could not be unconnected to the genealogy (Diagram 2): a daughter of David Dobbyn, wife of Thomas Halseley, no address, in 1375 (Curtis 1932-43, vol. ii, no. 207); Thomas Dobbyn, Lysnetane, gentleman, in 1559 (Curtis 1932-43, vol. v, no. 89); Thomas Dobbyn, Thomastown and his wife Katherin Mouny, in 1602 (Curtis 1932-32, vol vi, no. 145); and Laurence Dobbyn, no address, in 1602 (Curtis 1932-43, vol. vi, no. 145).
  37. Butlin 1976:149.
  38. Butlin 1977:76-77.
  39. Pilsworth 1953: 4. Local lore in the 1980s and earlier has maintained that the town was destroyed by plague. In the early 1980s, a ruined church and graveyard remained.
  40. Hayes-McCoy 1976c:140.
  41. Pilsworth n.d., citing J.C. Erck (ed.), *Patent Rolls of Chancery - Ireland:267*.
  42. Kilkenny city, Callan, Inistioge and Gowran-were the others (Pilsworth n.d., *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland [C.S.P.I.]*, 1608-1610:333).
  43. Pilsworth 1953:14. Italics mine.
  44. Pilsworth 1953:14.
  45. Pilsworth n.d., citing *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* xi:454-6.
  46. This act was 10 Chas I, sess. 2, c.26 (Moody et. al. 1982:230).
  47. This act was 10 & 11 Chas I, c.5 (Moody et. al. 1982:230).
  48. The cost was £35.6.0 for three months. However, "the money so spent could be deducted from the taxes paid to the government." (Pilsworth 1953:14; Pilsworth n.d., citing *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society* xvi:248-9).
  49. Corish 1976a:289, 293, 294, 296, 297, 298.
  50. Corish 1976a:298-300. The complex constitutional questions concerning the roles of, and relationships between, the English and Irish parliaments and the monarchy were discussed in Corish (1976a:300-2).
  51. Corish 1976a:302; 299. Neely 1990:116. For example, Ormond's cousin Lord Mountgarrett headed the provisional executive council of the Confederacy in 1642.
  52. Corish 1976a:312, 320, 321.
  53. Corish 1976b:320, 321.
  54. Pilsworth n.d., *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland [C.S.P.I.]*, 1633-1647:591, 594, 701.

55. Pilsworth n.d., citing *Calendar of State Papers, Ireland [C.S.P.I.]*, 1633-1647:618, 758, 736, 738. Arland's ancestors had come to Thomastown in around 1433 when a Kilkenny city burgess obtained a large amount of land around Thomastown borough from Thomastown's vicar and then quit-claimed it to Laurence Arland (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 105). In 1457, Arland ceded his feof to Edmund, son of Richard Botiller (Butler; Ormond kin) (Curtis 1932-43, vol. iii, no. 198). A hundred years later, in 1569, an Edmund Arland was sovereign of Thomastown (Curtis 1932-43, vol. v, no. 157). To the present day, a small piece of land, adjacent to the river near the old borough wall and containing the Little Mill, is known as Arland's Inch.
56. Corish 1976c:337.
57. Bagwell 1909, ii:204-5, 217; Pilsworth 1953:14.
58. Pilsworth (quoting Cromwell) 1953:15.
59. Pilsworth 1953:14; Pilsworth n.d., citing C.W. Russell & J.P. Prendergast, *Report on Carte M.S.S.*, Bodleian Library, Oxford (1871:81). According to Pilsworth (n.d.), "complaints against the soldiers were general. Gowran claimed £30 for having 'freely and cheerfully entertained 74 cavaliers for the space of six weeks' but could only obtain payment of £8.10.0." The "portrieve and inhabitants of Inistioge declared that they had been so overcharged that all the inhabitants deserted the town last winter save eight."
60. Pilsworth n.d., citing Carrigan vol. iii:44; and Pilsworth 1953:15.
61. Pilsworth n.d., citing P.H. Hore, "Extracts from Books in Bermingham Tower" in *Waterford and Southeastern Ireland Archaeological Society Journal* 14:2 (1911).
62. Bagwell 1909, ii:319.
63. MacCurtain 1972:153.
64. Clarke 1976a:177, 181-3.
65. Butlin 1976:162.
66. This history is continued in Gulliver and Silverman 1995.

## References

- Bagwell, Richard (1885; reprinted 1968)  
*Ireland Under the Tudors*, 3 vols. London: Holland Press.
- British Parliamentary Paper (1885).  
*Report from the Commissioner on Municipal Corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1885, xxviii:573.
- Butlin, R.A. (1977)  
*The Development of the Irish Town*. London: Croom Helm.
- (1976)  
 Irish Towns in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Clarke, Aidan (1976a)  
 The Irish Economy, 1600-60. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- (1976b)

- Pacification, Plantation and the Catholic Question, 1603-1623. With R. Dudley Edwards. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534- 1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Corish, Patrick J. (1976a )  
The Rising of 1641 and the Catholic Confederacy, 1641-45. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- (1976b)  
Ormond, Rinuccini and the Confederates, 1645-9. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- (1976c)  
The Cromwellian Conquest, 1649-53. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Curtis, Edmund (ed.) (1932-43)  
*Calendar of Ormond Deeds 1172-1603*, 6 volumes.
- Gulliver, P.H. & Marilyn Silverman (1995)  
*Merchants and Shopkeepers: A Historical Anthropology of an Irish Market Town, 1200-1990*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hayes-McCoy, G.A. (1976a)  
The Royal Supremacy and Ecclesiastical Revolution, 1534-47. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- (1976b)  
Conciliation, Coercion, and the Protestant Reformation, 1547-71. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- (1976c)  
The Completion of the Tudor Conquest and the Advance of the Counter-Reformation, 1571-1603. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534- 1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Lydon, James (1973)  
*Ireland in the Later Middle Ages*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- MacCurtain, Margaret (1972)  
*Tudor and Stuart Ireland*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Moody, T.W, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.) (1982)  
*A New History of Ireland (Vol VII): A Chronology of Irish History to 1976*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Neely, William (1990)  
The Ormond Butlers of County Kilkenny. In William Nolan & Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society*. Dublin: Geography Publications, 1990.
- Nicholls, Kenneth (1972)  
*Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the Middle Ages*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.
- Pilsworth, W. J. (n.d.)  
Unpublished Notebooks. Private Archives, Thomastown.
- (1953)  
*History of Thomastown and District*, 1st edition. Thomastown: An Tóstal Committee.
- Quinn D.B. (1987a)  
"Irish" Ireland and "English" Ireland. In Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol. II): Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1987b)  
The Hegemony of the Earls of Kildare, 1494-1520. In Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol. II): Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (1987c)  
The Re-emergence of English Policy as a Major Factor in Irish Affairs. In Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol. II): Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Quinn, D.B. & K.W. Nicholls (1976)  
Ireland in 1534. In T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin & F.J. Byrne (eds.), *A New History of Ireland (Vol III): Early Modern Ireland, 1534-1691*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Silverman, Marilyn (1998)  
Medieval Thomastown in Irish History, 1171-1555. In W. Murphy (ed.), *In the Shadow of the Steeple*, No. 6, pp. 49-74. Tullaherin Heritage Society.