Late medieval Ireland is a small but dynamic research area. The following is a selective guide designed to direct the reader to some of the more significant developments of recent years in subjects addressed by the Lecky professors in this volume. Where the Irish material is particularly exiguous, I have made some suggestions from the secondary literature further afield, which I hope may help stimulate comparative ideas on the Irish evidence.¹

**Bibliographies and guides to sources**

The essays printed in this volume represent merely a fraction of the published output of Curtis, Otway-Ruthven and Lydon. For comprehensive bibliographies of their work, see T.W. Moody, ‘The writings of Edmund Curtis’, *IHS*, 3:12 (1943); P.W.A. Asplin, ‘The writings of Prof. A.J. Otway-Ruthven to 1980’ in Lydon, *Eng. & Ire.*; P.W.A. Asplin, ‘Bibliography of J.F. Lydon [to 1993]’ in *Colony and frontier*. For general purposes, P.W.A. Asplin, *Medieval Ireland, c. 1170–1485: a bibliography of secondary works* (1971), with its excellent index, is a useful starting-point despite being over three decades old. Indeed, its value today lies chiefly in the fact that it reflects the fashions of a former era. It must, however, be read alongside the magnificent bibliography Asplin prepared for *NHI*, vol. 2, the second impression of which includes a supplement listing secondary works mostly published between 1986

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the place of publication is Dublin.
and 1993. Recent developments can be traced through the Royal Historical Society online bibliography.²

Approaching primary sources has become less daunting due to the publication of a number of valuable research guides. Philomena Connolly, *Medieval record sources*, Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History, no. 4 (2002), is indispensable. Its counterpart – *Medieval Gaelic sources* by Katharine Simms – is soon to be published in the same series. For invaluable guides to manuscript material in Britain, see B.C. Donovan and D. Edwards, ‘British sources for Irish history before 1485: a preliminary handlist of documents held in local and specialised repositories’, *AH*, 37 (1998); and P. Dryburgh and B. Smith (eds), *Handbook and select calendar of sources for medieval Ireland in the National Archives of the United Kingdom* (TNA, 2005).

**Part 1: Government**

**Chapter 1: Ireland and the English crown, 1171–1541**

This essay would once have been described as an exercise in ‘Anglo-Irish’ history; today, it is more likely to be characterized as a contribution to the ‘new’ (now decidedly mature) British history, a sparkling historiographical introduction to which is S. Duffy, ‘The British perspective’ in S.H. Rigby (ed.), *A companion to Britain in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2003). Among Irish medievalists, the ‘British’ approach is the distinctive calling card of Robin Frame, many of whose essays (collected in Frame, *Ire. & Brit.*) explore the interwoven histories of the two islands. Of these, ‘England and Ireland, 1171–1399’ in Frame, *Ire. & Brit.*, is closest in theme and scope to this chapter. For the end of the medieval period, the work of S.G. Ellis is

² RHS bibliography: http://www.rhs.ac.uk/bibl/bibwel.asp.

Revisionist interpretations of Ireland’s relationship with the English crown have themselves been extensively revised in recent years. J. Gillingham, ‘The English invasion of Ireland’ in idem, *The English in the twelfth century: imperialism, national identity and political values* (Woodbridge, 2000), argues persuasively that ‘English’ is the adjective that distorts our understanding of the invasion least; how and why the invaders were repackaged as ‘Norman’ by historians is a subject Gillingham investigates in ‘Normanizing the English invaders of Ireland’ in H. Pryce and J. Watts (eds), *Power and identity in the Middle Ages: essays in memory of Rees Davies* (Oxford, 2007). W.L. Warren’s sympathetic account of the English crown’s dealings with Gaelic Ireland – first glimpsed in his readable biographies of *King John* (1961) and *Henry II* (1973), and later elaborated in an accumulation of essay-length studies – is systematically demolished by Seán Duffy in ‘King John’s expedition to Ireland, 1210: the evidence reconsidered’, *IHS*, 30:117 (1996); ‘John and Ireland: the origins of England’s Irish problem’ in S.D. Church (ed.), *King John: new interpretations* (Woodbridge, 1999); and ‘Henry II and England’s insular neighbours’ in C. Harper-

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Chapter 2: The chief governors of medieval Ireland

The chief governorship of Ireland continues to generate scholarly interest, though sadly much of the best work remains unpublished. For specific chief governorships (listed here by the date of tenure), see P. Dryburgh, ‘The career of Roger Mortimer, first earl of March (c.1287–1330)’ (PhD, University of Bristol, 2002); R. Frame, ‘The
justiciarship of Ralph Ufford: warfare and politics in fourteenth-century Ireland’, *Studia Hibernica*, 13 (1972); R. Frame, ‘Thomas Rokeby, sheriff of Yorkshire and justiciar of Ireland’, *Peritia*, 10 (1996); P. Connolly, ‘Lionel of Clarence and Ireland, 1361–1366’ (PhD, University of Dublin, 1977); S. Harbison, ‘William of Windsor and Ireland, 1369–76’ (MLitt, University of Dublin, 1977); B. Blacker, ‘Thomas of Lancaster, duke of Clarence, 1388–1421: the consolidation of the Lancastrian dynasty’ (PhD, University of Dublin, 1996). For an intensive examination of the office in first half of the fifteenth century, see E.A.E. Matthew, ‘The governing of the Lancastrian lordship of Ireland in the time of James Butler, fourth earl of Ormond, c.1420–52’ (PhD, University of Durham, 1994), ch. 1, ‘The crown and the chief governorship’. For a slightly earlier period, the work of Dorothy Johnston is useful, esp. ‘Chief governors and treasurers in the reign of Richard II’ in *Colony and frontier*, which includes an edition of Edmund Mortimer’s indenture of 1379 (KR, memo. roll, E 159/194, Trinity communia). A glimpse of the horse-trading that underlay appointments to office is provided in D. Johnston, ‘The draft indenture of Thomas, duke of Gloucester, as lieutenant of Ireland, 1391’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 7:3 (1983). It is no coincidence that the intellectual lineage of each of these authors can be traced back to either Otway-Ruthven or Lydon (or both).

For the holders of the office in its earliest days, see M.T. Flanagan, ‘Household favourites: Angevin royal agents in Ireland under Henry II and John’ in A.P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas: studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (2000). The judicial activities of chief governors can be followed using P. Connolly, ‘Pleas held before the chief governors of Ireland, 1308–76’, *Ir. Jurist*, 18 (1983). The difficulties faced by English-born chief governors in negotiating the divisive internal politics of the colony is the theme
of P. Crooks, ‘The “calculus of faction” and Richard II’s duchy of Ireland, c. 1382–9’ in N. Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth Century England V* (Woodbridge, 2008). S.G. Ellis has demonstrated that the near-monopoly on the office held by the earls of Kildare in the last phase of the medieval lordship was a pragmatic solution to the problem of governing Ireland that allowed the area administered directly by the central government to expand: Ellis, *Reform and revival: English government in Ireland 1470–1534* (Woodbridge, 1986); idem, *Tudor frontiers and noble power: the making of the British state* (Oxford, 1995). Dublin castle – the seat of English governance in Ireland, whose history was first exposed in snapshots in Gilbert, *Viceroy* – is examined in J.F. Lydon, ‘Dublin castle in the Middle Ages’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin III* (2002).

**Chapter 3: William of Windsor and the Irish parliament**

Military interventions funded after 1361 primarily by the English exchequer form the background to this essay. An excellent analysis from an administrative viewpoint is P. Connolly, ‘The financing of English expeditions to Ireland, 1361–1376’ in Lydon, *Eng. & Ire.* Ireland receives an honourable mention in Holmes, *Good parl*, ch. 4. The interconnection between affairs at court and Ireland is further elaborated in S. Harbison, ‘William of Windsor, the court party and the administration of Ireland’ in Lydon, *Eng. & Ire.* P. Crooks, ‘Negotiating authority in a colonial capital: Dublin and the Windsor crisis, 1369–78’ in S. Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin IX* (forthcoming) is less sympathetic to Windsor’s policies. New evidence concerning Windsor’s notorious wife is brought to light in W.M. Ormrod, ‘Who was Alice Perrers?’, *Chaucer Review*, 40:3 (2006).
The chief governorship of Sir William Windsor is merely a prism through which Lydon views the development of the Irish parliament. This field has been left fallow in the decades since. The chapters on the medieval parliament by F.X. Martin and A. Cosgrove in B. Farrell (ed.), *The Irish parliamentary tradition* (1973) are insubstantial and derivative. For a more sophisticated analysis, see A. Cosgrove, ‘Parliament and the Anglo-Irish community: the declaration of 1460’ and S.G. Ellis, ‘Parliament and community in Yorkist and Tudor Ireland’, both in A. Cosgrove and J.I. McGuire (eds), *Parliament and community: historical studies XIV* (Belfast, 1983). The anniversary of the famous Dublin parliament of 1297 was marked by a symposium, but, of the participants, only Lydon specifically addressed parliament as an institution. His essay, ‘Parliament and the community of Ireland’ in Lydon, *Law & disorder*, advances an interpretation first put forward in his work on Sir William Windsor, which in turn was indebted to the views of J.G. Edwards. Thus, the starting-point for all research on the medieval Irish parliament remains Richardson and Sayles, *Ir. parl.*


Some recent work has taken account of Irish evidence. A critical edition of the much-controverted Irish version of the parliamentary treatise, *Modus tenendi*

Chapter 4: The medieval Irish chancery

This remains the standard account of the development of the Irish chancery, although reference should also be made to S.G. Ellis, Reform and revival: English government in Ireland 1470–1534 (Woodbridge, 1986), esp. ch. 6, ‘The seals and the secretariat’; and idem, ‘The privy seals of chief governors in Ireland, 1392–1560’, BIHR, 51
(1978). Otherwise, the literature on the Irish chancery is limited in the extreme. In this respect, the most positive development of recent years is the award of funding in 2007 to the TCD-based ‘Irish Chancery Project’ by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. The ‘Chancery Project’ was the brainchild of Otway-Ruthven, who intended to spend her retirement working on a new calendar of the medieval Irish chancery rolls that would supplant the inadequate Latin calendar published by the Irish Record Commissioners in 1828 (RCH). Illness intervened, but the project proceeded slowly throughout the 1980s under the direction of James Lydon, and a trial reconstruction of a single close roll was published in 1992: E. Dowse and M. Murphy (eds), ‘Rotulus clausus de anno 48 Edward III: a reconstruction’, *AH*, 35 (1992). The new phase of the project – also based at TCD and directed by Katharine Simms – seeks to produce an electronic calendar of the Irish chancery rolls by June 2011, as well as new lists of the personnel of the Irish chancery.

As well as making accessible in English an invaluable corpus of primary material, the new calendar of Irish chancery rolls will allow researchers to examine the institutional development of the Irish chancery in light of the most recent research on its counterparts elsewhere. The development of medieval chanceries in Britain and France was the theme of a conference held at Montréal in September 1995, the proceedings of which have been published as K. Fianu and D.J. Guth (eds), *Écrit et pouvoir dans les chancelleries médiévales: espace Français, espace Anglais* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1997). The essays contained therein on the English royal chancery are particularly relevant to Irish administrative developments, esp. D.A.

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4 See Elizabeth Dowse and Margaret Murphy, ‘The chancery project in the medieval history department, Trinity College, Dublin’, *Humanities Communication Newsletter*, 11 (1989).

Chapter 5: Anglo-Irish shire government in the thirteenth century


The importance of liberties to the governance of the English king’s dominions in the later Middle Ages is demonstrated in S.G. Ellis, ‘The destruction of the liberties: some further evidence’, BIHR, 54:130, (1981). For individual Irish liberties, see C.A. Empey, ‘County Kilkenny in the Anglo-Norman period’ in W. Nolan and K. Whelan (eds), Kilkenny: history and society (1990); ‘The Norman period, 1185–1500’ in W. Nolan and T. McGrath (eds), Tipperary: history and society (1985); ‘The Butler

**Chapter 6. The native Irish and English law in medieval Ireland**


**Part 2. War**
Chapters 7–8: Knight service and royal service in medieval Ireland


Any discussion of feudalism – whether combined with the qualifier ‘military’ or otherwise – must now take account of debates on the supposed ‘tyranny’ of that construct. The key works are E.A.R. Brown, ‘The tyranny of a construct: feudalism and historians of medieval Europe’, *AHR*, 79:4 (1974); and S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals: the medieval evidence reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994). The latter tome is heavy in every sense and, seemingly, more discussed than read; a convenient crib is S.
Reynolds, ‘Fiefs and vassals in Scotland: a view from outside’, *SHR*, 82:214 (2003), whose views on the Scottish evidence are especially relevant to Ireland. As Otway-Ruthven’s approach is undoubtedly Stentonian, D. Bates, ‘Re-ordering the past and negotiating the present in Stenton’s *First century*’ (The Stenton lecture, 1999: Reading, 2000), is useful in providing an appraisal of the work of the great man. Otway-Ruthven’s cool analysis of ‘military feudalism’ is relatively unproblematic on its own terms; more insidious are underlying assumptions (characteristic of her generation) about feudalism’s supposedly illegitimate successor. Aspects of the enormous secondary literature on ‘bastard feudalism’ are discussed, with reference to Ireland, in P. Crooks, ‘Factions, feuds and noble power in the lordship of Ireland, c.1356–1496’, *IHS*, 35:140 (2007), but see also D. Crouch, ‘From Stenton to McFarlane: models of societies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, *TRHS*, 6th ser., 5 (1995); and P. Coss, ‘From feudalism to bastard feudalism’ in N. Fryde, P. Monet and O.G. Oexle (eds), *Die Gegenwart des Feudalismus* (Göttingen, 2002).

**Chapters 9–12: Ireland’s participation in English military activities**


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5 Chapters 9 to 12 are considered here together because of the overlap in subject matter. The title I have chosen for this section of further reading is suggested by the thesis from which much of the material is drawn: James Lydon, ‘Ireland’s participation in the military activities of English kings in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries’ (PhD, University of London, 1955).


All this work can be seen as contributing to the history of the irruption of the English state across Britain and Ireland and indigenous reactions to that process – a subject that has been surveyed with unparalleled insight and eloquence by R.R. Davies, esp. *Domination and conquest: the experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100–1300* (Cambridge, 1990), and *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford, 2000). The limits of English expansion are revealed in M. Prestwich, ‘Colonial Scotland: the English in Scotland under Edward I’ in R. Mason (ed.), *Scotland and England, 1286–1815* (Edinburgh, 1987); R. Frame, ‘Overlordship and reaction, c.1200–c.1450’ in idem, *Ire. & Brit.*; and, more recently, B. Smith, ‘Lordship in the British Isles, c.1320–c.1360: the ebb tide of the English empire?’ in Pryce and Watts (eds), *Power and identity in the Middle Ages*. P. Crooks, ‘State of the Union: perspectives on English imperialism in the late Middle Ages’ (forthcoming), argues that the political and cultural infrastructure of the medieval English ‘empire’ was more durable than has been allowed and that the story should be extended geographically to include the continent and chronologically to (at least) the fall of Bordeaux in 1453.

**Chapter 13. Richard II’s expeditions to Ireland**

In this article, Lydon plugs a hole in Curtis’ account of Richard II and Ireland, which T.F. Tout criticized for its neglect of the wardrobe accounts that shed light on the military side of the first royal expedition.\(^6\) On the English interventions of the later

\(^6\) T.F. Tout, review of Curtis, *Ric. II & Ire.*, in *EHR*, 43:169 (1928): ‘His [Curtis’] subject is not really “Richard II and Ireland” so much as Richard’s relations to the Irish chieftains, up to

Of late, English historians have begun to take heed of Ireland’s role in the events of Richard’s reign and his evolving ideas of kingship. M. Bennett, ‘Richard II and the wider realm’ in A. Goodman and J.L. Gillespie, *Richard II: the art of kingship* (Oxford, 1999), opens up the subject in a stimulating way that has influenced the chapter on Ireland by Richard’s most recent biographer: N. Saul, *Richard II* (London, and during the period of his first Irish expedition. Beyond this his curiosity does not seem to extend. Neither the military details of the expedition, nor the extensive wanderings of the king, nor the personnel of Richard’s following are brought out so exhaustively as the texts would have allowed. And beyond those texts our editor has refused to go. There are sources in the Record Office [PRO] which would have helped to answer questions which he dismisses as hopeless.’

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**Chapter 14. Richard, duke of York, as viceroy of Ireland, 1447–1460**


Much of Curtis’ account is taken up with a recital of events in England before and during the Wars of the Roses. Consequently, there is an ocean of relevant literature available, much of which is usefully synthesized and surveyed in C. Carpenter, *The wars of the roses: politics and the constitution in England, c. 1437–1509* (Cambridge, 1997). Insightful chapters on Ireland punctuate R.A. Griffiths’
magisterial *Reign of Henry VI* (2nd ed., Stroud, 1998), although his picture of aristocratic violence and disorder is unduly negative. One aspect of English affairs that impinged directly on Lancastrian and Yorkist Ireland was the question of the Mortimer claim to the English throne, a matter that has received a good deal of notice due to the publication of a hitherto-unknown document in M. Bennett, ‘Edward III’s entail and the succession to the crown, 1376–1471’, *EHR*, 113:452 (1998). Further to this, see C. Given-Wilson, ‘Legitimation, designation and succession to the throne in fourteenth-century England’ in I. Alfonso, H. Kennedy and J. Escalona (eds), *Building legitimacy: political discourses and forms of legitimation in medieval societies* (Leiden, 2004), and I. Mortimer, ‘Richard II and the succession to the crown’, *History*, 91:303 (2006).

**Part 3. Society**

**Chapters 15–16. Norman settlement and Anglo-Irish agriculture**

Otway-Ruthven’s pioneering contribution to the historiography of European colonization is assessed in J. Gillingham, ‘A second tidal wave? The historiography of English colonization of Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’ in J.M. Piskorski (ed.), *Historiographical approaches to medieval colonization of east central Europe: a comparative analysis against the background of other European inter-ethnic colonization processes in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2002). Robert Bartlett integrates the peripheries (sometimes at the expense of the core) into his stunningly original analysis of Europe’s ‘Europeanization’: *The making of Europe: conquest, colonization and cultural change, 950–1350* (London, 1993). That he could draw so heavily on Irish evidence is in no small part a tribute to Otway-Ruthven, whose work on settlement has been highly influential and embraced by many disciplines, among them archaeology and historical geography. A notable

The most thorough examination of the manorial economy in Ireland is M.C. Lyons, ‘Manorial administration and the manorial economy in Ireland, c.1200–c.1377’, 2 vols (PhD, University of Dublin, 1984), which sadly remains unpublished. The best (albeit rather dry) survey in print is K. Down, ‘Colonial economy and society in the high Middle Ages’ in NHI, vol. 2, which is complemented by K. Nicholls, ‘Gaelic society and economy’ in the same volume. These surveys are

The pace of work is inevitably faster further afield, where an abundance of evidence and a labour surplus make for a plentiful historiographical harvest. Demesne cultivation in England is discussed in forensic detail in B.M.S. Campbell, *English seigniorial agriculture, 1250–1450* (Cambridge, 2000). For the crises of the fourteenth century, see the same author’s substantial essay, ‘The agrarian problem in the early fourteenth century’, *P&P*, 188 (2005). Developments in economic theory
can been followed in J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: the history and theory of England’s economic development* (Oxford, 2001); while those with a Marxian bent (a rare breed in medieval Irish studies) may wish to consult C. Wickham, ‘Memories of underdevelopment: what has Marxism done for medieval history, and what can it still do?’ in idem (ed.), *Marxist history-writing for the twenty-first century* (Oxford, 2007).

**Chapter 17. The English and Ostmen in Ireland**

Chapter 18. The clan system among English settlers in Ireland


A quarter-centenary celebration and the wanton destruction of Carrickmines

Chapter 19. The spoken languages of medieval Ireland

This chapter is a product of its time, but its significance is clear from the fact it was still deemed worthy of attack in the 1980s. See A. Bliss, ‘Language and literature’ in


**Chapter 20. The problem of the frontier in medieval Ireland**

Lydon’s seminal contribution to the idea of the medieval frontier in Ireland explains the choice of ‘frontier’ as one of two key themes for the *Festschrift* presented to him upon his retirement (*Colony & frontier*). It would be interesting to revisit Lydon’s invocation of the American ‘frontier thesis’ in light of the enormous literature that was generated around the centenary of Frederick Jackson Turner in 1993: see, for instance, W. Cronon, ‘Revisiting the vanishing frontier: the legacy of Frederick


Lydon’s essay is broad in thematic content and touches on many factors that have become closely associated with the decline of the colony from the fourteenth century. The impact of famine and plague is now treated in M. Lyons, ‘Weather, famine, pestilence and plague in Ireland, 900–1500’ in E.M. Crawford (ed.), Famine: the Irish experience (Edinburgh, 1989); and M. Kelly, A history of the black death in Ireland (Stroud, 2001). On the Scottish mercenaries who played a key role in the military resurgence of Gaelic Ireland, see a new collection, The world of the galloglass: kings, warlords and warriors in Ireland and Scotland, 1200–1600, ed. S. Duffy (2007): the contribution of Kenneth Nicholls to that volume (‘Scottish mercenary kindreds in Ireland, 1250–1600’) is of particular importance. Robin Frame queries whether tracking ‘decline’ is the most useful approach to the history of the later medieval colony in Frame, ‘The “failure” of the first English conquest of Ireland’ in idem, Ire. & Brit. A case in point is absenteeism. The first serious study was Frame, Eng. lordship, ch. 2; recent work by Beth Hartland has followed this in adopting a less fatalistic approach than was hitherto traditional: ‘Reasons for leaving: the effect of conflict on English landholding in late thirteenth-century Leinster’, Journal of Medieval History, 32 (2006), and ‘Absenteeism: the chronology of a concept’, Thirteenth Century England, 11 (2007). On that iconic, if under-studied, frontier – the Pale – see S.G. Ellis, The Pale and the far north: government and society in two early Tudor borderlands (Galway, 1988); idem, ‘An English gentleman and his community: Sir William Darcy of Platten’ in V. Carey and U. Lotz-Heumann (eds), Taking sides? Colonial and confessional mentalités in early modern Ireland: essays in honour of Karl S. Bottigheimer (2003); and, from an archaeological

**Chapter 21. The middle nation**

The identity of the English colonists in later medieval Ireland is perhaps the most contested issue in the historiography of recent decades. Lydon further elaborates his ideas in ‘Nation and race in medieval Ireland’ in S. Forde, L. Johnson and A.V. Murray (eds), *Concepts of national identity in the Middle Ages* (Leeds, 1995). This post-dates a vigorous debate on colonial identity that became ensnared by a controversy concerning ‘historical revisionism’ in Ireland (for which, see Brady, *Revisionism*). The key essays are S.G. Ellis, ‘Nationalist historiography and the English and Gaelic worlds in the late Middle Ages’, *IHS*, 25:97 (1986), and B. Bradshaw, ‘Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland’, *IHS* 26:104 (1989); and Ellis, ‘Historiographical debate. Representations of the past in Ireland: whose past and whose present?’, *IHS*, 27:108 (1991). Art Cosgrove’s entry into the fray is less constructive due to its recapitulation of the familiar: ‘The writing of medieval Irish history’, *IHS*, 27:106 (1990). Subtleties are sometimes lost when arguments are tailored for a popular audience; consequently, a spat between Steven Ellis and Kenneth Nicholls from 1999, though it makes for good reading, should be handled charily, since the impression of extreme polarization is typical neither of the authors, nor of historical opinion more generally: S.G. Ellis, ‘More Irish than the Irish themselves? The “Anglo-Irish” in Tudor Ireland’, *HI*, 7:1 (1999); K.W. Nicholls, ‘World’s apart? The Ellis two-nation theory on late medieval Ireland’, *HI*, 7:2 (1999).

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8 Both repr. Brady, *Revisionism*. 

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The combatants in this debate restricted their discussion for the most part to the late medieval and early modern periods. R. Frame, “‘Les Engleys nées en Irlande’: the English political identity in medieval Ireland’ in idem, *Ire. & Brit*, traces the sharpening sense of Englishness among the colonists ‘in the century and a half between Magna Carta and the Statutes of Kilkenny’. A contrasting picture of English lords immersed in Gaelic culture emerges from K. Simms, ‘Bards and barons: the Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the native culture’ in Bartlett and MacKay (eds), *Medieval frontier societies*. The two interpretations are probably consonant with each other. Whereas Frame’s concern was with the *political* identity of the colonists, Simms explored *cultural* identity as revealed in bardic poems commissioned by English lords. To some extent the gap has been narrowed by Frame’s recent foray, ‘Exporting state and nation: being English in medieval Ireland’ in L.E. Scales and O. Zimmer (eds), *Power and the nation in European history* (Cambridge, 2005), which reaffirms the resilience of ‘Englishness’ in Ireland, but does so by mustering evidence from (among other things) bardic poetry. He thereby allows for considerable cultural variegation among those settlers who described themselves as ‘English’. An attempt to break the deadlock from a different angle is P. Crooks, “‘Hobbes’, “dogs” and politics in the Ireland of Lionel of Antwerp, c. 1361–6’, *Haskins Society Journal*, 16 (2005), which explores the discrepancies between what political actors *said* and what they *did*.

Some of the most exciting work of recent years has been in answer to Seán Duffy’s plea for a study of ‘English and Anglicized Ireland’ (S. Duffy, ‘The problem of degeneracy’ in Lydon, *Law & disorder*). Acculturation is a cardinal theme of Simms, *Kings*, but more detailed studies of how English culture (in the broadest sense) operated upon Gaelic lordship are now appearing as a result of the research of

‘Identity’ is a master concept that will continue to be theorized. Many ‘theoretically-informed’ studies suffer from a lack of empirical grounding. James Muldoon, *Identity on the medieval Irish frontier: degenerate Englishmen, wild Irishmen, middle nations* (Gainesville, 2003), is a case in point, although it presents some fascinating comparative ideas that deserve to be properly worked out. For sound judgments and useful reviews of the term (and related concepts) in an extended chronological framework, see K. Stringer, ‘Social and political communities in European history: some reflections on recent studies’ in C. Björn, A. Grant and K. Stringer (eds), *Nations, nationalism and patriotism in the European past* (Copenhagen 1994), and R. Bartlett, ‘Medieval and modern concepts of race and ethnicity’, *Journal of Medieval and Modern Studies*, 31:1 (2001). R.R. Davies, ‘The peoples of Britain and Ireland, 1100–1400 [pts I–IV]’, *TRHS*, 6th ser., 4–7 (1994–7), is an exhilarating whirlwind tour of insular identities. A similar approach to the period after 1400 is R. Griffiths, ‘The island of Britain in the fifteenth century: perceptions of the peoples of the British Isles’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 29 (2003); and (somewhat derivatively) A. Goodman, ‘The British Isles imagined’ in Clarke (ed.), *The fifteenth century VI*. There is little to suggest that scholarly fascination with the subject is subsiding. For the latest crop of articles, see S.G. Ellis, ‘Frontiers and identities in the historiography of the British Isles’ in idem and L. Klusáková (eds), *Frontiers and identities: exploring the research area* (Pisa, 2006); idem, ‘Integration,
identities and frontiers in the British Isles: a European perspective’ in H. Gustafsson and H. Sanders (eds), Vid gränsen: integration och identiteter i det förnationalla Norden [At the border: integration and identities in the pre-national Nordic countries] (Göteborg [Gothenburg] 2006); R.A. Griffiths, ‘Crossing the frontiers of the English realm in the fifteenth century’ in Pryce and Watts (eds), Power and identity in the Middle Ages.