

British battalions (see for instance the correspondence between Thomas Finn and Monica Roberts available at the Dublin City Library and Archives).

In July 1916, Drury contracted malaria. For an entire year, he was away from his battalion, returning to Salonika in July 1917, shortly before his unit was ordered to move to Egypt and Palestine (chapter 7). British strategies sought to capture Jerusalem, split the Ottoman Empire and expand Britain's control over the Middle East. Though they did not participate in the capture of Jerusalem, the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers spent four months in the region and marvelled at the landscape of exceptional beauty. Only in December 1917 did they get involved in the defence the Holy City from a Turkish counter-attack (chapter 8), before being sent to France in September 1918 (chapter 9). Quite surprisingly, the armistice (chapter 10) did not meet with any degree of enthusiasm; Drury and his men would have liked nothing more than to 'get the dirty hounds with the bayonet' (p. 289). Here, it is worth wondering if battalions less engaged in combat held on to a strong desire to keep fighting. Did little exposure to violence suffice to explain that enthusiasm? Was revenge powerful enough to breed such feeling? Or were these few lines added several years after the conflict had ended?

Drury's loyalty unconditionally lay with the British Empire, as did that of many serving Irishmen at the time. In pondering the motivations of men for enlisting, Drury opined that 'shame must have been the deciding factor: how could one stay behind when every letter, every article in the papers, every dispatch, called urgently for help for our men in France, apparently with their backs to the wall' (p. 27). This interpretation of volunteering is intriguing; it is not something academics have written about and something which deserves fuller attention.

With this additional volume, Grayson not only gives a voice to a Protestant Irishman, but he also tells the academic world, and the public at large, about the sacrifice of all the Irish soldiers and officers who volunteered during the First World War. Grayson's research at large is of vital importance, even so today. Recently, the Republic of Ireland has participated in centenary commemorations and honoured the memory of all the Irish who had fallen during the conflict. But a resurgence of vivid resentment coupled with contemporary politics has tarnished the all-inclusive spirit advocated by President Michael D. Higgins. On 4 November 2022, the headquarters of the Royal British Legion in Dublin was vandalised by a self-proclaimed group of anti-imperialists. Drury would have no doubt have voiced his disgust at such action, seeing in this act some memorial terrorism spurred by hatred and ignorance. The making of any collective national memory will always be compounded by historical distortions and fabricated myths. And even today, it is much easier to assert that a handful of badly organised rebels liberated the country rather than recognising that 210,000 Irishmen risked their lives for the defence of the British Empire and for Ireland.

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DONEGAL: THE IRISH REVOLUTION, 1912–23. By Pauric Travers. Pp 183. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2022. € 24.95.

Pauric Travers's *Donegal: the Irish Revolution 1912–23* is the latest in the excellent county series from Four Courts Press. The book follows the standard chronological template of other works in the series: chapters deal with the the home rule crisis, the First World War, the 1916 Rising, the growth of Sinn Féin, the War of Independence and the Civil War. Given Donegal's geographic location on the border, partition is an ever-present feature of the discussion. While such a structure may point to a narrow study of political violence, this is not the case.

From the outset, Travers resists the temptation to present a single streamlined master narrative applicable to the entire county. Indeed, he points to evidence of four distinct areas roughly coinciding with the county's parliamentary constituencies: east Donegal with its significant Protestant population and larger farm size; impoverished west Donegal which was home to a large concentration of Irish speakers; the marginally more industrialised north

Donegal with its ties to Derry; and south Donegal, which again had a significant Protestant population and ties to Sligo and west Fermanagh. Layered upon these, Travers consistently addresses macro divisions associated with class, religion, gender, fraternal bodies and ideology. A complex picture is presented. This focus on disparity within the county certainly ‘presents a challenge for those who would seek to apply a simple model to explain the upsurge of radical nationalism’ (p. 15).

Early on, Travers observes that there was a lack of outstanding political leaders locally in the period. Given Irish political culture of the time and subsequently, this is surprising for a rural county of its size. Indeed, Donegal would in later decades be particularly associated with the type of clientelism that produces domineering political figures. Not least among these was Neil Blaney. As a related aside, it would no doubt have irked Blaney to discover that this volume does not mention the former government minister’s father, Neal Blaney, who was a senior I.R.A. member in Fanad in the 1920s. This omission is a reflection of the nature of the work, which at times lacks micro level detail on violent episodes, but compensates by providing a broader perspective.

Particular prominence is given to the role of Roman Catholic bishop Patrick O’Donnell of Raphoe. He was the exception when it came to political talent, according to Travers. O’Donnell is presented as an ‘influential advisor’ (p. 16) to John Redmond on home rule but features in discussions of the entire period. Given the substantial unionist population, home rule had a particularly polarising effect. As illustration, in 1912, 17,985 signed the Ulster Covenant, amounting to 73 per cent of the eligible Protestant population of the county. This is a higher proportion than in Tyrone and Fermanagh. There are interesting questions raised with regard to the militancy of Donegal loyalists that leaves scope for further study. The Ulster Volunteer Force’s initial activity locally is described as ‘haphazard’ but by July 1914 the organisation had over 3,000 members in the county. There was also a significant Orange Order presence. Raphoe, Pettigo and Ballintra are each identified as loyalist strongholds. Yet, when conflict came in 1919–21, armed loyalism seems to have played a peripheral role. This contrasts with neighbouring counties in the new Northern Ireland and Monaghan, another outpost county for Ulster loyalists. A broader issue is raised by this anomaly. The Military Service Pensions Collection, Bureau of Military History and other local sources, many of which are used in this study, detail the minutiae of the experience of rank-and-file republican volunteers, but there is no corollary for loyalists. There is certainly scope for further investigation of how loyalists experienced the violent years 1920–22, in particular. Whether enough archive sources exist to support such study is another matter.

It is worth noting that the chapter on the War of Independence itself is short, just thirteen pages. Nonetheless, the key message is clear — ‘the War of Independence in Donegal was on a smaller scale than much of the rest of the country’ (p. 113). However, the Civil War was more vicious. This is despite the fact that the bulk of the local I.R.A. took the pro-Treaty side. Travers speculates on the factors that might have contributed to the violence, the influx of I.R.A. members from Northern Ireland and the presence of seasoned republican veterans from Munster being significant elements. This latter group were sent north to fight an abortive border war and ended up back-boning the anti-Treaty forces, partition being central to both factors as it is to the study generally.

In the concluding pages, Travers observes that the Irish revolution was ‘not a single uniform phenomenon’. He further points out that a major theme of the volume is the ‘spatial, religious and political diversity’ within nationalism and unionism and is successful in conveying this. Like the best scholarship, the work also raises questions, some of which have been highlighted in this review. Overall, this is a fine study using a wide variety of sources. It is written in an accessible style that cleverly piques reader interest with thought-provoking references to local literature, such as the writings of Patrick MacGill and Peadar O’Donnell.