

## The Scots Element in North Irish Popular Culture

Some Problems in the Interpretation of an Historical Acculturation\*

### I.

IN A RECENT PLEA that adequate attention be paid to the study of "heritage" alongside "habitat" and "history", Evans remarked that the importance of Ireland as a field for the study of land, life and history lies in its small size, its insularity, and the unusual fact that it was occupied by man so recently, in the time scale of human occupance of the earth, that investigations can begin with a *tabula rasa* and can trace, in theory, man's transformation of the original natural environment alongside changing technologies and social forms through some eight millenia<sup>1</sup>. So, understanding of the development of popular culture in Ireland, or in any part of it, involves a study of immigrations of peoples and their cultures, and after the first, of the nature of the contacts, adaptations, assimilations and other cultural processes operating between each incoming people and their culture and the cultural outcome of what had preceded them. An extreme but incomplete definition of what is Irish, in terms of people and/or culture, is that it is the integral of what precedes the most recent incomer, at any point in time. This was the view of the English administration in the 16th and 17th centuries. They regarded the "Old English in Ireland" — medieval incomers — as Irish, but at that time the Old English were not yet fully regarded as Irish by the people amongst whom they had intruded. If this definition has validity from an external viewpoint, another application of it may, perhaps, be seen in the contemporary situation in the north of Ireland, which shows that the definition may also have internal validity. Much of the north Irish protestant population is regarded by their Roman Catholic neighbours as non-Irish, despite descent within Ulster over more than two and a half centuries. This develops from a divergence in attitudes to a variety of social, religious, political and cultural factors, including for example, the general protestant disinterest in the Gaelic language and consequently in oral traditions borne in that medium. On the other hand, even though there is a genuine element of continuity in Gaelic tradition from early times until the present, part of the Roman Catholic population's concern for the Gaelic language and related traditions is the outcome of nationalism and romanticism since the late 19th century. Nevertheless, to a degree the Catholic population may be taken to represent, and regard themselves as representing, the descendants of the pre-existing population from the time of the last general immigration into the north of Ireland. The identification is not complete, but is sufficiently close to be regarded as accurate. Furthermore, much of the

\* I am deeply indebted to colleagues on the staff of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum for valuable suggestions and discussion of the linguistic and historical aspects of this paper, to participants in the *Ethnologia Europaea* meeting at Edinburgh in March 1974 where the paper was discussed, for helpful criticism, particularly of some of the Scottish evidence, and to Professor Estyn Evans who subsequently read a draft of the paper and made many helpful suggestions for its improvement.

1. E. Estyn Evans, *The Personality of Ireland*. Cambridge, 1973. p. 68.

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protestant population is equivocal at best as to its Irishness, and many overtly categorise themselves as British. Both attitudes, however, ignore the consequences of the passage of time. A broader view of the decline of Gaelic speech sees it as part of the general decline of the Celtic languages in western Europe, and therefore as having in one way or another been inevitable — it is an accident of geography, as it were, that influences from Britain were responsible. On the other hand, the contemporary British view of the protestant northern Irish is that they are Irish — the latter have ignored the extent to which two and a half centuries of residence in Ireland have made them so. Presumably there was a cultural identity between the British colonial settlers in Ireland in the 17th century and those whom they left behind in Britain, but if only because the total environmental circumstances in the two islands differed historically, the two have subsequently diverged culturally.

Implicit in this preamble is the fact that problems of migration and acculturation are involved in interpretation of north Irish culture history. The suggested definition of Irish cultural identity (or "Irishness") given above was stated as being incomplete. It would be illogical, perhaps on *a priori* as well as on emotional grounds, to deny the probability that there is a uniqueness, a truly "Irish" quality about Irish culture. It is not *all* a matter of intrusive cultures and culture elements and their subsequent adaptations. Such is the general background to this paper, which does not deal with the uniquely Irish, but with the Scots contribution to north Irish popular culture.

## II.

A SUBSTANTIAL IMMIGRATION TOOK PLACE into the north of Ireland in the 17th century. It was a cumulative movement, involving relatively small numbers at first, growing to a stage in the 18th century when immigration into Ulster from Britain changed to emigration from Ulster to North America by some of these British settlers and by many of their descendants<sup>2</sup>. The migration to Ulster involved many people from England and a few from Wales, but most came from Scotland, mainly from the west Lowlands and from southwest Scotland, and in the early stages some also came from the Scotland/England borderlands<sup>3</sup>. Determination of the numbers who did migrate to Ulster at that time is very difficult, due to inadequate documentation. Almost all of the documentary sources relate to those who had formal grants of land under the scheme of "plantation"<sup>4</sup>. They were middle and upper class people regarded by the English government as having sufficient means to be able to bear the capital costs of settling not only

2. One estimate puts the figure at 200,000: J. B. Woodburn, *The Ulster Scot*. London 1914. pp. 212—229.

3. Many of these from the Borders were officially classed as criminals and obviously some were "on the run" from justice being administered and directed from London, following the union of the Scottish and English crowns in 1603: M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I*. London 1973. pp. 279—285.

4. i. e. the "undertakers" and "servitors": M. Perceval-Maxwell (s. footnote 3), for discussion of these individuals.



themselves in Ulster, but also the tenantry they were expected to bring with them. Some were aristocrats, although they constituted only a tiny proportion of those who migrated, and a few of them never took up residence in Ireland. In addition, settlement of one county, Londonderry, was undertaken by a group of London guild companies and corporations. Documentation hardly exists for the vastly greater numbers of tenants who came to Ulster from Britain; this is regrettable, for it is they who were important for any discussion of culture history, and especially for linguistic development.

Although inexact and incomplete, available evidence suffices to show that the migration started slowly, gathered momentum, and continued throughout the 17th century, with a number of interruptions due to events both in Ireland and in Britain. A census was carried out in 1659 which, although incomplete, permits an estimate of 40,651 people of British origin and 63,272 Irish in the plantation areas<sup>5</sup>. It is clear that the majority of the British were Scots, and if the proportions of Scots to other British of 5 to 1, quoted for 1685 when the entire British population has been estimated at 120,000 can be applied<sup>6</sup>, there would have been some 33,000 Scots in the north of Ireland in 1659. The census of that year shows that the British settlement was uneven; Down, Antrim and Londonderry were more than 40 % British, Donegal, Fermanagh and Armagh were about 25 % British, while Monaghan was only 10 % British — Tyrone probably belonged with the second group, and Cavan with Monaghan, but these two counties were omitted from the 1659 census and so there must be some doubt as to their precise position in the categories given. Regrettably the 1659 census did not distinguish between Scots and other British, but the former are likely to have prevailed in Down, Antrim, Londonderry, Donegal and Tyrone, with English predominance in Armagh, Monaghan, Cavan and Fermanagh. In a consideration of acculturation it is important to note that in no county did the incomers form a majority of total population, although they did predominate in some towns and in a few administrative units smaller than counties.

Some assessment of the spread of Scots settlers is possible. It depends upon two basic assumptions and, to that extent, is speculative, but it is the best available. The assumptions are that the establishment of congregations that can be recognised as presbyterian (Calvinist) in faith and in form of church government represents the growth of population of Scots origin, and that each congregation is representative of settlement in a surrounding area of land. Dates of establishment of presbyterian congregations are known, although some in the earliest period (1611—1640) are questionable because they depend on recognition of presbyterian forms within an essentially episcopalian milieu. 148 foundations are involved between 1611 (the earliest is regarded as in 1613) and 1720, a further 6 being

5. See J. Braidwood, *Ulster and Elizabethan English: I. The Planters*, in G. B. Adams (ed.), *Ulster Dialects, Ulster Folk Museum*, 1964, p. 6. Braidwood quotes S. Pender, *A Census of Ireland circa 1659*, Dublin 1939, and W. H. Hardinge in *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 24 (1873), pp. 317—328.

6. J. B. Woodburn (s. footnote 2), pp. 143—144.



added before 1740. Foundation dates have been grouped by decades, plotted on maps, and decadal isopleths interpolated. If the initial assumptions are accepted, these lines represent the probable boundaries of presbyterian, and therefore of Scottish, expansion at 10-year intervals.

Four maps are presented here (Fig. 1), chosen at intervals having historical significance. The first shows the beginnings of north Irish presbyterianism in north-east Down, in two parts of south Antrim, and in east Tyrone. Since the setting up of congregations would have lagged somewhat behind the spread of Scots settlers in small numbers, this and the following maps present a conservative view. The period represented by the first map covers the beginnings of the Plantation of Ulster, and it is probable that even by 1630 there were more than 4,000 Scots families in the north of Ireland<sup>7</sup>. Equivocation between presbyterian and protestant episcopal forms of church government and religious beliefs continued until the attempt stemming from England to assert episcopal conformity in the 1630s, which temporarily diminished Scots migration to Ulster. Scots settlement was re-established only at the very end of the period.

Acculturative reaction in the form of rebellion by the Irish broke out in 1641, and formal presbyterian ecclesiastical organisation in the north of Ireland owed its origin to the "Army Presbytery" formed by chaplains who accompanied Scots forces in the British army which quelled that rebellion. Consolidation of areas of primary Scots settlement in Down and Antrim is most marked during the 1640s, to judge from the second map (Fig. 1), and expansion reasserted itself in the 1650s, with substantial new areas of Scots settlement developing in the lower Bann valley, the Foyle basin, and about Lough Swilly in north Donegal. These two decades saw the total of 13 congregations before 1641 increase to 70, and more than 60 % of the additions came after 1651.

34 congregations were added in the next three decades represented by the third map (Fig. 1). Continued expansion and growth of the primary settlement nuclei is suggested, some of them coalescing, especially in north-west Antrim, east Londonderry and east Tyrone. The transition from the third to the fourth map represents the period of the Williamite wars in Ireland, but the continued pattern of Scots expansion in Ulster suggests that the military and political upheavals of the period had little permanent influence on Scots settlement.

Some of the interpretational problems implicit in these maps are particularly evident on the final one. For example, it may not be valid to suggest continuous spread along the Clogher valley into Fermanagh, where presbyterianism may have existed as a disconnected island throughout the period under review (Fig. 1). A long-lasting ridge of resistance has been shown in north-west Down, between spread up the Lagan valley from the north-east and across mid-Armagh from the west. However, this gap could have been closed in the 1661—1690 period without the formation of a separate congregation between the spread from the two directions, in which case the congregation shown on the last map as being

7. M. Perceval-Maxwell (s. footnote 3), pp. 228, 250—251.



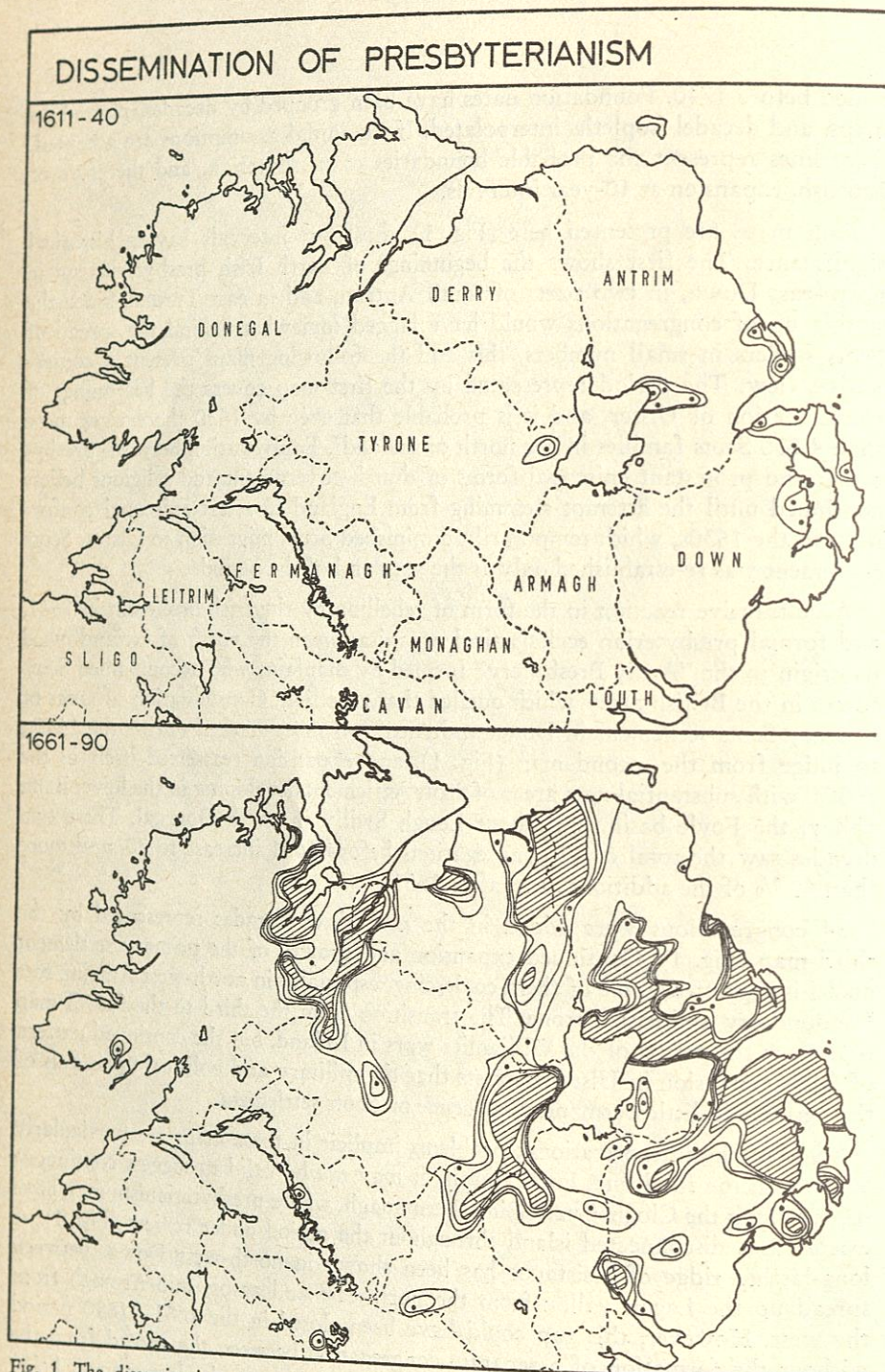
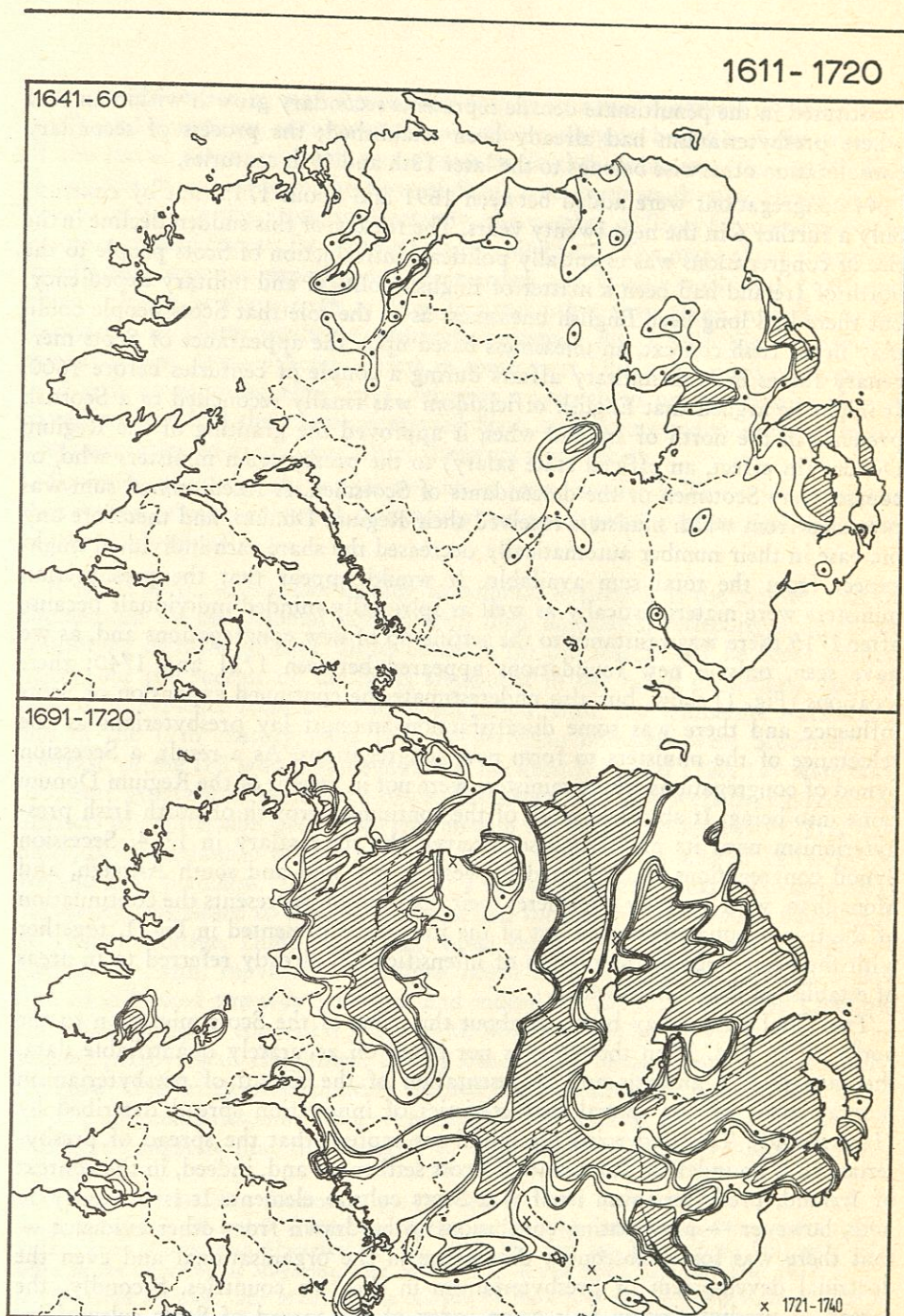


Fig. 1. The dissemination of presbyterianism in the north of Ireland, 1611—1720. The north Irish counties are indicated on the first map. Individual presbyterian congregations are located by black dots. The isopleths represent the probable limits of presbyterian settlement at 10-year





intervals. The cumulative area of presbyterianism, i. e., of Scots settlement, at the end of each period, is represented on the map for the succeeding period by means of diagonal shading. 6 congregations set up after 1720 are represented by X on the final map.



constituted in the penultimate decade represents secondary growth within an area where presbyterianism had already been established; the process of secondary consolidation otherwise belongs to the later 18th and 19th centuries.

44 congregations were added between 1691 and about 1715, but by contrast, only a further 6 in the next twenty years. The reason for this sudden decline in the rise of congregations was essentially political. Introduction of Scots people to the north of Ireland had been a matter of English political and military expediency, but there had long been English uneasiness as to the role that Scots people could play in an Irish context, an uneasiness based upon the appearance of Scots mercenary forces in Irish military affairs during a couple of centuries before 1600. It might be argued that English officialdom was finally reconciled to a Scottish presence in the north of Ireland when it approved the granting of the *Regium Donum* (in effect, an official state salary) to the presbyterian ministers who, of course, were Scotsmen or the descendants of Scotsmen. A fixed annual sum was provided from which ministers received their *Regium Donum*, and therefore any increase in their number automatically decreased the share each individual might expect from the total sum available. It would appear that the presbyterian ministers were materialistically as well as spiritually minded individuals because after 1715 there was resistance to the setting up of new congregations and, as we have seen, only 6 new foundations appeared between 1721 and 1740; their locations (Fig. 1) show, but also underestimate the continued expansion of Scots influence and there was some dissatisfaction amongst lay presbyterians at the reluctance of the ministers to form new congregations. As a result, a Secession Synod of congregations whose ministers were not in receipt of the *Regium Donum* came into being. It absorbed much of the continuing growth of north Irish presbyterianism until its ministers also received the state salary in 1784. Secession Synod congregations concentrated in west Down, mid and south Armagh, and Monaghan, with a scatter elsewhere; their distribution represents the continuation of the trends apparent on the last of the four maps presented in Fig. 1, together with the beginnings of the process of intensification already referred to in areas of established Scots settlement.

Two final points may be made about this view of the Scots migration to the north of Ireland. Even though it is not based on accurately quantifiable data, the cartographic analysis and representation of the spread of presbyterianism portray many of the spatial characteristics of innovation spread described by Hägerstrand<sup>8</sup>. This underpins the initial assumption that the spread of presbyterianism is an index of the spread of Scots settlement and, indeed, in the context of Ireland, presbyterianism itself is a Scots culture element. It is necessary to note, however — anticipating conclusions to be drawn from other evidence — that there was some subsequent divergence in the organisational and even the doctrinal development of presbyterianism in the two countries. Secondly, the spread of presbyterianism fails as an index of the spread of Scots cultural influence in at least one important area. Early in the Plantation of Ulster some

8. T. Hägerstrand, *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process*. Chicago 1967.



Scots people settled in west Fermanagh and mid Cavan. Numbers involved were small, and this Scots settlement did not thrive, largely because of the transfer of the initial grants of lands from Scots to English grantees before 1640. This change led to a decline in the flow of Scots tenants to south-west Ulster, if not to a total stop to their coming. Certainly, the number of Scots families present in Fermanagh and Cavan fell between 1619 and 1622<sup>9</sup>. The maps show that presbyterianism was not established in Fermanagh and Cavan until after 1670, and when it came in Fermanagh it arose in areas other than those intended in the Plantation of Ulster for Scots settlement (compare Fig. 1 with Fig. 3). Most of the early 17th century Scots settlers in south-west Ulster remained episcopalian in church government after 1641, whereas a growth in presbyterianism would have occurred had there been continued Scots settlement; a discontinuity in the Scots migration to south-west Ulster therefore seems likely.

So much, then, for the actual migration from Scotland. The evidence shows that it was substantial and that it conformed to a spatial pattern similar to that of any innovation.

A FEATURE OF MIGRATION leading to colonial settlement is the maintenance of connections by the colonial settlers with their homeland, reflecting a degree of continuing cultural identity. Other evidence for this feature will be demonstrated below but the success of the Scots settlement in the north of Ireland may be judged by evidence from the field of education. Until the Williamite wars at the end of the 17th century most Irish presbyterian ministers were Scotsmen; by contrast, of the 175 who became ministers between 1691 and 1720, 129 were born in Ulster. Analysis of their birth-places has shown that they were drawn from the districts of well-established presbyterianism in the period 1661—1690<sup>10</sup>. Traditionally, presbyterianism placed emphasis on the adequate training of its clergy, in Ireland as in Scotland. These men faced a serious problem, because the only Irish university was closed to them; at that time and for many years to come attendance at Trinity College, Dublin depended upon subscription to the episcopalian 39 Articles of Faith. Inevitably, therefore, north Irish presbyterians seeking higher education looked towards Scotland, and indeed the majority attended Glasgow University. Higher education was sought, however, not only by those hoping to become presbyterian clergymen, but by others who became doctors or teachers. Glasgow University matriculation records are available for the period 1728—1858<sup>11</sup>, and comparison of these with biographical data on the Irish presbyterian ministers<sup>12</sup> suggests that the majority of Irish students going to Glasgow in the

9. M. Perceval-Maxwell (s. footnote 3), pp. 200—201.

10. James McConnell and S. G. McConnell, *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church 1613—1840*. Belfast, Irish Presbyterian Historical Society, 1951. The first two parts of the fasti were published in the *Genealogists Magazine*, Sept. and Dec. 1936 and April, Sept. and Dec. 1937.

11. W. Innes Addison, *The Matriculation Albums of the University of Glasgow, from 1728 to 1858*. Glasgow 1913.

12. James McConnell and S. G. McConnell (s. footnote 10). This source, and the Glasgow University matriculation evidence have been analysed in much greater detail than can be presented here; it is hoped that a separate study of this material will be published later.



18th century intended becoming presbyterian ministers. But from the end of that century onwards more students trained in Glasgow than became presbyterian ministers, presumably to enter a variety of professions. Both kinds of data provide information on the geographical sources in the north of Ireland of a more than representative sample of these students. Analysis of this locational material for the 18th century shows that students were being drawn, in small numbers, from all Scots-settled areas. In the period 1728—1760 the sources remained basically those from which presbyterian ministers were drawn before 1720; the newest frontiers of Scots settlement, established between 1691 and 1720 were still sending few if any students to Scotland. After 1760 students went from all areas, in spite of decline in their numbers after 1780, at a time when the numbers of non-Irish students attending Glasgow University continued to increase. Maximum numbers of north Irish students at Glasgow were attained in the period 1801—1815 (Fig. 2), when they still went from all areas of Scot settlement, although county Antrim (which, it may be noted, was not included in the formal Plantation of Ulster) produced a low number, while east county Londonderry and east Tyrone produced a marked concentration. Only 11 students from Fermanagh are noted throughout the matriculation records, of whom 7 were in the period 1761—1780; the evidence for that county seems to testify to a discontinuity in Scots settlement early on, and most students from that Scots settlement seeking higher education, being episcopalian, would have attended Trinity College, Dublin.

The second map (Fig. 2), based on the Glasgow matriculation data, shows a significant change from its predecessor. From 1816 to 1858 only small numbers of students went from the Scots settled areas, with the notable exception of east Donegal and west Londonderry, where the maximum numbers for any period were attained. Two reasons seem likely for this pattern. Higher education became available in Belfast for presbyterians about 1815 and thereafter only north-west Ulster was likely to find it advantageous to continue to send students to Scotland rather than to Belfast, balancing the advantages and disadvantages of both proximity to Belfast and Glasgow, and overland and sea travel. The setting up of a university college in Belfast in the 1840s coincided with marked improvements in land travel, and few students went from any part of the north of Ireland to Glasgow after 1845. However, another factor may have been different regional rates of acculturation in the different Scots-settled parts of the north of Ireland. The maps presented earlier (Fig. 1) show that the substantial consolidation of the Scots settlement in north-west Ulster was achieved at the end of the period of settlement, and the impetus to send students for higher education may have been a cumulative phenomenon requiring some generations to come to maturity. We have already seen a similar implication in the data on the earliest north-Irish-born presbyterian ministers in the period before 1720. Substantial problems of timing are involved, however, which cannot be resolved from the available data. What does appear is the extent of educational dependence by Scots settlers on Scotland over a period of about a century and half. As educated



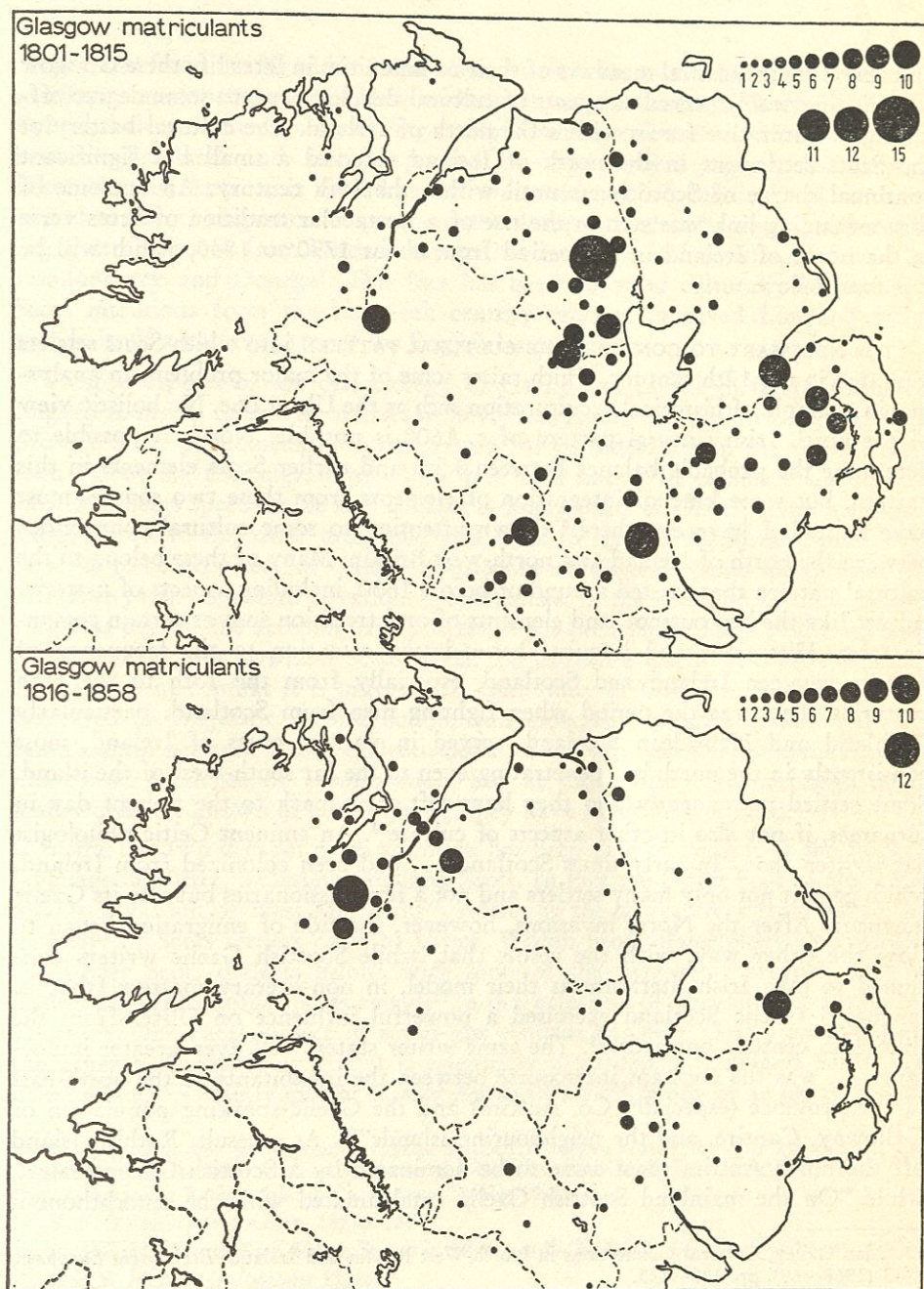


Fig. 2. Sources of north Irish students matriculating at Glasgow University, in the 19th century. The data are available, and have been plotted, on a parish basis, but the parish boundaries are too complicated to represent on maps at small scale. Circular symbols of graded size, and not of proportional area, have been used to represent the numbers of students; this overemphasises the larger numbers of students, but also makes visual separation of the data easier.



and therefore influential members of their communities in later life these Glasgow students inevitably served as agents of cultural development, to some degree offsetting acculturative forces within the north of Ireland. The cultural battery of the Scots settlement in the north of Ireland received a small but significant continual charge of Scottishness until within the 19th century. An outcome of this continuing link was seen in the rise of a vernacular tradition of Scots verse in the north of Ireland in the period from about 1790 to 1840, which will be discussed below.

IT IS NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THE CULTURAL PATTERN into which Scots settlers migrated in the 17th century, which raises some of the major problems in analysing an example of historical acculturation such as the Ulster one. No holistic view of the north Irish cultural pattern of c. 1600 is possible. Nor is it possible to determine the probable balance between Irish and earlier Scots elements in this pattern, but some kind of integration of elements from these two sources must have existed. I have elsewhere<sup>13</sup> drawn attention to some cultural connections between the north of Ireland and north-west Britain. Many of these belong to the cultural pattern that existed around or before 1600, including aspects of material culture like the bed outshot, and elements of oral tradition such as certain romantic tales. Historians and linguists have drawn attention to the frequency of contact between Ireland and Scotland, especially from the 13th to the 16th centuries. This was the period when fighting men from Scotland, particularly Highland and Hebridean Scotland, served in various parts of Ireland, most consistently in the north but penetrating even to the far south-west of the island. Some settled permanently and they have left their mark to the present day in surnames, if not also in other aspects of culture<sup>14</sup>. An eminent Celtic philologist has written that "In early times Scotland . . . had been colonized from Ireland, which gave it not only many settlers and not a few missionaries but also its Gaelic language. After the Norse invasions, however, the tide of emigration began to flow the other way, with the result that, while Scottish Gaelic writers continued to take Irish literature as their model, in non-literary matters [that is, language] Gaelic Scotland exercised a powerful influence on Ulster from the thirteenth century onwards"<sup>15</sup>. The same writer states: "Of even greater importance . . . was the constant intercourse between the inhabitants of the north-east of the province (especially Co. Antrim) and the Gaelic-speaking population of Galloway, Cantire, and the neighbouring islands"<sup>16</sup>. As a result, Rathlin Island off the north Antrim coast came to be dominated by a Scottish Gaelic dialect, while "On the mainland Scottish Gaelic amalgamated with the autochthonous

13. Alan Gailey, Cultural Connections in North-West Britain and Ireland, *Ethnologia Europaea*, 2-3 (1968-69), pp. 138-143.

14. G. A. Hayes-McCoy, *Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland*. Dublin 1937, deals particularly with the later mercenary forces, mainly of the 16th century. See also T. F. O'Rahilly, *Irish Dialects Past and Present*. Dublin 1932, p. 161.

15. T. F. O'Rahilly (s. footnote 14), p. 161.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 163.



dialect and from the blend has come what we now know as Ulster Irish, which is in effect a cross between the Gaelic of Ireland and the Gaelic of Scotland<sup>17</sup>. The hybrid dialect that evolved as a *lingua franca* on either side of the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland proved to have hybrid vigour, for having taken root in Antrim, it spread thence west and south<sup>18</sup>. Similarly as we have seen, later Scots migration of people and culture proved to be vigorous, spreading west and south from beach-heads at first in Down and Antrim, and later in Londonderry and Donegal. This fact has been obscured culturally because the Scots intrusions from the late 16th century onward involved Lowland Scots speech, itself a variant form of the English language.

Various aspects of the dialectology of Gaelic and of the different forms of English found in the north of Ireland have been studied by philologists, and they provide some phenomena of acculturation for consideration in the present context. Following the migrations of the late 16th and 17th centuries Gaelic and Lowland Scots speech came into contact in many parts of Ulster. In an historical situation where the latter took hold and came to replace the former, more evidence is to be expected for Gaelic sub-stratum influence on Scots speech than for influence in the opposite direction. Nevertheless, in the situation of bilingualism that was part of the acculturative process, it has been shown from studies of both languages<sup>19 20</sup> that Lowland Scots speech did influence Gaelic in county Antrim. In the present context it is unfortunate that study of Gaelic in Ulster has concentrated on linguistic reconstruction, and especially on determination of the relationships between Gaelic dialects. Some of the work on phonological features has shown evidence of acculturation, but at the lexical level although Scots loan-words are known in Ulster Gaelic, they have never been studied.

In the last two decades much attention has been paid to dialects of the English language in Ulster, including Lowland Scots. In fact the Ulster Scots dialects are mainly a variant of West Mid Scots<sup>21</sup>, reflecting the source areas from which the majority of Scots settlers came to Ulster. Within Scots dialectology as a whole, the Ulster Scots dialects belong with some of the peripheral Scottish ones in preserving certain older Scots sounds<sup>22</sup>, a characteristic of languages in a colonial situation. One rural dialect in south-east Antrim has been closely studied, and the general conclusion is that it is essentially a variant of Lowland Scots, but its phonology is mainly that of county Antrim Gaelic<sup>23</sup>. Study of an urban dialect

17. *Ibid.*, p. 164. For the definitive studies of county Antrim Gaelic see Nils M. Holmer, *On Some Relics of the Irish Dialect spoken in the Glens of Antrim*. Uppsala 1940, and *idem*, *The Irish Language in Rathlin Island, Co. Antrim*. Dublin 1942.

18. T. F. O'Rahilly (s. footnote 14), p. 261.

19. R. J. Gregg, *Scotch-Irish Urban Speech in Ulster*, in G. B. Adams (ed.) (s. footnote 5), p. 190.

20. Nils M. Holmer (s. footnote 17), p. 6.

21. W. Grant (ed.), *The Scottish National Dictionary*. I. Edinburgh, no date. p. xli. See also G. B. Adams, *Introduction*, in *idem* (ed.), (s. footnote 5), p. 2.

22. G. B. Adams, *Ulster Dialects: Introduction*, in *idem* (ed.), (s. footnote 5), p. 2.

23. R. J. Gregg, *Notes on the Phonology of a County Antrim Scotch/Irish Dialect*, *Orbis*, 8 (1959), p. 402.



in the same part of Ulster provides the following conclusions which, since they stand as a diachronic series, give an insight into the linguistic aspect of acculturation. 1. The original Lowland Scots dialects that were brought over to county Antrim were modified in the mouths of the native Gaelic speakers who eventually, after the bilingual phase, lost their native tongue. 2. This modified dialect was gradually adopted even by the descendants of the original Lowland Scottish settlers. 3. With the growth of towns and the spread of education which has always worked through the medium of *written* standard English a new local *spoken* standard arose, modelled on and closely conforming to the written standard lexicon, morphology and syntax. Phonologically it has complex origins but at the present time its constituent elements are essentially identical to those of the rural dialects, that is, it shows strong influence from the phonological system of county Antrim Gaelic<sup>24</sup>.

The lexical aspect of language also provides evidence for acculturation, as already noted. Gaelic loan-words are common in modern Ulster speech, even at the popular level. Quite complex patterns of borrowing between the two languages also occurred; a piece of English slang based on a word unrecorded in England before 1677 found its way into Donegal Gaelic, was borrowed back into a local west Ulster dialect of English, and survives in modern speech<sup>25</sup>. It is likely that such a history of changes requires time to become fixed, and a period of four generations has been suggested for the direct transition from Gaelic to English (or Scots) dialect speech. Allowing that the two middle generations permit almost a century of bilingualism, this provides sufficient time for phonetic, lexical and syntactical features to pass in either direction<sup>26</sup>. A loose time-scale may thus be provided for the diachronic stages mentioned earlier and so, at the linguistic level, the beginnings of an estimate of the time-scale involved in the acculturative process are available.

MORE WORK HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT in the north of Ireland on language contact than on other manifestations of acculturation, but some evidence is forthcoming from the field of seasonal custom. Two examples have been documented. New Year is an important Scottish seasonal festival, but until very recently it has not been generally so regarded in Ireland. This difference between the countries seems to have been true at least as far back as the 17th century, which is our datum. Given a successful 17th-century Scots settlement in Ulster, it should be expected that some importance would attach to New Year as a popular

24. R. J. Gregg (s. footnote 19), p. 190.

25. G. B. Adams, *The Emergence of Ulster as a Distinct Dialect Area*, *Ulster Folklife*, 4 (1958), p. 70.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 69. The four generations Adams suggests are, in order: (1) those speaking Gaelic only, perhaps with a few words of English picked up by chance; (2) their children speaking Gaelic with a more or less imperfect knowledge of English as second language; (3) their grandchildren speaking English with a declining knowledge of Gaelic, perhaps more readily understood than spoken; and (4) their great-grandchildren speaking English only with no understanding of Gaelic save such odd words as had become part of the English of their district.



festival. Scottish-type first-footing traditions are known, particularly in Down and Antrim, together with the common beliefs about what is, and is not, lucky on New Year's Day. A north Down poet of the mid-19th century recorded these beliefs thus:

If unshod feet should enter first,  
That house is little less than curst;  
Should good luck not be spoke with speed,  
Small welcome is the stranger's mead;  
The fireless hearth may coldly lie,  
No coal the neighbour will supply;  
Nothing must leave the house that day —  
Feared lest they'd give their luck away<sup>27</sup>.

The farther away one goes from areas of Scots settlement, the less evident such beliefs become, but even in Down and Antrim this was a muted folk festival by comparison with New Year in Scotland. Perhaps we may here see the influence of the pre-Plantation substratum of the Ulster cultural pattern asserting itself, for until very recently Hallowe'en was much more important than New Year throughout Ulster, and Hallowe'en was the early Celtic turn of the year.

Sloan went on to describe a New Year activity indulged in recently by children, but formerly by men: the distribution of wisps of straw as first-footing gifts. I have analysed this elsewhere and noted that the practice is and was confined to areas of Scots settlement in county Down (Fig. 3), and to other areas in the same county into which people of Scots descent spread. Unfortunately there is little or no early evidence for the practice, and there is no evidence for it in folk tradition in Scotland. The closest parallel was the Scottish New Year practice of using the last sheaf of harvest as a first-footing gift. County Down wisps may be likened to last sheaves cut in pieces for distribution through the community. Accepting the distributional evidence for the custom as indicative of a Scots origin, it is suggested that the custom in the county Down form was once known in south-west Scotland. Its subsequent disappearance from there need cause no surprise. Older Scots folk customs could well have survived in Ulster just as archaic features of Lowland Scots dialect also survive in Ulster, as already noted. Moreover, the absence of the wisp custom from other districts of Scots settlement in Ulster may reflect its former restriction in Scotland to Galloway in the south-west. Settlers from the west Lowlands coming, for example, to county Antrim, would not have known the custom as part of their own New Year tradition, and they would have been unlikely to acquire it in a new environment where

27. Edward L. Sloan, *The Year's Holidays*, in his *The Bard's Offering*. Belfast 1854, pp. 53—64: lines 15 to 22 are quoted here. See Alan Gailey, *Ulster Folklife*, 14 (1968), pp. 51—59 for comment on the folklore content of this poem.

28. It is unnecessary to set out the evidence and argument on the county Down wisp custom here: see Alan Gailey, *A New Year Custom in South-East Ulster*, in W. Escher, T. Gantner and H. Trümper (eds.), *Festschrift für Robert Wildhaber*. Basel 1973. pp. 126—136.



conservative cultural attitudes would have prevailed initially in face of the acculturative problems arising from contact with Gaelic culture<sup>28</sup>.

Having quoted from a north county Down poet, vernacular poetry may be considered. Sloan wrote his verse more or less in the standard language and therefore he may be placed in the last of the diachronic stages enumerated earlier in the discussion of linguistic change. Perhaps Sloan's verse indicates the extent to which acculturation had proceeded by the mid-19th century in north Down. There were, however, local poets in north Down and mid Antrim (Fig. 3) who wrote in Scots-derived dialects between about 1790 and 1840. A modern Ulster poet points out that they worked within a tradition similar to that in which Burns worked rather earlier in Scotland<sup>29</sup>, but there is some dispute as to whether these Ulster vernacular writers were directly inspired by Burns, by earlier Scottish poets like Ramsay, or whether they worked within an independent but parallel tradition. Some of them certainly made journeys — pilgrimages might be a more appropriate word — to visit Burns and the Burns country in Scotland. Many of their volumes of poetry had lists of subscribers, people who had agreed to buy copies, often including individuals in Scotland, mainly in Edinburgh, Glasgow and the west Lowlands. Whether they were of admirers or relatives, the lists are another index, like the evidence of the Glasgow University matriculation entries, of continuity of contacts between Scotland and north-east Ireland appreciably after Scots migration to Ulster had ended. Early publication of editions of Burns's poems in Belfast also indicates these same connections, illustrating that his work had a receptive market in east Ulster and that there existed a climate of opinion favourable for the spontaneous rise of the Ulster vernacular writers. It has been observed that Burns's work in Scotland, amongst others, involved a mixture of older Scots and Modern English spellings in the orthographic rendering of dialect speech<sup>30</sup>. Burns may well have belonged to one of the intermediate generations in the process of language change. If Sloan belongs to the final phase of such change, some of the earlier Ulster vernacular poets may, like Burns but some decades later than him, belong to the intermediate stages. There were even some who "... like James Orr of Ballycarry could, in his 'Irish Cottier's Death and Burial' (1817) write a poem more surely and consistently Scots than Burns's 'The Cottar's Saturday Night' ..." <sup>31</sup>. This hints at a stronger survival of Scots vernacular tradition in a peripheral colonial area than in Scotland itself where standard English was impinging more markedly on Scottish literature. Another early poet in this genre was the farmer Francis Boyle who lived just south of Belfast. In many of his poems he made few concessions to his readers in the form of Modern or standard English spellings; he may represent a still earlier phase of acculturation. However, these are all rather subjective assessments since no trained dialectologists

29. John Hewitt, *Ulster Poets 1800—1870*. Unpublished M. A. thesis, Queen's University, Belfast, 1951: library reference 051.J2. See also idem, *The Rhyming Weavers, Fibres, Fabrics and Cordage*, 15 (1948).

30. W. Grant (ed.) (s. footnote 21), p. XV.

31. J. Braidwood, *The Ulster Dialect Lexicon*. Queen's University inaugural lecture, Belfast 1969. p. 34.



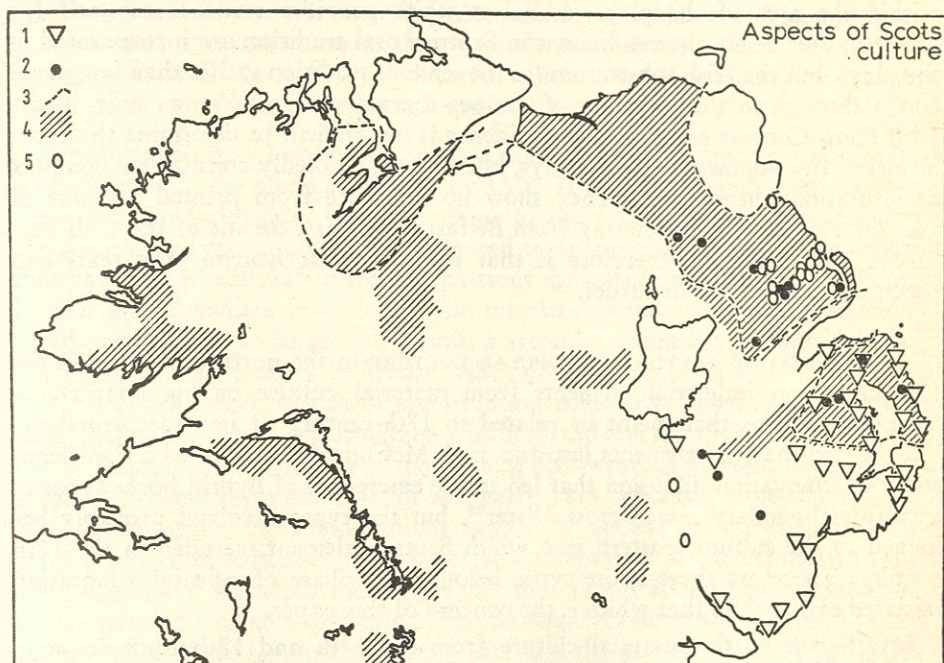


Fig. 3. Some aspects of Scots-derived culture in the north of Ireland. 1: locations of records of the New Year wisp custom in county Down. 2: locations of the homes of Scots-dialect vernacular poets, 1790—1840. 3: the modern boundary of Scots dialect in the north of Ireland, after R. J. Gregg. 4: areas settled by Scots people in Down and Antrim, outside the formal Plantation of Ulster in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, together with areas intended under the scheme of Plantation in the early 17th century for Scots settlement, after G. B. Adams, with corrections, and based on J. Braidwood. 5: south-east Antrim variant Hero-Combat folk play.

have examined the work of these poets from the viewpoint of language change. In the context of this paper, the evidence of the vernacular poetry may be considered suggestive, but not conclusive.

Another manifestation of acculturation is from the field of folk drama. A variant of the Hero-Combat type of mummers' play known widely in Britain has, until recently, survived vigorously in south-east Antrim, with outliers in county Armagh (Fig. 3). To understand their relationship to other variants of the Hero-Combat plays the analogy of folktale ecotypes is useful. The south-east Antrim plays are defined by a range of characterisations with specific dramatic functions in a pattern recognised elsewhere only in Cheshire and south Lancashire. A 17th-century prototype from this north-west English source provided the basis for the derivation of the south-east Antrim plays, and there are reasonable historical grounds for this assertion<sup>32</sup>. But in recent times the plays have been performed by men speaking a Scots-based dialect already mentioned<sup>33</sup> from

32. Alan Gaily, *The Rhymers of South-East Antrim*, *Ulster Folklife*, 13 (1967), pp. 18—28.

33. R. J. Gregg (s. footnote 23), *Orbis*, 7 (1958), pp. 392—406, and *Orbis*, 8 (1959), pp. 400—424.



within the area of the plays, a dialect which provides evidence in itself for acculturation. Some rhymes known in Scottish oral tradition are incorporated in the plays, but the Irish substratum (in the sense of tradition rather than language) comes through in the inclusion of various characterisations known only in the Irish Hero-Combat plays. Present evidence is insufficient to determine the exact historical development of these plays, but they undoubtedly constitute a complex acculturation phenomenon. They show no influence from printed versions of another variant play emanating from Belfast in the first decade of the 19th century<sup>34</sup>. The likelihood therefore is that the south-east Antrim play texts had become fixed by 1800 or earlier.

AN INTERESTING FEATURE OF POPULAR CULTURE in the north of Ireland is the absence of pre-industrial elements from material culture having adapted or hybridized forms that might be related to 17th-century or later acculturation, like the non-material elements just discussed. McCourt has published a significant study of innovation diffusion that led to the emergence of hybrid house types in a cultural boundary zone across Ulster<sup>35</sup>, but the types involved probably belonged to the cultural pattern into which Scots settlement intruded in the 17th century. Therefore these house types belong to a phase of cultural adaptation initiated earlier than that which is the concern of this paper.

Insufficient of the material culture from the 17th and 18th centuries may survive to provide examples of hybrid or introduced Scottish phenomena. Collections at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum seem to confirm this for they contain few objects from earlier than 1800, possibly due to a lack of interest by the culture bearers in their material culture, in contrast to an obviously overt concern for some aspects, at least, of their oral tradition. Admittedly referring to a slightly different context, Lucas pointed out nearly twenty years ago that the artistic instincts of Irish people found expression in non-material forms<sup>36</sup>. Perhaps there was no interest in preserving a material culture that was undecorated. Lucas also noted '... how many elements there are in respect of which Ireland forms a part of the *continuum* of the general pattern of continental European folklife ...' and he listed some of the obvious examples like flail types<sup>37</sup>. Here may lie the explanation for the absence of material evidence for acculturation accruing from the Scots migration to Ulster in the 17th century. As I have suggested elsewhere<sup>38</sup> the scales of regional folk cultural identity seem to differ in the fields of material and non-material culture. Until the advent of

34. This early 19th-century Belfast-printed version was only discovered in the autumn of 1973. Its discovery has enabled a close analysis of possible chapbook influence on oral plays: see Alan Gailey, Chapbook Influence on Irish Mummers' Plays, *Folklore*, 85 (1974), pp. 1-22.

35. Desmond McCourt, Innovation Diffusion in Ireland: an historical case study, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 73 (1973), pp. 1-19.

36. A. T. Lucas, Irish Folk Life, in J. Meenan and D. A. Webb (eds.), *A View of Ireland*. Dublin 1957. p. 205.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

38. A. Gailey (s. footnote 13), pp. 138-143.



elements from the early industrial period, a few of which are discussed below, it seems that a common material culture dominated north Irish and much of Scottish life until about 1800, and that this was a common background against which the Scots migration to Ulster happened.

Acculturation may have proceeded to a point where a coherent regional culture was emerging in the north of Ireland by 1800. If so, it was based upon a population of two main groups, the descendants of the pre-Plantation population and the descendants of those who had migrated to an environment of culture contact that gave rise to cultural forms and patterns divergent from those developing in Britain and elsewhere in Ireland. The migrated population had become sufficiently established to be able to sustain a sizeable emigration to North America during its second century in Ulster. Also, of course, and in spite of divergent cultural development because of acculturation, some links based on kinship, sentiment and education were maintained with Scotland into the 19th century. Whether due to these, or due to decline of the cultural conservatism inherent in the migrant colonial circumstances of the 17th and early 18th centuries, from about 1800 a number of agricultural innovations began to appear in north-east Ireland, emanating from Scotland. Analysis of the acceptance of these innovations has only begun, and is complicated by the fact that almost all agricultural innovation in the north of Ireland was coming from Scotland. Comparison is needed between the spread of these innovations into Ulster and the dissemination of agricultural innovations into other parts of Ireland and Britain. Only one innovation has been commented on to any extent, the two-wheeled "Scotch cart", which came into Ulster from Scotland about 1800<sup>39</sup>. By 1812 it was described as "general" in Ulster, although its predecessor, the small blockwheel car, continued in use in many areas. Introduction of the Scotch cart apparently started with the linen merchants who required more effective transport for woven cloth to and from the bleach-greens, and who had the necessary capital to acquire it, and probably also the necessary contacts through their trade to know of the Scotch cart's suitability for their purpose<sup>40</sup>.

The relatively high capital cost of the early ploughs, but even more of the early threshing machines, determined that it was the landlords and their agents who were in a position to acquire them for experimentation, a necessary prerequisite to widespread adoption. In that social milieu, the earliest examples are recorded in the early 1800s quite widely in Ireland; in county Antrim two landowners installed machines that cost nearly £ 100 each, but by 1812 machines being introduced from Scotland were being erected for less than half that sum, includ-

39. G. B. Thompson, *Primitive Land Transport of Ulster*. Belfast, 1958. *idem*, *Some Primitive Forms of Farm Transport used in Northern Ireland*, *Ulster Folklife*, 1 (1955), pp. 32—36. E. E. Evans, *Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster*, in W. F. Grimes (ed.), *Aspects of Archaeology in Britain and Beyond*. London 1951. pp. 108—123. I. Herring, *The Scottish Cart in Ireland and its Contemporaries*, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3rd series, 7 (1944), pp. 42—46.

40. E. Wakefield, *An Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political*. I, 1812. p. 155.



ing the cost of bringing Scots workmen over to Antrim to set the machines up<sup>41</sup>. Reputedly the first threshing machine erected in Ulster derived from a visit paid by an Ulster landlord to Scotland in 1796 where he made drawings, from which a local craftsman built a thresher upon his master's return to Ulster. This same craftsman subsequently produced a second machine for another landowner in north Down<sup>42</sup>. Enterprising landowners might even bring Scotsmen to Ireland to demonstrate the use of the new equipment and methods. There was "an excellent Scotch ploughman" in county Meath in 1802<sup>43</sup>. County surveys of agriculture in the early 19th century thus catch the beginnings of the innovation process. The second stage was the spread of information about these agricultural innovations where an important agency was the large number of local ploughing, and general farming societies which flourished between about 1815 and 1840. Adoption of the threshing machines was slow. In the parish of Belfast in 1823 there were "some", but seemingly not many, and this parish was advantageously located close to a suitable source of supply of the machines through Belfast<sup>44</sup>. The Ordnance Survey parish memoirs, extant for much of Ulster, deal with conditions in the 1830s, and some of the western parishes include information from returns made to the North-West of Ireland Farming Society about 1820—25. This source shows that only isolated machines existed sporadically in Ulster at large and that they were either entirely absent in many places or still confined to farms operated by landlords on their own account. In the Parish of Templemore, on the west side of the Foyle in county Londonderry, for example, there were only three threshing machines on 412 holdings of which 61 were of more than 50 acres (20 hectares), large farms by contemporary Irish standards<sup>45</sup>. On 137 holdings near the village of Coagh in east Tyrone there were no threshing machines<sup>46</sup>. It may be noted that both of these were areas of Scots settlement, indicated on maps earlier in this paper. In some parishes in south-east Antrim, however, between Carrickfergus and Larne<sup>47</sup>, threshing machines were being introduced in appreciable numbers. This was not an immediately obvious area for their initial general acceptance by the farming community, being less advantageously placed in relation to sources of supply of the machines than, for example, parishes about Belfast, and less dominated by grain growing than, for example, south-east county Down. It is tempting to see here the influence of a cultural receptiveness to innovations from Scotland, operating in advance of factors like economic viability, or proximity to centres of supply. General acceptance of threshing machines elsewhere in Ulster had to await the fundamental changes that Irish agriculture underwent during the 1840s and 1850s. If the thesis advanced here to explain the early acceptance of

41. J. Dubourdieu, *A Statistical Survey of the County of Antrim*. Dublin, 1812. p. 155.

42. Idem., *A Statistical Survey of the County of Down*. Dublin 1802. pp. 52—53.

43. R. Thompson, *A Statistical Survey of the County of Meath*. Dublin 1802. pp. 110—111.

44. G. Benn, *A History of the Town of Belfast*. Belfast 1823. p. 280.

45. Ordnance Survey Memoir, County Londonderry. I, Dublin 1837. pp. 314—317.

46. MS Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Royal Irish Academy Library, Dublin: county Tyrone, Tamlaght parish.

47. Ibid.; county Antrim, parishes of Templecorran, Islandmagee, etc.



threshers in south-east Antrim is valid, the conclusion to be drawn is that acculturation accruing from migration at an earlier period provided a cultural basis for the later diffusion of culture elements independently of migration.

### III.

1. IN ATTEMPTING TO ANALYSE the nature of north Irish popular culture there is an obvious dilemma. Sufficient evidence exists to show that acculturation was involved in the historical development of the present cultural pattern, but documentation exists neither to provide a full assessment of acculturation nor to give a holistic view of the cultural pattern into which the 17th century Scots migration intruded. Evidence provides sidelights only on individual phenomena of acculturation. The dilemma is that concentration on individual culture elements is at best incomplete, at worst misleading, but that to ignore acculturation as a formative cultural process is equally misleading.

2. As Beals foresaw in the 1950s, research on acculturation that ignores the linguistic element may do itself a serious disservice<sup>48</sup>. North Irish dialectology clearly demonstrates the value of the study of languages in contact as an index of acculturation, and it is particularly valuable for the diachronic insights it may provide. It confirms also Beals's view that acculturation must be considered on an historical time scale.

3. The problem of scale is vital to an appreciation of north Irish acculturation. A time scale of some centuries is involved, and the differences in evidence from the material and non-material fields suggest that a considerable geographical scale may also be necessary. In itself this difference may be quite fundamental, casting light on the nature of west European popular culture.

4. The process of migration and settlement and the attendant introduction of a presbyterian ethic and ecclesiastical forms generally conformed to the nature of innovation diffusion. Acculturative reaction to this whole innovation complex was evident in rebellion by the pre-migration population of the north of Ireland in the 1640s, and again by their adherence to the cause of King James during the Williamite wars. A century after these wars another rebellion broke out in Ulster but led this time largely by individuals from within the Scots presbyterian tradition against mainly English control and influence. The 1798 Rebellion in Ulster might be construed, within a setting of very complicated political and social pressures, as showing the extent to which the Scots settlement in Ulster had been adapted into a cultural pattern divergent from the mainstream of Scottish cultural life. Some of the Scots vernacular poets in Ulster were implicated in this rebellion or sympathised with it. Concentration of the rebellion in Ulster in parts of Antrim and Down, where it might be held that the process of acculturation had proceeded farthest, and not in the more western areas of

48. R. Beals, Acculturation, in A. L. Kroeber (ed.), *Anthropology Today*. Chicago 1953. p. 635.



the Foyle basin and east Donegal, where the process may have been slower or different in emphasis, is in itself not only interesting, but echoes the differences in the timing of the maximum numbers of students going from these same areas to study at Glasgow.

5. Acculturation in the north of Ireland was much more complex than this paper would suggest. To try to clarify the argument in a preliminary study such as this, the theme has been limited to consideration of acculturation between incoming Scots and earlier Gaelic cultures. But settlers also migrated to Ulster from England and Wales. As the folk drama evidence shows they cannot be ignored, even in areas that on a modern linguistic basis seem to have involved only contact between Scots and Gaelic settlers and cultures. There is no absolute identification between settlement and culture. At least three elements were in contact in many parts of Ulster. Furthermore, the limitations of the linguistic work so far carried out are apparent even from a simple comparison of the maps presented here on the spread of Scots settlement, reinforced by the maps showing the sources of students seeking education in Scotland, on the one hand, with on the other the recently defined limits of modern Scots-based dialects in Ulster<sup>49</sup>. Discrepancies between the two may perhaps be explained in terms of the choice of elements included in the linguistic definition of a Scots dialect in the north of Ireland. The linguistic work seems to imply that Scots dialect is an absolute cultural feature, and not that there may be "degrees of Scottishness" in modern north Irish dialects. The third element, southern British migration and cultural influence, may have prevented the emergence of what has recently been defined as Scots-based dialect in some parts of Scots-settled Ulster, or it may have recently effaced such dialect present at an earlier period. If so, not only must due consideration be given to a diachronic approach to acculturation, but north Irish cultural development throughout the whole period of acculturation must also be seen against the numerical and cultural balance between the different migrant groups and the population into which they intruded.

49. R. J. Gregg, *Scotch-Irish Dialect Boundaries in Ulster*, in M. Wakelyn (ed.), *Patterns of Folk Speech of the British Isles*. London 1972. pp. 109–139, especially the map on pp. 132–133. Gregg's contemporary Scotch-Irish dialect boundary is also published by G. B. Adams, *Ulster Dialect Origins*, *Ulster Folklife*, 17 (1971), p. 101.