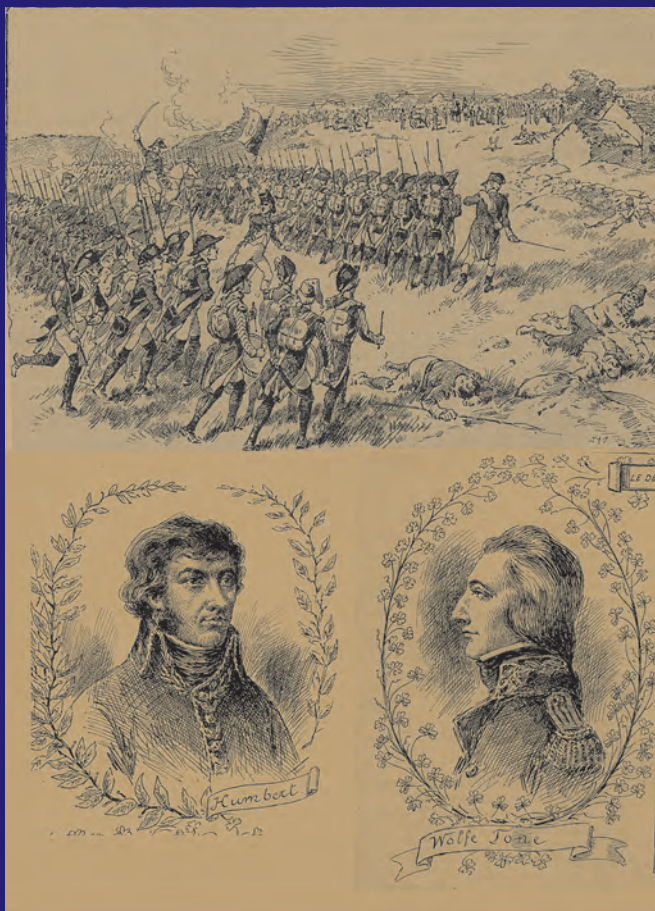


Eamon Maher and Catherine Maignant (eds)

# FRANCO-IRISH CONNECTIONS IN SPACE AND TIME

PEREGRINATIONS AND RUMINATIONS



# ireimagining land

FRANCO-IRISH CONNECTIONS IN SPACE AND TIME

Strong cultural, commercial, literary and intellectual links have existed for many centuries between the Celtic cousins France and Ireland and continue to flourish today. This book explores some of the connections that have been forged over space and time by groups and individuals travelling between the two countries.

Covering subjects as varied as travel literature, music, philosophy, wine production, photography and consumer culture, and spanning the seventeenth through to the twenty-first centuries, the collection draws attention to the rich tapestry of interconnections and associations which confirm this unique and mutually beneficial friendship. The book examines the role of figures such as Boullaye-le-Gouz, Coquebert de Montbret, Sydney Owenson, Alain de Lille, Augusta Holmes, Alain Badiou, Wolfe Tone, Jacques Rancière, the 'Wine Geese', the O'Kelly family, Marguerite Mespoulet, Madeleine Mignon, Jules Verne, Hector Malot, Harry Clifton, John McGahern, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Kate O'Brien, John Broderick, Brian Moore and François Mauriac. The essays will appeal to both academic and general readers and to anyone with an interest in Franco-Irish relations.

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# Franco-Irish Connections in Space and Time

# Reimagining Ireland

Volume 28

Edited by Dr Eamon Maher  
Institute of Technology, Tallaght



PETER LANG

Oxford • Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Wien

Eamon Maher and  
Catherine Maignant (eds)

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Peregrinations and Ruminations



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## Introduction

When it comes to ‘reimagining’ Ireland, as the series in which this study is appearing purports to do, it is always useful to consider how the country is perceived by those ‘outside’ its borders. Equally, it can be instructive to reflect on how Ireland relates to other societies, or how it applies certain values acquired elsewhere to its own particular context. It is difficult to explain the significant impact Ireland has exerted, and continues to exert, around the globe. At times it seems as though our politicians and diplomats enjoy almost unlimited access to the most influential figures in countries like America, Great Britain, China and France. By examining Franco-Irish connections in space and time, and the especially close and longstanding friendship that exists between France and Ireland, it is possible to discover a lot about how Ireland has attained the enviable position it occupies on the world stage. While some of the gloss of our image was undoubtedly tarnished during the Celtic Tiger boom and bust, and the relationship with France strained by some strident talk from former President Sarkozy in relation to our generous corporation tax regime, nevertheless there is still a ‘special’ relationship between the two Celtic cousins, one that is based on mutual respect and appreciation.

Connections between France and Ireland go back to prehistoric times and they were well-established when Rome reigned supreme in most of Europe, with the exception of Ireland. In those remote times, Irish chieftains imported Gaulish wine, which they bartered against shepherd dogs, and they employed Gaulish mercenaries. There were so many Gauls around that the Gaelic word for foreigner, ‘*Gall*’, may be attributable to their presence in Ireland at that time. If we are to believe the *Leyden Glossary*, when the Empire collapsed and Gaul was devastated by barbarian invaders, all

learned men fled to Ireland and ‘wherever they betook themselves, brought about a very great increase of learning to the inhabitants of those regions.’<sup>1</sup>

In later centuries, however, Ireland in its turn became known across Europe as a beacon of learning and it attracted many students, including the Merovingian king in exile, Dagobert II, who studied at Clonmacnoise. Around the same time, Irish monks, driven by their missionary zeal, sailed to the continent. Columbanus, Fursa and his brothers, to mention the best known figures, brought Irish Christianity to Merovingian Gaul, whilst great scholars such as John Scotus Eriugena were employed by Carolingian emperors to teach the ruling elites.

France’s geographical and linguistic – if not political – association with Normandy ensured continued respect for the culture of the island in the Middle Ages. When Marie de France translated *De Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* into Old French towards the end of the twelfth century, she deliberately omitted the reference to the savagery of the Irish, which the English author of the text had emphasised. Her *Espurgatoire Seint Patriz* also contributed to popularising the idea of Purgatory as an otherworldly space, a major Irish contribution to the Christian dogma.

This volume does not cover the origins of Franco-Irish connections, but anchoring them in history is essential in order to understand their depth and wealth. Readers may be more familiar with later links from the seventeenth century onwards. In that perspective, since the conference which led to the publication of this book was organised in Lille, it is certainly noteworthy that Irish families resided in the city from the sixteenth century, that Irish regiments were quartered in the area and that an Irish college was founded in 1610 and remained in existence until the French Revolution. The students of this college were so poor that local authorities granted them the exclusive right to bury the dead in order to allow them to earn a little money. The *Hibernois* integrated so well into the local society that they became more native than the natives themselves and got involved in local political and religious affairs.

1 The English translation is from James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1993).

In an article on Franco-Irish relations, published in a Festschrift for Pierre Joannon, Garret FitzGerald explained how after the Williamite War which culminated in the crushing defeat of the Jacobite army at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690, Irish émigrés were inclined to choose France as their preferred place of exile in Europe.<sup>2</sup> For its part, France tended to view Ireland as being of strategic military importance in its ongoing struggle with Britain. After the signing of the 'Entente Cordiale' between Britain and France in 1903, however, Irish Republicans, still anxious to break the link with the British Crown, focused their fund-raising and attempts to gain potential political support more on the United States than on France. Ireland's entry to the EEC (European Economic Community) in January 1973 would not have been possible without French support and FitzGerald points to the importance of General de Gaulle's stay in Ireland after he resigned as President in 1969 in raising Ireland's visibility and its tourism potential among French people. As Minister for Foreign Affairs in the 1970s, FitzGerald was conscious that his obvious commitment to the French language was greatly appreciated by the French government.<sup>3</sup> As Taoiseach, FitzGerald on one occasion found himself engaged in an interesting discussion with François Mitterrand about the Catholic intellectual tradition in France:

I speculated as to why there seemed to have been a gap between the period in the first half of the nineteenth century when leading Catholics played a prominent role in intellectual matters and the period in the twentieth century when my father's friends, Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson, were similarly influential. I later learned that this random conversation had helped to set up a good relationship between us.<sup>4</sup>

A knowledge of the language, history and culture of a country is a good basis for forming close bonds. Brian Fallon, in his 1998 study, *An Age of*

2 Garret FitzGerald, 'Irish French Relations, 1919–2009', in Jane Conroy (ed.), *Franco-Irish Connections. Essays, Memoirs and Poems in Honour of Pierre Joannon* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp. 82–94, p. 82.

3 FitzGerald, p. 90.

4 FitzGerald, p. 92. It is interesting that Charles Haughey also had a good personal relationship with Mitterrand.

*Innocence: Irish Culture 1930–1960*, dedicates a full chapter to ‘The French Connection’, which illustrates the importance he attached to the political, ideological and cultural links between Ireland and France. He mentions how France was viewed by many in Ireland as an alternative to English domination, but he also points out the deep-seated admiration among the Irish intelligentsia for French thought and culture. Viewed as the home of liberty, equality and fraternity, France also possessed other attractions in the minds of several Irish people:

The French were also the ‘civilised’ nation, supposedly adept in the arts of cookery, haute couture and erotic life ... But on a very different level, France was, or had been, a Catholic country with a lively, even aggressive Catholic intellectual wing, a long and illustrious succession of Catholic writers from the Middle Ages down to Claudel, a flourishing Neo-Thomist movement as exemplified by the philosopher Jacques Maritain, and at least the remnants of a deep-rooted peasant piety which drew thousands of ordinary, unintellectual Irish people to make pilgrimages to Lourdes.<sup>5</sup>

In light of these points of convergence, it is not altogether surprising that Irish priests, businessmen and diplomats throughout the centuries should have found many shared values and beliefs among the French, the most notable being a commitment to Republican ideals and a historical link to Catholicism. Clearly one should not exaggerate the closeness of the ties, either, as there are some obvious differences between the two countries. Ireland is a small island with a proud culture going back to Celtic times and the early Middle Ages, but it was conquered by its powerful neighbour and much of its former glory was forgotten. France later emerged as a large powerful country, which now has a celebrated history. Its influence extended well beyond the boundaries of Europe; its armies gained footholds in places as far removed as Canada, North America, the Caribbean, Africa, Egypt and Russia. French was the language of diplomacy par excellence and was spoken by the nobility and ruling classes in many countries. France’s writers and philosophers, culture and literature, food and drink have long been held in high regard. But being a colonial power also brings

5 Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930–1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998), p. 124.



with it a certain amount of baggage – witness the complicated relationship between Ireland and its closest neighbour, Great Britain. Ireland shares with Denmark the unique distinction of being the only country in Europe never to have been at war with France. Today, both Ireland and France are small countries in the global village and their partnership in the European Union may be a key to their future. In this new context their friendship has clearly endured.

But, more than a friend, France has long been a cultural icon for Irish people, a place of refuge in times of religious persecution, an asylum for writers like James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. Joyce first travelled to Paris with the intention of studying medicine, and the French capital was, in his biographer Ellmann's view, 'Dublin's antithesis'.<sup>6</sup> When he took up residence there in 1920, the influence of Paris on Joyce's artistic development was noteworthy. He would meet Valéry, Claudel, Gide, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Beach (who would play such an important role in the publication of *Ulysses* in 1922), Valéry Larbaud, Ernest Hemingway and many others there during the 1920s. At this time, Paris was undoubtedly *the* meeting place, where writers and artists of all nationalities came to seek out inspiration and share ideas. Joyce internalised its unique customs, its sights and smells, as can be seen from the following passage from *Ulysses*:

Paris rawly waking, crude sunlight on her lemon streets. Moist piths of farls of bread, the froggreen wormwood, her matin incense, court the air. Belluomo rises from the bed of his wife's lover's wife, the kerchiefed housewife is astir, a saucer of acetic acid in her hands. In Rodot's Yvonne and Madeleine newmake their tumbled beauties, their mouths yellowed with the *pus* of *flan Breton*. Faces of Paris men go by, their wellpleased pleasers, curled conquistadores.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this passage containing some rather clichéd notions about Paris and its inhabitants, Joyce certainly knew that writers and intellectuals were cherished in France in a way that was unthinkable in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century.

6 Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 115.

7 Cited by Ellmann, p. 115.

This book seeks to trace the rich tapestry of interaction between France and Ireland, an interaction that can be seen at work in every chapter. Grace Neville and Jane Conroy open the volume with an exploration of the observations on Ireland made by the French travel writers Boullaye-le-Gouz and Coquebert de Montbret during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Neville's study interprets Boullaye-le-Gouz' work as an illuminating witness account by an outside eye of the political turmoil that marked the land onto which he had just stepped in the summer of 1644. Conroy considers how travellers and cultural historians shuttle back and forth along similar heuristic spirals, collecting, selecting, deciphering and representing the random elements available to them. She concludes that Coquebert de Montbret was one traveller whose observations of Ireland's 'present' in or around the years 1791–1793 contribute to our understanding of that Irish past and how it was once read by fellow Europeans. The two other chapters in this section, by Jeanne Lakatos and Mary Pierse, discuss how Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan) drew inspiration from French philosophy, especially in relation to nationalism. Lakatos sees a strong correlation between the philosophies of Owenson and the French medieval writer and Cistercian monk, Alain de Lille, in their desire to enlighten aristocratic communities. Mary Pierse's chapter, a comparative study of Owenson and the composer Augusta Holmes, notes the fascinating intertwining of nationalism and music, and of independent, liberal thought and action, in the lives and artistic creations of these two strong women. Their travels to France and to Ireland are both actual and creative in Pierse's view.

The second section concentrates on the cultural and commercial exchanges between France and Ireland and opens with a revealing consideration of how the French Revolution, from being viewed as a template for the actions and ideological position of the United Irishmen, ultimately came to signify a lot more in the Irish context. Building on the ideas of the French philosophers Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière in particular, Eugene O'Brien argues that the 'real' of the French Revolution came in time to exert very different effects on the Irish and French public spheres. Brian Murphy's chapter considers the links between France's wine heritage and Ireland since the time of the migration of what are referred to colloquially as the 'Wine Geese' in the eighteenth century. Murphy argues

that the backstory of this migration could be successfully used as a means of enhancing the nature and authenticity of French wine among potential Irish consumers. Axel Klein, in the following chapter, follows the fortunes of the O'Kellys in nineteenth-century France and argues that there is no better example in the history of music of such a close integration of an Irish family into French music. This section concludes with Catherine Maignant's chapter which deals with the arrival in Ireland in May 1913 of two French women, Marguerite Mespoulet and Madeleine Mignon, armed with sophisticated photographic equipment whose intended purpose was to capture traditional Irish lifestyles that were deemed to be on the point of extinction. The banker Albert Kahn, who financed the trip, wanted to use these pictures in his *Archive of the Planet*, where he hoped to keep a record of all such disappearing cultures around the world. The first exhibition of the photographs in Ireland took place in 1981, on the initiative of the French Embassy and Alliance Française, and it elicited a huge public response. Ireland as seen through French eyes, or through a French lens, did not always appeal to native sensibilities, but the Kahn collection is nonetheless a very important social document.

The final section traces some literary links between France and Ireland. Lauren Clark considers the critical neglect of France and Ireland's Victorian foundling narratives from the standpoints of encroaching consumer culture and advertising. She takes Jules Verne's only Irish-based novel, *P'tit Bonhomme* (1893), and Hector Malot's *Sans Famille* (1878) to illustrate how the child characters in both novels are forced by circumstances to engage in bartering and hawking their wares in the burgeoning *fin de siècle* consumer capitals of Dublin and Paris. Benjamin Keatinge focuses on the international dimension of the poet Harry Clifton's oeuvre and in particular his 2007 collection, *Secular Eden: Paris Notebooks 1994–2004*, a remarkable engagement with French culture by an Irish poet who considers French civic urban space, secularism, intellectual traditions and historical experience as part of a late twentieth- and twenty-first-century 'borderlessness'. The Irish fiction writer John McGahern never made any secret of his admiration for French authors such as Flaubert, Proust and Camus, and Raymond Mullen charts the phenomenology of memory in McGahern's *That They May Face the Rising Sun* with the aid of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology*

*of Perception*. The collection closes with Eamon Maher's elucidation of the influence exerted by the Nobel Laureate François Mauriac on Irish writers, particularly as this pertains to their treatment of hypocrisy and Pharisaism. Looking at some allegedly 'Catholic' Irish novelists – Kate O'Brien, Brian Moore, John Broderick and John McGahern – Maher concludes that there is enough convergence for a comparative reading such as the one he proposes to be of benefit.

This book of essays covers a broad spectrum of shared interests or cross-fertilisation of ideas between France and Ireland. While far from exhaustive, it does at least point to some interesting avenues of research into what has been, is, and will continue to be a mutually advantageous friendship.

EAMON MAHER AND CATHERINE MAIGNANT

PART I

Travel Literature and Literary Connections  
Between France and Ireland



## *Things Fall Apart* – Boullaye-le-Gouz, An Angevin Traveller to Ireland in 1644

In all of literature – or so it has often been said – there are just two basic plots: a man goes on a journey, a stranger comes to town. While the text that forms the basis of this chapter is not strictly speaking a work of literature but rather a naturalistic discourse, it nonetheless revolves around these twin themes: it tells the story of a man who went on a journey, of a stranger who came to town. The text in question, *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de La Boullaye le Gouz*, contains a purportedly factual account of a two-month stay in Ireland in 1644, by a self-styled *Voyageur Catholique*, the Angevin, François de la Boullaye-le-Gouz (1623–1668).<sup>1</sup> He arrived on Irish shores in early summer, 1644, and headed south from Dublin through Kilkenny and Limerick to Cork, before making his departure through Wexford. He was just twenty-one years old at the time.

Accounts of strangers arriving in Ireland are, of course, as old as recorded history, from Paladius and St Patrick through to Giraldus Cambrensis, via visits, invasions and landings, all the way down to our own day. From aeons before that, the origin myths preserved in folklore tell how the first settlers to arrive in Ireland purportedly landed in pre-historic times on the shores of South Kerry from their home in Spain. In the early modern period, with Europe on the cusp of colonising fervour, French commentators on Ireland range from armchair or deskbound travellers to people

1 François de la Boullaye-le-Gouz, *Les Voyages et observations du Sieur de la Boullaye le-Gouz* (Paris: Clousier, 1653 / Troyes: Oudot, 1657, new edition). Facsimiles of these editions can be consulted online at [gallica.bnf.fr](http://gallica.bnf.fr). All page references in this chapter are to the 1657 edition.

like Boullaye-le-Gouz, observers who actually visited the country.<sup>2</sup> Their motives for travelling, insofar as they can be established, were, to say the least, mixed. To quote Joan-Pau Rubies: 'the pilgrim was succeeded by the gentleman as traveller, and educational travel came to support a humanistic ideal of practical wisdom against the fading medieval paradigm of the journey to a sacred location'.<sup>3</sup>

Boullaye-le-Gouz is best known for his extensive accounts of his travels to the Orient. The title page of his *Voyages* sets out his vast ambition to describe nothing less than 'les Religions, Gouvernemens, et situations des Estats et Royaumes d'Italie, Grece, Natolie, Syrie, Perse, Palestine, Karamenie, Kaldee, Assyrie, grand Mogol, Bijapour, Indes Orientales des Portugais, Arabie, Egypte, Hollande, grande Bretagne, Irlande, Dannemark, Pologne, Isles et autres lieux d'Europe, Asie et Affrique'. Their ethnographic content ensures that they are important and, indeed, nothing short of fascinating. The illustrations that adorn *Les Voyages* make this a rare and engrossing work. It would be tempting, therefore, in the Irish section, to highlight elements such as its ethnographic value, for instance his startling remarks that in Ireland, red-haired people are considered the most attractive, that Irish women have hanging breasts and that those amongst them who are freckled like a trout are deemed to be the most beautiful,<sup>4</sup> or his fleeting references to Irish clothing and to the lice-ridden Irish delousing themselves shamelessly in public.<sup>5</sup> Even at a stylistic level, the *Voyages* are of undeniable interest: witness the *Voyageur's* use of aphorisms, for instance his contention that the Irish '*ayment les Espagnols comme leurs frères, les François comme leurs amis, les Italiens comme leurs alliez, les Allemands comme leurs parens, les Anglois et Escossois sont leurs ennemis irréconciliables*' ('[they]

2 See the excellent article by Jane Conroy, 'Entre réel et imaginaire: les voyageurs français en Irlande, 1650–1850', in *Entrelacs franco-irlandais: langue, mémoire, imaginaire*, edited by Paul Brennan and Michael O'Dea (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2004), pp. 45–64.

3 Joan-Pau Rubies, *Travellers and Cosmographers: Studies in the History of Early Modern Travel and Ethnology* (Ashgate: Abingdon, 2007), p. 25.

4 *Voyages*, p. 476.

5 *Voyages*, p. 478.



love the Spanish as their brothers, the French as their friends, the Italians as their allies, the Germans as their relatives, the English and the Scots as their sworn enemies').<sup>6</sup> However, the focus of this chapter is elsewhere: it aims to present *Les Voyages* in a new light, as a heretofore neglected first-hand witness account of the chaos and conflict that marked Ireland in the 1640s. For what emerges from this narrative by our young traveller is his acute awareness of Ireland as a land in which things are in danger of falling apart – hence the title of this chapter which echoes a phrase reprinted by various writers from Yeats<sup>7</sup> to Chinua Achebe.<sup>8</sup> His text can be taken as an invaluable companion piece to the remarkable and much discussed archive of the 1641 depositions, the originals of which are in Trinity College Dublin and which have recently been made available electronically.<sup>9</sup> These depositions or witness statements are detailed first-hand accounts in words and images (woodcuts) of the violence inflicted on members of the planter or English community throughout Ireland in the early 1640s. They tell of men, women and children being dispossessed, tortured and massacred in a variety of gruesome ways. The witnesses and victims of this violence are named in these remarkable depositions, their words immortalised, their voices recorded, voices of '*le menu peuple*' ('the small, unimportant people'), those who are all too often '*les muets et les exclus de l'histoire traditionnelle*' ('those deprived of a voice and of space in traditional history'),<sup>10</sup> people – many of them women – who all too often slip unrecorded, unnamed and unseen 'outside history', to quote Eavan Boland's powerful phrase.

A few words at the outset in order to contextualise Boullaye-le-Gouz. This 'gentilhomme angevin' as he described himself was born in 1623 and, coincidentally, studied in the same Jesuit college at la Flèche attended just one generation earlier by René Descartes. Ever understated, this

6 *Voyages*, p. 477.

7 W.B. Yeats, 'The Second Coming' in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1920).

8 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

9 See 1641.tcd.ie.

10 Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'L'Histoire des marginaux', in *La Nouvelle Histoire*, edited by Jacques le Goff (Paris: Editions Complexe, 1978), p. 278.

'gentilhomme de petite fortune' ('a not particularly well-off gentleman') as his biographer, fellow Angevin, Gaston Moreau, saw him, '*ne cherche pas à étonner, à provoquer l'admiration*' ('[he] does not seek to astonish or to prompt admiration').<sup>11</sup> Boullaye-le-Gouz himself explains that he had never intended to publish this work: indeed, *pace* Montaigne, he says that his observations were private, recorded just for himself. However, contacts made through readings of his *Voyages* among circles of learned, well-connected friends, including especially a fellow Angevin, le Comte de Bautru, led to Boullaye-le-Gouz coming to the attention of Louis XIV: the King is said to have wanted to see him in his '*habit persan*' ('Persian garb') and to hear him read some of his work. It would appear that he presented the King with a copy of the section he had composed on Asia, his travels in Western Europe being added at a later date.

The *Voyageur* seems to have initially intended to leave his observations in manuscript form but was persuaded to publish them by Cardinal Capponi to whom he had given a copy during a visit to Rome in 1650 and to whom he dedicated the first edition of his work. His text, 540 pages long, was first published in Paris in 1653, with its success being attested by the publication of a second edition just four years later in 1657. While he was mentioned still into the eighteenth century, as one of his recent editors, the Normalien Jacques de MauSSION de Favières, has commented: '*la renommée de La Boullaye semble par la suite s'estomper un peu*' ('La Boullaye's fame seems to wane somewhat thereafter').<sup>12</sup> Travel writing has, of course, become fertile territory for scholarly investigation in recent years. Despite his far-reaching travels, however, Boullaye-le-Gouz has, to date, escaped extensive scholarly attention, overshadowed as he is by other travellers to the East such as his contemporary, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605–1689).<sup>13</sup> It is striking that many of the more extensive studies on the *Voyageur* such

11 Gaston Moreau, *Le Gouz de la Boullaye, gentilhomme angevin, ambassadeur de Louis XIV. Sa vie, son oeuvre et sa famille* (Baugé: E. Cingla, 1956), p. 14.

12 *Les Voyages et Observations du Sieur de la Boullaye-le-Gouz, Gentilhomme angevin*, edited by Jacques de MauSSION de Favières (Paris: Editions Kime, 1994), p. 11.

13 See Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Les Six Voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier* (Paris: Clouzier, 1677), 3 volumes.

as the biography by an Angevin lawyer, Gaston Moreau, or the articles by Henri Louis Castonnet des Fosses, are published in or around his Angevin birthplace, suggesting local pride as much as anything else as a key factor in their genesis.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the scholarly value of such publications is limited: for instance, Castonnet des Fosses' articles are little more than paraphrased accounts of the *Voyageur's* travels.

A small number of articles focuses exclusively on Boullaye-le-Gouz,<sup>15</sup> for instance on the remarkable illustrations incorporated in his text.<sup>16</sup> More often, however, he merits mere fleeting references in narrower discussions for instance of points of philology: the term 'punch' is said to be derived from his use of the term 'bolle ponge'<sup>17</sup> which he describes as '*une bison dont les Anglois usent aux Indes*' (a drink of which the English partake in India).<sup>18</sup> His work surfaces briefly as supporting evidence for ethnographic observations.<sup>19</sup> for instance confirming the presence of caravans on the northern route across Turkey.<sup>20</sup> He warrants a posthumous mention in 1708 in the travel writings of French Huguenot explorer and naturalist, François Leguat.<sup>21</sup>

- 14 H.L. Castonnet des Fosses, 'La Boullaye le Gouz. Sa vie et ses voyages', in *La Revue de l'Anjou*, 1891.
- 15 See *inter alia* B. Naderzad, 'Louis XIV, La Boullaye et l'exotisme persan', in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 114:1236 (1972), pp. 29–38. On 16 January 2007 in the UCLA Latin American Institute, Prof. Sanjay Subrahmanyam gave a presentation entitled 'Between Ethnography and Realpolitik: Le Gouz de la Boullaye in Mughal India and Beyond'.
- 16 Michele Bernardini, 'The Illustrations of a MS of the Travel Account of François de la Boullaye le Gouz in the Library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei in Rome', in *Muqarnas: Essays in Honour of J.M. Rogers*, 21 (2004), pp. 55–72.
- 17 Paul Barbier, 'Loan words from English in Eighteenth Century French', in *The Modern Language Review*, 16:3–4 (July–October 1921), p. 253.
- 18 See also for instance Etienne Combe, 'A note: Quafar: Khafara', in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10:3 (1940), p. 790.
- 19 See for instance Bart Ooghe, 'The Rediscovery of Babylonia: European Travellers and the Development of Knowledge on Lower Mesopotamia, Sixteenth to Early Nineteenth Century', in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3:17:3 (2007), p. 243.
- 20 David Winfield, 'The Northern Routes across Anatolia', in *Anatolian Studies* 27 (1977), pp. 162–163.
- 21 See Geoffroy Atkinson, 'A French Desert Island Novel of 1708', in *PMLA* 36:4 (December 1921), pp. 509–528.

To date, his Irish journey has attracted little attention. In 1837, Crofton Croker translated and published an abridged version of it which he dedicated to Disraeli.<sup>22</sup> For the most part, however, the *Voyageur's* Irish journey is corralled in the same kind of contexts as his journeys further afield: relegated to footnotes in scholarly journals. For instance, his version of an anecdote regarding a log swept ashore near Youghal reported to contain an image of the Virgin Mary is noted in wider studies of this motif.<sup>23</sup> For the most part, details from his travelogue are cited as evidence in arguments made in various archaeological or architectural studies.<sup>24</sup>

Boullaye-le-Gouz spent two months in Ireland, sixty-three days in all, from 15 May to 17 July 1644. Chronologically (though not in terms of its location within his overall *Voyages*, where it stretches from chapter XXIX starting on page 450 to chapter XXXVI, just over thirty pages further on), it comes towards the start of his journeys which were to take him from Ireland in the West through Europe to the East where, having been made '*ambassadeur de Sa Majesté vers les rois de Perse, des Indes et autres souverains*' (Ambassador in the service of His Majesty to the kings of Persia, India and other royal personages), he died in Isfahan, Persia, in

- 22 *The Tour of the French Traveller, M. de la Boullaye le Gouz in Ireland, A.D. 1644*, translated and edited by T. Crofton Croker (London: T. and W. Boone, 1837). The translation from French to English of this text may, in fact, be the work not of Crofton Croker himself but of his wife. It contains some errors; for instance, 'rade' is mistranslated as 'road'.
- 23 S. Hayman, 'The Miraculous Image and Shrine of the Madonna of Youghal', in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 1:2 (1854), p. 118; Urban G. Flanagan, 'Our Lady of Graces of Youghal', in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 1:55:181 (January–June 1950), pp. 1–2.
- 24 See *inter alia* C. Ua Danachair, 'Some Primitive Structures used as Dwellings', in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 75:4 (1945), pp. 204–212; F.H.A. Aalen, 'The Evolution the Traditional House in Western Ireland', in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 96:1 (1966), pp. 47–58; P. Robinson, 'Vernacular housing in Ulster in the Seventeenth Century', in *Ulster Folklife* 25 (1979), pp. 1–28; Rory Sherlock, 'The Evolution of the Tower-House as a Domestic Space', in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 111 (2011), pp. 115–140.

his mid-forties, in 1668. Maussion de Favières underlines the importance of the Irish journey in Boullaye-le-Gouz' overall travels:

*C'est avec l'Irlande que va commencer pour lui ce voyage aux horizons dont la passion ne le quitte plus, et qui, de cet Extrême Occident à l'Orient, par la Baltique et la mer Egée, les pentes du Caucause et les bords du Nil, les Etats du Grand Seigneur, du Sophi et du Grand Mogol, lui fera rencontrer le jour du destin dans la lointaine Isfahan.*

(For him, Ireland marks the start of this journey towards horizons that will never cease to fascinate him, and which from this extreme Westwardly point all the way to the Orient, passing through the Baltic and the Aegean Sea, the slopes of the Caucauses and the banks of the Nile, the States of the Great Master, of the Sophi and of the Great Mogul, leads him to meet his destiny in faraway Isfahan.)<sup>25</sup>

It is tempting, therefore, to see his stopover in Ireland as some kind of test case, an opportunity for him literally and metaphorically to test the waters before embarking on more ambitious travels.

The Ireland into which he arrived was a country in turmoil, with wars and general unrest being played out against a background of wars and further wars. Indeed, the very titles of recent historical studies of this period give a flavour of the reality into which he was stepping. These include:

*Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s*<sup>26</sup>  
*Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland*<sup>27</sup>  
*Religious Violence against Settlers in Southern Ulster 1641–2*<sup>28</sup>  
*The Other Massacre: English Killings of the Irish 1641–2*<sup>29</sup>  
*An Upstart Earl: Richard Boyle*<sup>30</sup>

25 Jacques de Maussion de Favières, p. 35.

26 *Kingdoms in Crisis: Ireland in the 1640s*, edited by Micheal O Siochru (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).

27 David Edwards, Padraig Lenihan and Clodagh Tait (eds), *The Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

28 Brian Mac Cuarta, in David Edwards *et al.*, pp. 154–175.

29 Kenneth Nicholls, in David Edwards *et al.*, pp. 176–191.

30 Nicholas Canny, *An Upstart Earl: Richard Boyle, 1566–1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

To say that the *lieu de mémoire* that is the 1641 Rebellion and the wider context into which it fits is still a contested site would be an understatement: visual representations of the 1641 massacres still feature in current Portadown Orange marches every summer.

Boullaye-le-Gouz' Irish journey is bookended by conflict. Death, especially unexpected death, is everywhere. Already, before the start of his Irish adventure, his companion, le Capitaine Giron, with whom he had set out for England in order to fight for Charles I against Cromwell, had been killed, leaving the young traveller apparently alone as he set sail for Ireland. In the first pages of his Irish account, again before ever reaching Irish shores, we see the vessel on which he was travelling being pursued by a large English Parliamentary gunship. He and his companions were terrified for their lives, in danger of becoming collateral damage in someone else's war as rumours spread about the lack of mercy shown to other travellers by these same Parliamentarians consumed by a desire to avenge what the Irish had, according to more rumours, done in slaughtering 145,000 Protestant settlers. Indeed, the role of rumour here and elsewhere throughout the *Voyages* is key in whipping up an atmosphere of constant fear, suspicion and apprehension. (One is reminded here, of course, of the compelling studies on the destabilising power of rumour in eighteenth-century Paris by Robert Darnton, and others.<sup>31</sup>) Even without blood-thirsty Parliamentarians, his initial journey is fraught with danger: the captain of the vessel which was to bring him to Ireland was drunk and consequently dangerous, responsible for his ship nearly smashing into the most dangerous sandbank off the Dublin coast (the motif of the drunken sea-captain is, of course, a *deus ex machina*, but that does not mean that he did not actually exist!). Drunken sea-captains and blood-thirsty sailors were not all he had to contend with, however: from the very start, everything, even nature itself, seems to be on some kind of semi-permanent war footing: the black birds he glimpses somewhere out over the Irish Sea – again before ever arriving in Ireland – remind him of a battalion; the fact that they are managing to

31 Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London: Allen Lane, 1984).

fly against the wind is in some way a sign that he is now entering a zone somehow beyond human comprehension and therefore beyond human control. This 'twilight zone' atmosphere is heightened by his sighting of islands appearing and disappearing off the coast of Dublin. This scene is so vivid that he imagines that he can distinguish cattle and trees on them. A Dutch sailor on board explains that what he is really seeing is a collection of vapours, often misinterpreted in northern seas as islands inhabited by witches. In other words, he gives a scientific explanation while at the same time recording other, older interpretations of such phenomena. The duality of Boullaye-le-Gouz' own vision of the world comes to mind as superstition and folklore are given equal footing with signs, symbols, numbers and calculations. In any case, how can we know anything? What is it that we see? Any phenomenon can give rise to convincing though contradictory interpretations and explanations. Here is a world in which one is free to favour explanation (a) or, if preferred, its opposite, explanation (b). Our traveller's feelings of uncertainty and apprehension are intensified.

His departure two months later is equally fraught. The restrained tone maintained throughout this text is, for once, jettisoned in the conclusion where the now frantic young traveller states with some urgency that he now wants to leave this country, come what may. His sudden desperation to leave this war-torn island is evident in his gesture of falling to his knees to implore a sea-captain for permission to board his vessel in Wexford. To the captain's understandable fear of being found by Parliamentarians with a French passenger on board, Boullaye-le-Gouz answers that he does not mind just as long as he can get out of Ireland: *'il me dit si ie rencontre des François ie vous meneray en France, si des Biscains en Espagne, ie lui respondis que tout chemin m'estoit indifferent, pourueu que ie peusse sortir d'Irlande'* ('he told me that if he met any French people, he would conduct me to France and that if he met anyone from Biscay, he would take me to Spain. I answered him that I did not mind where he brought me as long as I could get out of Ireland').<sup>32</sup> When contrary winds abort his initial departure, he finds himself back on shore. His dismay that this apparently last chance of

32 *Voyages*, p. 479.