

Zitierhinweis

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**Raingard Esser / Steven G. Ellis (eds.): Borders, Bordering Practices and Mobility in Early Modern Europe**

The present conference volume of nine essays is the outcome of a panel on new approaches in the fields of border and mobility studies in Early Modern Europe at the 33<sup>rd</sup> Irish Conference of Historians at the University of Galway in May 2021. Due to the COVID pandemic at the time, the conference was held virtually, but even so attracted a variety of interesting and innovative speakers. Given the difficulties, first in reorganizing a virtual conference and second, in convincing the original presenters to update, extend, and submit their papers without the opportunity to discuss their topics with colleagues in person, the resulting publication is a collection of texts by four original panellists in collaboration with a number of excellent international colleagues who contributed their research in borders and mobility studies. Therefore, it was possible to extend the conference's original focus with case studies from a broader geographical range. However, given the geographical focus, all papers deal either with English-speaking Western European cases in Ireland and England, or with Dutch, French, or Western German case studies and Mid-Atlantic borderlands in North America. The period covered by the various contributions ranges from the late fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

What ties the different historical approaches together is a shared interest in geographical, physical borders and a focus on the power relations of political and other historical actors in the Early Modern period. How were border regimes negotiated among different players and what practices were used by mobile people who crossed borders in pre-industrial Western Europe? All the contributions deal with wider territorial borders of states and provinces rather than including Early Modern practices of controlling people at city walls or cultural borders between different communities. Since 'border-making' is at the centre and this was mostly done by men, predominantly from the elites, with few exceptions, women and other members of socially disadvantaged segments of society hardly play a role in these texts. However, the editors are aware of these shortcomings and correctly claim that women's roles in Early Modern border practices are still rather under-researched.

After a short introduction to the background of the book's creation and an overview of the contents of the individual contributions, one of the editors, Raingard Esser, starts with a more theoretical chapter on new historical approaches in Early Modern border practices and mobility regimes. She convincingly demonstrates that a vision of a 'borderless society' where all people could travel within Europe without limits was never an option, neither in our pandemic-driven society with increasing state border controls nor in Early Modern societies where mostly members of the elites and professional segments, such as diplomats or merchants, were hardly restricted by administrative borders. In her text, Esser shows the growing interest in historical 'border-making', the agency of different players, and suggests using the term 'transregional history' for the Early Modern period instead of 'transnationalism'.

The detailed introductory chapter ties together the different approaches of all authors and is followed by three contributions on borders and military frontiers in Ireland and England. Steven Ellis writes about the military frontier and the English Pale in Ireland in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His case study focusses on the south Dublin marches and demonstrates how English settlers followed a distinctive strategy to transform sparsely inhabited territories into military frontiers - a common aspect of Early Modern border formation. During the Kildare ascendancy we see a clear revival of English rule,

accompanied by the instalment of English culture and identity in the four shires. Christopher Maginn's text deals with Elizabethan Ireland, which was thought of by contemporaries as a kingdom of perfect territorial integrity without borders. Contrary to abstract concepts of royal sovereignty, his chapter presents overlapping jurisdictions and a fluid and liminal space of important land frontiers for the case of Ireland's north-west region. Anglicisation strategies moved the frontier further away from the English crown and enlarged the territory, however without establishing a new frontier defence. Finally, Neil Murphy writes about the Calais Pale and years of incursions by French farmers onto English lands during the reign of Henry VIII. To defend the English Pale, which was surrounded by French territory, arable land was given to English-speaking farmers who followed English law and inheritance practices and therefore incorporated these lands more firmly into English dominions. Such settlement models were employed on other Tudor frontiers, even if it was hard to tell how successful they were.

The chapter by Mark Thompson broadens the geographical focus of the volume across the Atlantic, to Maryland and the bordering Dutch settlement of New Amstel in New Netherland. In the middle of the seventeenth century, English planters threatened to invade territories of colonizers from the Netherlands, which resulted in a series of meetings between English and Dutch representatives. With his detailed case study, Thompson comprehensively demonstrates how strategies of anglicisation were successfully transported to the colonies. The chapter by Dániel Moerman enriches the volume with a case study from Upper Guelders in the early seventeenth century, which was part of the Spanish Habsburg Netherlands at the time. With his analysis of the justice system, he is able to demonstrate how Protestant members of a small border community used legal opportunities to overturn their religious exile. The chapter by Holger Gräf deals with Early Modern border practices in the case of the Princely Abbey of Fulda. Based on extensive treaties of demarcation, Gräf gives a comprehensive example of an emerging Early Modern territorial state. In the next chapter, Megan Williams discusses an influential text on Early Modern law practices, the argumentation of Francisco de Vitoria on early-sixteenth-century diplomatic mobility. Regarding the Spanish case and its colonies in South America, Williams emphasizes the importance of diplomatic immunity in transit across borders. Finally, the last text by Ann Ruth deals with the expulsion of the Jewish community of Colmar in Alsace in the early sixteenth century and its dispute at the *Reichskammergericht*. Through this special case, which was brought to court by Rabbi Josel von Rosheim in 1548, the author shows its special importance for negotiating mobility rights for Jews in the Early Modern Holy Roman Empire.

The conference volume on Early Modern border practices by Esser and Ellis can be recommended to those who are interested in law practices, diplomatic negotiations, and in distinctive state strategies to homogenise border regions and their people, as well as how these legal regimes were implemented in newly conquered colonies. The different chapters clearly focus on legal disputes and administrative 'border-making' businesses based on a vast number of different documents and Early Modern texts for Ireland, England, and other parts of Western and Southern Europe. Even if not all chapters are easy to read, the hope is that the various case studies will stimulate and inspire further research in the field of border and mobility studies in the Early Modern period.