

“Designed establishment in delightful country”: planting, a plantation, The Plantation

Introduction

Placing a seed in the earth is such a long way from founding a colony that I have always been exercised by the nature and definition of plantation. And it is such an English word and English concept that its translation into Scotland, Ireland, the Americas and beyond complicates matters still further, to the point at which when one seeks to explore the relationship of ethnically-diverse individuals in the early-modern period and their sense of place – the relationship between land and people – it is worth asking the question whether the term ‘plantation’ is at all helpful, or whether we need to abandon it and search for a range of more nuanced, and origin-specific terms. This paper then is an exploration of diverse-interpretation, across a range of plantation, with some hints at where a specifically Scottish devising of plantation might derive.

The dictionary provides six basic overview definitions of the word plantation: something that has been founded or established, but also the action of founding something, and again the foundation on which something is lain or built; a patch of cultivated, growing plants, and the action of starting seeds or seedlings in the ground; a settlement with the aim of controlling territory, and an estate on which specific crops are grown. Even this typology has involved re-grouping the heads, and within each heading are sub-definitions which further confuse. Terms such as ‘settlement’ and ‘colony’ are used as if they can be interchangeable or synonymous, along with ‘religion’, ‘belief’, ‘conquest’, ‘domination’, ‘cultivation’, ‘commerce’, ‘indenture’, ‘prisoner’, and ‘slave’. In all it is not clear whether what is being discussed relates to the physical presence of people, their actions, their ideas or their relationship to their environment. So, through an exploration of ‘plantations’ within England and Scotland, the Plantation of Munster, the Hamilton-Montgomery plantation of Clondeboy, the Plantation of Ulster and examples of plantation in the Americas, this paper will seek to identify the defining qualities of a plantation and at what point a plantation might mean a settlement, a settlement of what or whom, and when it might also constitute a colony.

I

Deliberately choosing examples from before around 1570, so as not to introduce the issue of Irish or American uses of the term plantation, English sources define social and geographical locale by land use. John Fitzherbert detailed every aspect of husbandry – seeds were sown and crops weeded and cut and threshed and stored, animals bred, raised, tended, and lands edged, ditched, ploughed; but the words ‘plant’ or plantation never used.¹ In areas of defined land, surveys referred to common land being rateable according to pasturage, particular buildings such as the cottage defined ones position and obligation and the rights to fairs and markets denoted economic activity within a defined environment.² Examples from Exmoor, referred to pasturage of cattle. In the 16th century as the practice of feeding sheep by moving them from one fold to another – foldage – developed, so did the right of foldcourse, which led Fitzherbert’s brother, Sir Anthony, in a treatise on criminal law to define the lord’s ‘demeane landes, pastures, and foldcourses’ and Coke’s common law exposition of this last noted that ‘a man may make a Title by vsage’.³ Despite not using the word, the *idea* of tending for land and its products was a providential gift of God and the role of individuals was defined by their action: ‘O what a noble acte that were for an husbände or houswyfe, to purchase suche a royall place in heuen ... [through] ... what thyng pleaseth god most, that we myght do it.’⁴ All references were to the competing demands of tillage, herbage, pasturage, and foldage, even within lands which might otherwise be considered detached for special purpose, such as forest or common.⁵

In Scotland, however, land-use differed, law differed and some elements remained the same, but in different translation. The huge corpus of reform passed in the parliament of 6

¹ John Fitzherbert, *The boke of husbandry* (1540: published posthumously, Fitzherbert died in 1531). John did not apply the same honour to huswyfs: he separated from his wife, Benedicta, early in their marriage disinherited her and denied paternity of her children, stating ‘Bennett my wyffe hath been of lewd and vile disposicion and cowde not be content with me but forsaken my houshoolde and company and lyffed in other places where yt pleased her.’

² See, for example, the multiple surveys of manors bound in one volume: Devon Record Office, Surveys 123M/E33 and 123M/E34.

³ Sir Anthony Fitzherbert, *The newe boke of Iustices of the peas* (1538), f.127b; Sir Edward Coke, *The first part of the institutes of the lawes of England: or a commentarie vpon Littleton*, part II. x. §170.

⁴ Fitzherbert, *Husbandry*, p.73.

⁵ Cheshire and Chester Archives and Local Studies Service, Papers relating to Delamere Forest DAR/A/8 and DAR/A/4/1, Forest of Mara and Mondrem, c.1509: Extract from Ministers' Accounts: Sir John Done's account as chief Forester 1546; Copy letters Patent: Commission to enquire re agistment, herbage and pasturage of Old Pale, c.1653. ‘The six main categories of use rights on common land recognised in English law were pasture, pannage, turbary, estovers, piscary and common in the soil’: Angus J.L. Winchester, ‘Beyond pasture rights: the management of turbary, estovers and other lesser rights on common land in England and Wales since 1600’, unpublished paper delivered to the Contested Common Land Symposium 2, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 7-8 September 2009.

March 1458 noted an item concerning the ‘plantacione of woddis and heggis and sawing of browme’, which again in translation into the English is deemed to describe an action – planting – but at least brings us closer to distinguishing between planting (woods and hedges) and sowing (broom and subsequently wheat, beans and peas) and ploughing with oxen.⁶ Subsequent Scottish acts legislated for the planting of woods (a meaning of plantation on English estates which did not come into common use until the later 17th century), and by the Edinburgh Convention of 1567 James VI was ‘plantit, placeit and possessit’ of Scottish sovereignty and the named lords (including Alexander Cunyngham of Glencairn) would act ‘to plant, place and inaugurate him in the kingdom, and, with all ceremonies requisite, to put the crown royal upon his head in sign and token of the establishing of him therein’.⁷ This reference to the foundation of lordship operates in similar fashion to subsequent references to planting guns, garrisons and kirks.

II

Sixteenth-century commentaries on Ireland did not refer to plantation. O’Neill’s surrender and regrant of 1542 stressed land use – the husbandry of manurage and tillage – along with building dwellings for those thereby engaged; whilst the settlement of Leighlin, County Carlow, in 1552, entitled the Constable to whatever two disinterested parties decided was proper demesne and tillage.⁸ The emphasis was on land use and the buildings which defined and secured it, even when it referred to ruin. Piers Butler, Earl of Ossory, against O’Neill and Kildare, was ‘foraging and doing such hurts as I might, leaving but a few to keep my lodges’.⁹ His son, Lord James Butler, wrote to Thomas Cromwell of his campaigns against the Desmonds in Limerick: ‘we foraged and committed semblable destruction’ and when the manor of Lough Gur was found open, the former occupants having carried off the doors and windows and burnt the roofs themselves, Butler secured it as a garrison.¹⁰ At the

⁶ K.M. Brown *et al* (eds.), *The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, (St Andrews, 2007-2010), James II, 1458/3/28.

⁷ Demission of the Crown by Mary, Queen of Scots, Convention of Edinburgh, 25 July 1567: 1567/7/25/1; and Parliament of Edinburgh, 6 Dec., 1567.

⁸ Lambeth Palace Library, Carew MSS, MS 603, p.76a; Carew MSS, MS 635, p. 91a 30 April 1552; James Murray, *Enforcing the English Reformation in Ireland: Clerical Resistance and Political Conflict in the Diocese of Dublin, 1534–1590* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).

⁹ LPL Carew MSS, MS 616, p.46: 2 Jan., 1532, [Piers Butler] Earl of Ossory to Thomas Cromwell.

¹⁰ LPL, Carew MSS, MS 602, p. 100 , 11 Aug 1536; Carew MSS, MS 616, p. 29, 9 Aug 1536: Council of Ireland to Henry VIII; See also *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, Volume 11: July-December 1536 (1888), pp. 103-114.

end of the century as Queen Elizabeth sought to secure by persuasion rather than violence ‘which doth rather obdurate than reform’, the term referred still to the anchoring of English allegiance by isolated garrisons. It also had a negative connotation, in that those who had been loyal might still suffer ‘displantation’, and Ormond was chastised for prolonging war by keeping troops on the move, which led to their exhaustion and waste, which made it impossible to plant at Lough Foyle.¹¹ Her appointment of Mountjoy, previous incumbents having cost her money and honour, announced the plantation of garrisons as the only policy, which in varying proportions of people and physicality would prosecute a ‘mixed war’.¹² So dominant was the policy that garrisons were place-names in themselves and acquired the definite article – ‘the Newry’, ‘the Annaly’ (Longford), ‘the Moyra’ (Donegal).

Up to the death of Queen Elizabeth of England, Ireland and France, the term ‘Scot’ was used in Ulster pejoratively. It was suggested in England that the whole problem of Ireland at the end of the 16th century could be traced not to the wider Irish, Scottish and English political manoeuvrings of Turlough Luineach O’Neill, but to his marriage to Lady Agnes Campbell, for ‘if her Majesty do not provide against her devices, this Scottish woman will make a new Scotland of Ulster. She hath already planted a good foundation, for she in Tyrone, her daughter in Tyreconnell (being O’Donnell’s wife), and Sorleboy in Clandeboy, do carry all the way in the North, and do seek to creep into Connaught’, in which he was merely repeating an earlier assertion made by Captain Piers, custodian of Carrickfergus castle.¹³ Lord Deputy Perrot despaired of maintaining either bank of the river Bann, the Clandeboy side bamboozled by migrations, escapes and reinforcements back and forwards across the Channel, and from his base at Dunluce, Sorley Boy – ‘the Scot’ – McDonnell directed Scottish allies and galleys into Lough Foyle.¹⁴ As a separate sovereign power, any articles of agreement which might bind Ireland’s leaders to the English Crown referred to them giving up Scots or other foreigners, and as a separate kingdom, the Scots were not rebels, but foreign

¹¹ Queen Elizabeth to the Lord Lieutenant and Council of Ireland, 6 Nov., 1599: LPL Carew MSS, MS 601, p.106a.

¹² Instructions for Lord Mountjoy as Lord Deputy of Ireland, Jan 1600: LPL Carew MSS, MS 632, p.194.

¹³ The opinion of Sir Nicholas Malby, then President of Connacht, to the Earl of Leicester, 17 Aug., 1580: LPL Carew MSS, MS 607, p.68; Articles set down by Captain Piers for the reformation of the north of Ireland, 1574: Carew MSS, MS 616, p.141.

¹⁴ Perrot to the Council, 15 Sep., 1584: LPL Carew MSS, MS 632, p.72. Fitzwilliam referred to him as ‘the Scot’: LPL Carew MSS, MS 632, p.116a, [Aug] 1594.

enemies, and as such more dangerous than those whom, if the correct blanket could be lain over Ulster, could be returned to their allegiance.¹⁵

III

These were obviously not the same Scots as those who would start to establish plantations in Ulster, either private or state-sponsored, but gives us pause to note the dramatic change in language following the Union of the Crowns and James VI and I's British enterprise and its imperial tentacles. In exploring the role of English and Scots in the development of plantations we are now further exercised by looking for the distinctively British elements and those which could be identified as English or Scottish in character.

Those whom Stewart called 'The Founding Fathers of the Ulster Scots' – Hugh Montgomery and James Hamilton – have their own website, suggesting their activity was 'Not plantation, not conquest, not invasion. *Settlement*'.¹⁶ This is underlined by the citation of several sources and the number of times they use the word 'settlement' to describe it, and is used to distinguish this project in Down from that of the westerly 'Plantation of Ulster'.¹⁷ Described rather as 'voluntary works' in the official survey, it was noted that Hamilton in Bangor and Holywood and Montgomery in Newtownards had each developed a hundred houses, the former inhabited by English and Scots, the latter by Scots.¹⁸ It is here therefore, that the language begins to change, reflected by the interpretations of 19th and 20th century scholars who have seized on the contemporary phrase 'waste and desolate', itself reflective of God's injunction to Job to gird his loins because amongst the awesome powers of God was 'to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of tender herb to spring forth', and that of James VI's instructions to Chichester that the pair have the task of populating an area 'depopulated and wasted'.¹⁹ Stewart stresses that the land taken over by the 1606

¹⁵ See for example the articles made by the Earl of Tyrone, 15 June 1590: LPL Carew MSS, MS 632, p.103a. Carew's gloss on a letter from Sir Richard Bingham as President of Connacht was 'certain services done by Sir Richard Bingham upon the Rebels and Scots in Connaught', [Sep] 1586: Carew MSS, MS 632, p.12.

¹⁶ A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground*; <http://www.hamiltonmontgomery1606.com/> (retrieved 09.09.10).

¹⁷ Rev George Hill (ed.), *The Montgomery Manuscripts* (Belfast, 1869); T K Lowry (ed.), *The Hamilton Manuscripts* (Belfast, 1867); Cyril Falls, *The Birth of Ulster* (London, 1936); John Harrison, *The Scot in Ulster* (Edinburgh & London, 1888); James Barkley Woodburn, *The Ulster Scot, his History and Religion* (London, 1914); Rory Fitzpatrick, *God's Frontiersmen – the Scots-Irish Epic* (London, 1989).

¹⁸ Philip Robinson, *The Plantation of Ulster: British Settlement in an Irish Landscape, 1600-1670* (Belfast: Gill and Macmillan, 1994), pp.52-55.

¹⁹ King James Bible, Job 38:28. It is also a phrase used in Ezekiel about Jerusalem (Ezek.6:6), and Egypt (Ezek. 29:10); King James VI and I to Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, *Carte Papers*, vol. 61 p.145, April 16 1605.

settlement was not ‘wrested’ from the clans, nor was it fertile and productive, but devastated by violence, usually described either as internecine or as English against Irish. Subtle but real distinction was thereby made between negative (English and Irish) populations and their use of the land and positive (Scottish) new arrivals. Descriptions of the land were all about populating and cultivating – waste, wilderness, bog, forest, wolf and robber – ‘yet within two years, aided by good harvests, the planters had transformed the Ards into a garden’.²⁰ Commentators started to use the terms settlement, plantation and colony interchangeably, and to draw attention to the connections between English and Scottish figures in Ireland and adventurism in America.²¹

Of the six escheated counties of Ulster – Tyrone, Armagh, Coleraine, Donegal, Fermanagh and Cavan, a total of 511,465 acres – 209,800 acres were allocated to ‘The British undertakers and the londoners’ and the remainder to bishops, freeholders, glebe land incumbents, servitors and natives, persons on abbey lands, patentees before the plantation, corporate towns, Conor Roe Maguire (5,980 acres) and ‘seveall Irishmen’.²² Note is taken of, and note is taken of the distinction between, the ‘*Buildings* [and] fortifications’ erected by the English on escheated land, and the ‘Workes done by the Scottishe undertakers’.²³ Under the former, to give the town of Lifford, near Strabane on the Derry/Donegal border as an example, Sir Richard Hansard had built a good fort of lime and stone, with bulwarks and parapet, deep ditch, and thatched house ‘buylte after the English manner’, and another smaller fort ‘aboute wherin are certaine houses buylte of good tymber after the English manner’ which served as a jail. When stationed there in 1607 Hansard had ‘founde but one house in that Towne’ since which time he had built a brick house, ‘plated’, with thirteen rooms, a 16-room timber house which served as a brew-house, a stone house of 40 x 22 feet which was intended to have two towers which would act as good defence of the town, ‘he hath made a fayre garden and an orchard neere his bricke house w^ch he planted wth frute trees of all sorts’; the town was well furnished with English, Scottish and Irish inhabitants ‘who live by severall trads brought thether by the said Sir Richard’ who have built twenty-one houses and a further 37 houses of one floor and a chimney built by others.²⁴

²⁰ ATQ Stewart, *The Narrow Ground* (London: 1977), pp.38-39.

²¹ Stewart, *Narrow Ground*, p.38; Robinson, *Plantation*, p.56.

²² ‘A Summary view and distribuc[~]on of the Six Excheated Counties of Ulster’: LPL Carew MSS MS 630, ff.28, 29.

²³ LPL Carew MSS, MS 630 ff. 41-63^v, 95-105, both dated 29 July 1611.

²⁴ LPL Carew MSS, MS 630 ff.49-49^v.

Building conditions were stipulated, and in proportion to the allocation, with 2000-acre undertakers required to build a castle. Servitors and natives were to have the same great, middle and small portions, with allowance of bogs and woods as the British undertakers, build bawns and couples (that is buildings with inclined beams to support a roof – before which a house was not considered ‘perfect’²⁵ – with sufficient store of arms, ‘They shall take possession and sitt downe upon their proportions erect their Buildinges, enter into Bonds, or recognizance as the Brittithe undertakers’; the natives would similarly ‘sit down’ and have timber allowance like the British undertakers but ‘shall use Tillage and Husbandrie after the maner of the Englishe’.²⁶ In what would become Newtown Stewart, Sir Robert Newcomen built ‘a castle of lime and stone, 4 storeys high. Around it is a Bawn of lime and stone, 81 feet long, 66 feet long and 9 feet high, with 2 flankers’, but when it was taken over by Sir William Stewart of Newtown Stewart in Galloway, the buildings developed hybrid characteristics: stepped gables from the Scots’ style and brick chimney from the English. These buildings came to be described as ‘defended stone Planter homes’, which became interchangeable with ‘castle’ and ‘bawn’. Castle Caulfield in Tyrone was built by Sir Toby Caulfeild between 1611 and 1619 on the site of an earlier O'Donnell castle with elements dating from the late 13th century; the building constructed by Sir John Davies on the River Derg was a standard square bawn with corner flankers; open-topped for artillery facing the river or roofed for accommodation, but it was based around O'Neill's round tower. Davies was apt to get carried away, paralleling the building of Coleraine with that of Carthage.²⁷ The English, despite bewailing the ravages of war, and stressing de-population, but should, as Thomas Blennerhasset's *Direction* exhorted, England ‘assist her with meanes to erect her ruynes’ Ulster's ‘excellency will embrace that thy ouerplus in her amourous sweete armes: she will place them as it were by *Euphrates*, and feed them with better *Ambrosia* than euer *Iupiter* himselfe knew’.²⁸ As the seventeenth century progressed, and fortifications were destroyed (mainly by the forces of Sir Phelim O'Neill), they were rebuilt with a bawn shape but more traditional house at the heart of an estate.

By contrast, the work undertaken by Scots consisted of much shorter descriptions, usually hinting at the lack of building and sparseness of population. Five miles north and west of Lifford, Ludovic Stewart, 2nd Duke of Lennox had installed his agent, Sir Aula MacAulay

²⁵ John Bossewell, *Works of Armorie* (London, 1572), II, p.72.

²⁶ ‘Conditions to be observed by the servitors and Natives of the escheated landes in Ulster’: LPL Carew MSS, MS 630 ff.19-20.

²⁷ Virgil, *Aeneid*.

²⁸ [Thomas Blennerhasset], *A Direction for the Plantation in Ulster* (London, 1610), n.p., D2.

in the 2000 acres in Portlough precinct, Raphoe, ‘w^h some British famelies, but no preparation for buyldinge; save only some tymber trees felled and squared’; Sir Walter Stewart of Minto had taken possession in the summer of 1610, but returned to Scotland and done nothing; John Crawford, laird of Kilberny and Alexander MacAulay of Durling had not appeared. Within ‘The Britaines portion’ of the 1610 scheme, the Cunninghams held land in Donegal. Alexander Cunningham was possessed of 1000 acres in Boylagh under Sir Robert Maclellan of Bombie, Provost of Kirkcudbright (and future Covenanter).²⁹ Sir James Cunningham of Glengarnock had returned to Scotland and his agent Robert Young had built an Irish barn with couples; John Cunningham of Crawfield had one British family resident, was building a bawn, and had a plough and thirty cattle; Cuthbert Cunningham had two British families, had built an Irish house of couples, and had a plough and 80 head of cattle; William Stewart’s brother had come in the summer of 1610 but returned leaving a servant to ‘keepe his Stocke upon the lands, beinge two mares and 30 heads of Cattle’; James Cunningham of Horomilne had also turned up but left two servants ‘to keepe certaine Cowes w^{ch} he hath upon his portion where he hath done nothings else nor made no p^rparation for buyldinge’.³⁰ Other Scots had made more provision – Sir James Douglas in Fewes, Armagh, was building a stone bawn with 8-foot walls, and had 16 British men and women of whom six were masons, 80 cows, and 14 horses; James Craig was building a mill. In Cavan, Sir Alexander Hamilton was also building a mill, with his son Claude in possession, had felled 20 trees, had a minister, ‘Competent Armes’ and tenants and artificers slowly arrived.³¹ Scottish areas however, stressed soldiery and livestock, rather than building, inhabiting or tillage, except for Craig who had sown and reaped some oats and barley. The Scots’ presence, however, remained steady and strengthening, despite English reports of its desultory lack of commitment, because the extensive nature of English design, and its common law underpinning based on English husbandry had clearly not taken strong root in an alien Irish environment. Scots seem to have adapted their undertaking (or, indeed lack of it) to prevailing Irish conditions and traditions: not plantation, not settlement, not conquest, sometimes not even habitation or residence.

²⁹ ‘The Distribution of Precincts for English, Scottish Servitors and Natives’: LPL Carew MSS MS 630 f.26.

³⁰ LPL Carew MSS, MS 630, ff.96-97.

³¹ LPL Carew MSS MS 630 ff.103-104.

IV

If we continue with the examples of Cunningham and Montgomery, however, the same could not be said of these Scots' undertakings in the Americas. A son of the Cunninghams of Glengarnock, Robert, son of Richard, was a planter in the Leewards Islands. He owned estates at Cayon and Basseterre, St Kitts, and another on Montserrat. He had trading bases in Glasgow, London, Cork, Philadelphia, Ostend and Rouen, handling sugar, rum, madeira, cotton and copper. He was involved in the affairs of General Walter Douglas and Brigadier-General Robert Hunter, the future governor of Jamaica. He kept meticulous, neat and detailed records, which speak – to the point of anal-retentiveness – of *design*. He drew up a genealogy for himself and his kin of the Earls of Glencairn, lairds of Craighend. He designed a lottery. He retired back to Ayrshire around 1741 but was resident and active in Basseterre from 1717, although he was involved in the lands long before that year. Up to the point of his departure for St Kitts he had been trading sugar, rum (vast quantities) and coppers. He had also married the niece of the French woman, Madam Elizabeth de Saleneve, whose estates Robert managed through both French and English possession (part of the reason for moving to St Kitts in 1717 was to execute Elizabeth's will and see to her funeral which despite the Salenaves being Huguenot refugees was in the Greek Church). Cunyngham's ledgers and waste books are the neatest, most meticulous thing I have ever seen. He listed with intimate precision the development of his garden and of the wider estates. He planted an olive walk, lemons and limes, coffee, potatoes, plantain and bananas, and various trees. He detailed the growth of his domestic space, its candlesticks, cutlery and crockery all engraved with his crest and initials, a portmanteau of books, including the authors, titles and the value of each volume. He kept punctilious records of those who peopled his estates. There was the shipping of silver collars for domestic slave boys, at 3 ounces and 12 pennyweight; the health of his labour-force – on 11 December 1728 'my Negro woman Lubba died she was valued at £20. ster' and four days later 'My Negro Woman Izabeau Michells wife del^d of a Da^u Lucinda'.³² During July 1729 'Icanny my Negro Cooper Andrew his wife del^d last night of a Daughter Dinah' but 'My Negro Boy Sam Irvin's son dyed of the Cramp'.³³ The estates at Basseterre were peopled by 175 slaves, of which there were 88 men, 48 women, 25 boys and 14 girls. The remarkableness of Cunyngham's micromanagement was underlined in that he not only combined the lucrative business of slavery with paternalist oversight of those who peopled

³² National Archives of Scotland (NAS): CS96/3096/1; CS96/3102.

³³ NAS CS96/3102, f.6, 6 July 1729 and 9 July 1729.

his estates, but when he itemised his slaves, he denoted the men not only by name, but by country – only some of which are recognisable, so there is much work to be done here: Papa, Congo, Moccow, Mina, Creole, Ibo, Appopou, Mandinga and Canga Mina. A unique and uniquely valuable historical record because of the detail of oversight.

Since the Cunyngams and the Montgomerys were deadly rivals, it is fitting that our final example of design is from Robert Cunyngam's neighbours in Skelmorlie. Robert Montgomery had been 'purposely created' a knight by James VI and I to the end of planting Nova Scotia, so when it was destroyed by the French it fell to his ilk to make good the particular Montgomery form of 'Service of their Country'. Colonialism was a 'humour' carried in noble blood, and referencing Bacon for motivation 'Plantations of new Countries ... *are among the Primitive, and most Heroick Works of Man*'.³⁴ The fourth baronet was Sir James, one of those who involved themselves in the schemes of Lord Cardross for a settlement at Port Royal, Carolina, which although overrun by the Spanish really failed 'through want of full Powers, and distinct Jurisdiction'.³⁵ Sir James himself died in September 1694 and the aristocratic obligation to project was taken up by the fifth baronet, also Sir Robert, of Skelmorlie, Ayrshire. On the basis of a grant from the Lords Proprietors of 19 June 1717, confirmed by a deed enrolled in Chancery about a month later, Sir Robert, 5th Bart offered us his 'designed establishment' in the 'Most delightful Country of the Universe' though he heard this from those who had been part of unsuccessful ancestral predecessors. He called it Azilia (a Pyrenean Mesolithic culture of around 10,000 BC), and he would be its Margrave (one step up from the highest noble title then operating in Carolina, a Landgrave). Even then, he does not use the word plantation, but establishment, settling and colony.

Azilia was conceived of in two stages. Aware that both Nova Scotia and Port Royal had failed for want of adequate defence to allow sufficient embedment in the territory, he denounced past attempts to secure planters by dotting isolated forts throughout the claim.³⁶ All land would be immediately enclosed with the size of the enclosure proportionate to the numbers who travelled, surrounded by a line of little bastions, which would expand as numbers followed on. It would presumably also contract should numbers subsequently

³⁴ Sir Robert Mountgomery, *A Discourse Concerning the design's Establishment of a New Colony to the South of Carolina*, (London, 1717), p.2.

³⁵ Sir Robert Mountgomery, *A Discourse Concerning the design's Establishment of a New Colony to the South of Carolina*, (London, 1717), p.1.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.7.

decline, but that would not happen. For one, there would be no threat from Indian attack because the ‘poor unskilful Natives ... have accomplish’d all their bloody Mischiefs by Surprizes, and Incursions, but durst never think of a Defyance to Artillery’.³⁷ Inside the bastions would be a collection of soldier-planters (though he uses neither term), officers and men quartered together, who would build little wooden dwellings, and in the centre would be a fort with cannon and its principal, a Governor in Chief. Such a scheme, ‘when weigh’d against the Ignorance, and wildness of the Natives, will shew, that Men, thus settled, may at once defend, and cultivate a Territory, with the utmost Satisfaction, and Security, even in the *Heart of an Indian Country*’.³⁸

Montgomery’s design was a utopian one, and while his possession is celebrated as the start of a distinctive British presence in what is now the State of Georgia, the full and horrifically over-planned beauty of Montgomery’s scheme never came to pass. In the first case, it was unworkable. If the idea was to start small and then expand the square as more people arrived, then either the feudal serfs in effect – responsible for defence and for farming the lord’s demesne – at the edges of the settlement moved up the social ladder and became the farmers, or freeholders of the middle allotments, or they were forced to see their land turned into farms for others and they migrated out to start the frontier all over again. So, it is either constantly *unsettled*, or becomes a giant experiment in social engineering.

Nor did Montgomery seem to show any realistic notion of how to cultivate the land around Savannah. Apparently from his ancestors he had inherited a utopian view of the land – ‘[t]he Air is found so temperate ... that there is no Excess of Heat, or Cold, nor any sudden Alterations in the Weather; The River Banks are cover’d with a strange Variety of lovely trees, which being always green, present a thousand Landskips to the Eye ... the Ground lies sloping towards the Rivers ... and intermingles little Hills of Woods with fruitful Plains, all cover’d with wild Flowers, and not a Tree to interrupt the Prospect’.³⁹ The fastidiously planned strip farming, fields of carefully spaced trees, shrubs and corn, the reserved areas of pasture, woodland and common, and the plantation house with its formal gardens looks to all the world like the unrealistic grid pattern cultivation the English proposed for Munster. His description of the ‘tempting Country’ was that it was barely habited ‘except those Parts in the Possession of the *English*, unless by here and there a Tribe of wandering *Indians*, wild and

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.8.

³⁸ *Ibid*. p.9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

ignorant, all artless, and uncultivated, as the Soil, which fosters them'. So, following Bacon (and Blennerhasset's over-sexualised metaphor), it was virtually virgin territory, both to land and people, but if so, why denounce the military effectiveness of the dotted garrison and make such hefty provision for one's defence, so that Azilia did not meet the fate of the Scots in Nova Scotia or Port Royal?

Finally, Montgomery hinted that he had failed to solve the problems of peopling a settlement, as previous Britons had struggled with whether to import labourers from home, set up residence in new lands themselves, harness the expertise and location of native inhabitants or ship cowed and oppressed people from far away. He starts by announcing how easy it is to draw 'Numbers of Inhabitants from Every Corner' and to 'dispose them regularly, and with due regard to Order, Beauty, and the Comforts of Society', rather than leave them to 'fix' randomly and self-indulgently.⁴⁰ And who was going to ensure this regulation? There is no evidence that Montgomery ever visited his American home. Rather he will take indentured labour from Britain and Ireland, bound to be happy in such a place, and those who either bring a family or get married in America would be entitled to fee-farm land, cleared, with a house built on it and stock provided (by whom is not clear), which they would enjoy rent free for life, as a reward for their services:

By which Means two very great Advantages must naturally follow; Poor labouring Men, so secur'd of a fix'd future Settlement; will be thereby induc'd to go thither more willingly; and act, when there, with double Diligence, and Duty; And when their Time expires, possessing just Land enough to pass their Lives at Ease, and bring up their Children honestly, the Families they leave will prove a constant Seminary of sober Servants, of Both sexes, for the Gentry of the Colony; whereby they will be under no necessity to use the dangerous Help of *Blackamoors*, or *Indians*.⁴¹

The fee-farm is only held for the lifetime of the originally indentured servant: after that, his or her children become bound and the farm becomes a feudal tenure again. Essentially, the labourers are a breeding stock for bound-labour, but at least it side-steps the security problems posed by enslaving Africans or Americans.

All the lectures and papers I give on the Americas seem to end on a dismal and depressing note, and this is no exception. I arrive at the end even more convinced that

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11.

plantation does not work as a term, but rather we need a whole series of terms to describe the engineering of people and environment. The over-riding distinctiveness behind some patch of earth, be it in Ireland or America that could be defined as a plantation is its alien, artificial and designed nature. It is deliberately aimed at changing the land-use, the inhabitants, the social status, the commodity and commodiousness of what is natural, be it little oases of civilisation in the midst of barbarity, little plots of corn and sheep in the midst of forest and bog, areas of commodity crop which deplete and erode the soil and keep plantation colonies dependent on a mother country for basic supply, or people a land with vast numbers of enslaved and enchained people. Robert Montgomery was wrong: neither was their great prospect of profit in Azilia, but this was not a design, this was not a plantation for 'men of Noble Minds ... who take a Pleasure in Things publick Spirited, and Useful to Posterity'.⁴²

⁴²*Ibid.*, p.27.