

Empires and Bureaucracy in World History

How did empires rule different peoples across vast expanses of space and time? And how did small numbers of imperial bureaucrats govern large numbers of subordinated peoples? *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History* seeks answers to these fundamental problems in imperial studies by exploring the power and limits of bureaucracy. The book is pioneering in bringing together historians of antiquity and the Middle Ages with scholars of post-medieval European empires, while a genuinely world-historical perspective is provided by chapters on China, the Incas and the Ottomans. The editors identify a paradox in how bureaucracy operated on the scale of empires and so help explain why some empires endured for centuries, while, in the contemporary world, empires fail almost before they begin. By adopting a cross-chronological and world-historical approach, the book challenges the abiding association of bureaucratic rationality with ‘modernity’ and the so-called ‘Rise of the West’.

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Empires and Bureaucracy in World History

From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century

Edited by

Peter Crooks

Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin

and

Timothy H. Parsons

Washington University in St Louis



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Preface

On 30 June 1922, an explosion and fire destroyed the records treasury of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI), situated at the western end of the Four Courts complex that lies on the north quays of the River Liffey in Dublin. Established by an act of the Westminster parliament in 1867, the PROI was a state-of-the-art archival facility for the preservation of the public records and state papers of English government in Ireland.¹ Its holdings stretched back some seven hundred years to the early decades of the thirteenth century, when Ireland first became a dominion of the English crown. Following the signing and ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, control of the PROI was transferred to the provisional government of the southern twenty-six counties of Ireland on 1 April 1922. A fortnight later, on 14 April 1922, ‘irregular’ forces opposed to the treaty occupied the Four Courts, including the PROI buildings. After temporizing for more than two months, the Irish National Army began to bombard the Four Courts in the early morning of 28 June, employing eighteen-pounder guns borrowed from British forces. Ireland had slipped into a bitter civil war. The exact sequence of events that led to the catastrophic explosion remains contested. What is clear is that – despite the pleas of a few learned scholars with impeccable Irish nationalist credentials – neither pro- nor anti-treaty forces demonstrated much concern in practice for the safeguard of the accumulated records of English (later British) colonial rule in Ireland. The anti-treaty forces had heavily mined the records treasury. A double blast on 30 June 1922 caused a near-total archival cataclysm. The intense blaze that raged afterwards destroyed even those records stored in protective metal casings. As a report of the deputy keeper of the public records in Ireland later lamented: ‘The fire left little but tangled iron work, blocks of masonry, mason rubbish and the charred fragments and ashes of what had once been Public Records.’²

Empires and Bureaucracy in World History finds its oblique beginnings in this post-colonial Irish bonfire. Colonial archives currently ride high in the public

¹ Public Records (Ireland) Act of 1867 (30 & 31 Vict., c. 70).

² *Fifty-Fifth Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland* (Dublin, 1931), p. 17.

consciousness. Indeed, the whole topic of empires and archives – their intended function, their unintended consequences, their appropriation, their destruction, their migration, their survival – is one that could usefully be explored in long-range historical perspective, perhaps from the destruction of the library at Alexandria to the ‘migrated’ Kenyan archives, until recently secreted at Hanslope Park. The present volume arises from a distinct but related concern with colonial archives, namely to salvage and reconstruct some portion of what was lost in the flames of 1922. In 2008, the Medieval History Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin established the ‘Irish Chancery Project’ with funding provided by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences under the thematic strand: ‘The Making of Modern Ireland: Paths to Modernity’. The aim of the Irish Chancery Project was to reconstruct the records of the medieval Irish chancery – the secretariat of the kings of England in Ireland. All the original parchment chancery rolls had been consumed in the Four Courts blaze. A principal outcome of that research is *CIRCLE: A Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters, c.1244–1509*.³ Reconstructing records is, however, only a preliminary stage in any historical inquiry. More challenging is the interrogation of those records – the work of reconstructing the past. To this end, the Irish Chancery Project sought to place its research on medieval record-keeping in the broadest possible context. The establishment of English-style law and administration in Ireland in the thirteenth century – so important in the later historical development of the island – was an early phase in the export of English governing structures and official attitudes overseas. This itself was but a chapter in a longer, but curiously unwritten, story about the relationship between bureaucracy and empires – the theme explored in the essays that make up the present volume.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here the contribution of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and its successor institution, the Irish Research Council, in funding the project that gave rise to this volume at a time of acute fiscal crisis in Ireland. I am also immensely grateful to the scholars who attended the colloquium on ‘Empires and Bureaucracy’ at Trinity College Dublin in June 2011 and who engaged so fully in the spirit of collaborative comparison that I hoped the occasion would engender. The pairing of the key words ‘empires’ and ‘bureaucracy’ proved to be felicitous. It enabled a diverse group of specialists on empires from ancient Rome to twentieth-century Africa to engage in meaningful conversations. Their findings revealed the historical relationship between empires and

³ Publicly accessible at the following address: <https://chancery.tcd.ie/>. The Irish Chancery Project and its findings are described in more detail in Peter Crooks, ‘Reconstructing the past: the case of the medieval Irish chancery rolls’, in N. M. Dawson and Felix Larkin (eds.), *Lawyers, the law and history: Irish Legal History Society discourses and other papers, 2006–2011* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 281–309.

bureaucracy to be far more varied, complex and significant than I had realized when embarking on this project. The collection as a whole challenges conventional state-focussed narratives of modernization and bureaucratization. In doing so, it nicely subverts the original, rather *étatiste*, presumption of the thematic strand ‘Paths to Modernity’, under which the project received its funding. This is, I hope, a useful demonstration of the value of open-ended research in the humanities, which the Irish Research Council has done much to promote.

The Advisory Board of the Irish Chancery Project provided encouragement and sage advice throughout the course of the project. I am especially grateful to the chairperson of the board, Chris Given-Wilson (St Andrews), from whom I cajoled the chapter that appears here on the Incas, as well as my fellow travellers in medieval Irish history: Robin Frame (Durham), Elizabeth Matthew (Reading) and Brendan Smith (Bristol). In Ireland, several colleagues provided advice and practical support during the project and at the time of the Dublin colloquium, especially David Dickson, David Ditchburn, Seán Duffy, Áine Foley, Jane Ohlmeyer and Katharine Simms from Trinity College Dublin, and Nicholas Canny from the National University of Ireland, Galway. Much of the editorial work was undertaken during two happy years at the University of East Anglia, where I enjoyed the company of a most magnificent muddle of medievalists: Julie Barrau, Stephen Church, Hugh Doherty, Tom Licence, Gesine Oppitz-Trotman, Carole Rawcliffe and the inimitable Nick Vincent. Above all, I am grateful to my co-editor Tim Parsons, who cannot have known what he was getting into when he responded positively to an email I sent him as a stranger from the unknown (by which I mean the Middle Ages) in October 2010. He has since become a valued colleague and a close friend. Our editorial meetings have taken us from Dublin to Washington DC, St Louis and – as surprising for myself as for anyone who knows me – Goodison Park (thrice).

Tim and I would like to thank our contributors warmly for engaging so constructively with our importunate demands at every stage of the writing and editing process. They were a pleasure to work with and have helped shape this into what is, we hope, a genuinely collaborative exercise in historical comparison. We are especially grateful to Karen Barkey and Deana Heath, who did not attend the Dublin colloquium but kindly agreed to contribute chapters to the book. We would also like to record our appreciation for Dane Kennedy of George Washington University, who organized a seminar at the Elliott School of International Affairs, Washington DC, in March 2012, at which we presented the preliminary findings from the collection and received valuable feedback. Mike Rowe and Margaret Procter of the University of Liverpool, who attended the Dublin colloquium in 2011, provided us with an occasion to deliver a more refined version of

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our arguments at a colloquium held at Liverpool in October 2013. The ideas developed on those occasions form part of Chapter 1. A special vote of thanks is due to Michael Watson of Cambridge University Press for his interest in the volume, for his patience and for his expertise in steering it through the press. Finally, the book would not exist without the unflagging support of Ann and Helen (*sine quibus non*) and those micro-motivators, Emily and Olivia (*nil satis nisi optimum*).

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Admin. Ire.</i> | H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles (eds.), <i>The administration of Ireland, 1172–1377</i> (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1963) |
| <i>AfD</i> | <i>Archiv für Diplomatik</i> |
| <i>AHR</i> | <i>American Historical Review</i> |
| Albrow, <i>Bureaucracy</i> | M. Albrow, <i>Bureaucracy</i> (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970) |
| Alcock <i>et al.</i> , <i>Empires</i> | Susan E. Alcock, Terence N. D’Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison and Carla M. Sinopoli (eds.), <i>Empires: perspectives from archaeology and history</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) |
| ANP | Archives nationales (Paris) |
| | C// (Commission de la France d’Outre-Mer) |
| AOF | <i>Afrique Occidentale Française</i> (French West Africa) |
| AOM | Archives d’Outre-Mer (Aix-en-Provence, France) |
| | AP (Affaires Politiques) |
| | IGT (Inspection Générale du Travail) |
| | 19PA (Delavignette Papers) |
| | K (Travail) |
| AS | Archives du Sénégal, Dakar |
| | 2G (<i>Rapports</i>) |
| | 7G (<i>Affaires politiques</i>) |
| | 18G (<i>Affaires administratives</i>) |
| BCE | Before Common Era |
| Bang & Bayly, <i>Tributary empires</i> | P. F. Bang and C. A. Bayly (eds.), <i>Tributary empires in global history</i> (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) |
| Bang & Kołodziejczyk, <i>Universal empire</i> | Peter Fibiger Bang and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk (eds.), <i>Universal empire: a comparative approach to imperial culture and representation in Eurasian history</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) |

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|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Barkey, <i>Empire of difference</i> | Karen Barkey, <i>Empire of difference: the Ottomans in comparative perspective</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) |
| Barkey & von Hagen, <i>After empire</i> | Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (eds.), <i>After empire: multiethnic societies and nation-building</i> (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) |
| Burbank & Cooper, <i>Empires</i> | Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, <i>Empires in world history: power and the politics of difference</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) |
| BIHR | <i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i> |
| BJRL | <i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i> |
| BL | British Library (London) |
| Add. MSS | Additional Manuscripts |
| c. | <i>circa</i> |
| CAH | <i>The Cambridge ancient history</i> (14 vols. in 19, 1970–2004) |
| CCR | <i>Calendar of the close rolls . . . , 1272–[1509]</i> (47 vols., London: PRO, 1892–1963) |
| CE | Common Era |
| CHC | <i>The Cambridge history of China</i> (15 vols., 1978–2015) |
| CHI | <i>The new Cambridge history of Islam</i> (6 vols., 2010) |
| Clanchy, <i>Memory</i> | M. T. Clanchy, <i>From memory to written record: England 1066–1307</i> , 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) |
| CNRS | Le Centre national de la recherche scientifique (Paris) |
| CO | Colonial Office |
| CO summer conference | <i>Colonial Office summer conference on African administration</i> , 1st–8th sessions (1947–57) |
| Cooper, <i>Colonialism</i> | Frederick Cooper, <i>Colonialism in question: theory, knowledge, history</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) |
| Cooper, <i>Decolonization</i> | Frederick Cooper, <i>Decolonization and African society: the labor question in French and British Africa</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) |
| CPR | <i>Calendar of the patent rolls . . . , 1232–[1509]</i> (53 vols., London: PRO, 1911–) |
| Crooks, ‘State of the union’ | Peter Crooks, ‘State of the union: perspectives on English imperialism in the late Middle Ages’, <i>P&P</i> 212 (2011), 1–40 |
| CS | Camden Society |
| CSSH | <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> |
| d. | died |
| DA | <i>Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters</i> |

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- Davies, *Domination* R. R. Davies, *Domination and conquest: the experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Davies, *Empire* R. R. Davies, *The first English empire: power and identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
- DKR *The Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*
- Doyle, *Empires* Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986)
- EHD, vol. iv A. R. Myers (ed.), *English historical documents, 1327–1485* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969; repr. 1996)
- EHR *English Historical Review*
- EI2 P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (12 vols., Leiden: Brill, 1960–2008)
- EI3 Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 2007), www.brillonline.com
- Elr E. Yarshater (gen. ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns Inc., 1985–)
- Eisenstadt, *Empires* S. N. Eisenstadt, *The political systems of empires* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1963)
- Elliott, *Empires* J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006)
- Elliott, *SEWW* J. H. Elliott, *Spain, Europe and the wider world, 1500–1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009)
- EME *Early Medieval Europe*
- FCO Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Fianu & Guth, *Écrit* Kouky Fianu and DeLloyd J. Guth (eds.), *Écrit et pouvoir dans les chancelleries médiévales: espace français, espace anglais* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fidem, 1997)
- Foedera T. Rymer, *Foedera, conventiones, litterae . . .*, ed. A. Clarke and J. Caley (London, 1816)
- Foucault, 'Governmentality' Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in Graham Burchell, Colin Godon and Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault effect: studies in governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 102

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| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fr. | French |
| G. | German |
| Gk. | Greek |
| Garnsey & Saller, <i>Empire</i> | Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, <i>The Roman empire: economy, society and culture</i> (London: Duckworth, 1987) |
| Goldstone & Haldon, 'Ancient states' | Jack A. Goldstone and John F. Haldon, 'Ancient states, empires, and exploitation: problems and perspectives', in Morris & Scheidel, <i>Dynamics</i> , pp. 3–29 |
| Greene, 'Negotiated authorities' | Jack P. Greene, 'Negotiated authorities: the problem of governance in the extended polities of the early modern Atlantic world', in Jack P. Greene, <i>Negotiated authorities: essays in colonial political and constitutional history</i> (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994) |
| HAHR | <i>Hispanic American Historical Review</i> |
| HMSO | His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office |
| HJ | <i>Historical Journal</i> |
| Howe, <i>Empire</i> | Stephen Howe, <i>Empire: a very short introduction</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) |
| HR | <i>Historical Research</i> |
| HZ | <i>Historische Zeitschrift</i> |
| ICS | Indian Civil Service |
| IGT | <i>Inspection Générale du Travail</i> (head office of <i>IT</i>) |
| Irigoin & Grafe, 'Bargaining' | Alejandra Irigoin and Regina Grafe, 'Bargaining for absolutism: a Spanish path to nation-state and empire building', <i>HAHR</i> 88:2 (2008), 173–209 |
| IT | <i>Inspection du Travail</i> |
| JICH | <i>Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History</i> |
| Jones, <i>LRE</i> | A. H. M. Jones, <i>The later Roman empire, 284–602: a social, economic and administrative survey</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964) |
| JRS | <i>Journal of Roman Studies</i> |
| JWH | <i>Journal of World History</i> |
| KNA | Kenya National Archives |
| Koebner, <i>Imperialism</i> | Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, <i>Imperialism: the story and significance of a political word, 1840–1960</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) |
| L. | Latin |
| Lieven, <i>Empire</i> | Dominic Lieven, <i>Empire: the Russian empire and its rivals</i> (London: John Murray, 2000) |
| Lugard, <i>Dual mandate</i> | Frederick Lugard, <i>The dual mandate in British tropical Africa</i> (London: Archon Books, 1965 [first published London, 1922]) |

List of Abbreviations

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MGH | Monumenta Germaniae Historica |
| MIÖG | <i>Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung</i> |
| Morris & Scheidel, <i>Dynamics</i> | Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel (eds.), <i>The dynamics of ancient empires: state power from Assyria to Byzantium</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) |
| MWG | <i>Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe</i> |
| NAI | <i>National Archives of India</i> |
| NCMH | <i>The New Cambridge Medieval History</i> , 8 vols. (1995–2004) |
| OHBE | Wm. Roger Louis (gen. ed.), <i>The Oxford history of the British empire</i> , 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998–9) |
| PBA | <i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i> |
| pl. | plural |
| Potter, <i>IPA</i> | David C. Potter, <i>India's political administrators: from ICS to IAS</i> (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996) |
| P&P | <i>Past and Present</i> |
| PRO | Public Record Office |
| PROME | Chris Given-Wilson (ed.), <i>The parliament rolls of medieval England</i> , available online at www.sd-editions.com /PROME |
| r. | reigned/ruled |
| RA | <i>Rapport annuel</i> ('annual report') |
| RC | Record Commission |
| Reuter, <i>MPMM</i> | Timothy Reuter, <i>Medieval polities and modern mentalities</i> , ed. Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) |
| Reynolds, 'Empires' | Susan Reynolds, 'Empires: a problem of comparative history', <i>HR</i> 79:204 (2006), 151–65 |
| RHS | Royal Historical Society |
| <i>Rot. chart.</i> | <i>Rotuli chartarum in turri Londinensi asservati, 1199–1216</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy (London: RC, 1837) |
| <i>Rot. lib.</i> | <i>Rotuli de liberate ac de misis et praestitis</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy (London: RC, 1844) |
| <i>Rot. litt. claus., 1204–24</i> | <i>Rotuli litterarum clausurarum in turri Londinensi asservati, 1204–24</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy, 2 vols. (London: RC, 1833–44) |
| <i>Rot. litt. pat.</i> | <i>Rotuli litterarum patentium in turri Londinensi asservati</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy (London: RC, 1835) |
| <i>Rot. norm.</i> | <i>Rotuli normanniae</i> , ed. T. D. Hardy (London: RC, 1835) |
| RS | Rolls Series |
| SAHR | <i>Spanish American Historical Review</i> |
| sing. | singular |

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- Scales & Zimmer, *Power* Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the nation in European history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- Sp. Spanish
- Spangenberg, *BB* Bradford Spangenberg, *British bureaucracy in India: status, policy and the I.C.S. in the late 19th century* (Delhi: Manohar, 1976)
- TNA The National Archives of the United Kingdom
 CO (Colonial Office)
 FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)
 WO (War Office)
- TRHS* *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
- Weber, *E&S* Max Weber, *Economy and society: an outline of interpretative sociology*, ed. and trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)
- Weber, *FMW* H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (ed. and trans.), *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*, new edn (London: Routledge, 1991)
- Weber, *Theory* Max Weber, *The theory of social and economic organization*, ed. and trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (1st edn, London: Hodge, 1947; 2nd edn, New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1965)
- WO War Office
- Wong & Sayer, *British state* Yoke-Sum Wong and Derek Sayer (eds.), *Twenty years of the Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 1: *essays on the British state* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008)