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IRELAND AND  
THE IRISH SEA REGION,  
1014-1318

SEÁN DUFFY

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**IRELAND AND  
THE IRISH SEA REGION,  
1014-1318**

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January, 1993**

IRLAND AND  
THE IRISH SEA REGION  
101-1318

THESIS

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines the period between two decisive battles in Irish history. Covered in 1014 is when perhaps the greatest of Ireland's kings, Brian Boru, was slain, and Fochlaí (not only) died a heroic death, which ended the 'age' of the great kings regarded as the last king of Ireland, Edward Bruce. Its purpose is to examine the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other.

Many through it, the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland followed. It had significant implications for the future of Ireland. The Anglo-Norman invasion, 12th and 13th centuries, was a turning point in the history of Ireland. The continued flow of the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other. The Anglo-Norman invasion, 12th and 13th centuries, was a turning point in the history of Ireland. The continued flow of the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other.

This thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at any other university. The library may lend or copy it upon request.

The review of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland is also considered, as it helped to define the nature of future relations with their 'Celtic' neighbours. Through the middle years of the thirteenth century Ireland was being divided as 'Irish only'. It is argued here that a significant reconstruction was a feature of the Irish response from the earliest days of the invasion.

One of the great objectives of this period remains perhaps to be less well explored. The battle of Clontarf, 1014, was a decisive battle in the history of Ireland. The Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, 12th and 13th centuries, was a turning point in the history of Ireland. The continued flow of the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other.

*Seán Duffy*

Seán Duffy  
15 January 1993

The 'Anglo-Norman' invasion of Ireland, 12th and 13th centuries, was a turning point in the history of Ireland. The continued flow of the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other.

As the period of decisive battles, so too did the geographical pull of the 'Celtic' invasion, 12th and 13th centuries, was a turning point in the history of Ireland. The continued flow of the Irish - primarily the political - history of the period - during the period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Celtic on the other.

## SUMMARY

This thesis covers the period between two decisive battles in Irish history, Clontarf in 1014 at which perhaps the greatest of Ireland's kings, Brian Bóruma, was slain, and Fochart just over three centuries later, which ended the 'reign' of the man often regarded as the last king of Ireland, Edward Bruce. Its purpose is to examine the links - primarily, the politico-military links - during this period between Ireland, on the one hand, and Wales, Scotland, and the Isles, on the other.

Midway through it, the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland occurred. It had significant implications for the relationship between Ireland and its 'Irish Sea' neighbours, while some features of their former association were carried through to the new era. The continued flow of the latter cross-channel undercurrent has fared badly at historians' hands, whose concentration on Anglo-Irish, Anglo-Welsh, and Anglo-Scottish affairs has meant that their respective interconnections have gone largely without investigation. An effort is made to reconstitute the relationship below.

The reaction of the indigenous Irish to the establishment of the Anglo-Norman colony is also considered, as it helped to dictate the course of future relations with their 'Celtic' neighbours. Though the middle years of the thirteenth century witnessed what has been dubbed an 'Irish rally', it is argued here that organized counteraction was a feature of the Irish response from the earliest days of the conquest.

One of the more obvious implications of that conquest remains perhaps the least well explored. The barrier which the Irish Sea had formed in protecting Ireland from the Anglo-Norman assertion of hegemony over Scotland and Wales had been breached. As a result, Ireland's experience began for the first time to mirror theirs. All three were now countries subject, to a greater or lesser extent, to Anglo-Norman (later, English) domination. This was a state of things unlikely to run smoothly. Their own particular form of endemic war between native and newcomer was the result in both Ireland and Wales.

The 'normanization' on which the kings of Scots had embarked in the twelfth century may have reduced somewhat their capacity to sympathize with the less than voluntary Norman embrace gripping Ireland and Wales, but, even so, periodic crises were to erupt between Scots and English over their respective, and hotly disputed, technical interpretations of the relationship between their kings. In these circumstances, a perception abounded that the Scots had formed or were about to form a league with the Welsh and Irish, directed against England. The examination of this theme is at the core of the thesis.

As this process of domination intensified, so too did the gravitational pull of the 'Celtic alliance'. Outbreaks of Welsh rebellion heightened tensions in Ireland, the Irish perhaps hoping to emulate Welsh successes on the battlefield. The Edwardian conquest of Wales, and the failure of subsequent Welsh attempts to reverse it, were greeted with regret in Ireland. When, then, Edward I turned his attention to Scotland, few failed to see what was in store. The

Scottish leaders, many of Anglo-Norman extraction, may have formerly felt closer ties of affinity with the colonists in Ireland, but began now to look to native Ireland for allies.

This was particularly the case after the seizure of the Scottish kingship by Robert Bruce, who had strong links with both the west highland and island region and, partly as a result, with Ireland. From the start of his reign, it is argued here, he and his energetic brothers exploited the remote common origin of the Scots and Irish for political ends, urging the formation of a military alliance. Simultaneously, they courted the Welsh, reminding them of their shared experience of English belligerence, in the hope of rousing them to rebellion. This culminated in Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland in 1315, in alliance with certain native Irish lords, and plans for intervention in Wales, again with indigenous support.

The ambitious schemes of the Bruces were neither entirely delusory nor cynical. If in the past they have appeared so, it is partly because they were not placed in context. Viewed in the wider geographical context of the 'Irish Sea region' and in the light of the long-term relations between the Celtic countries, the Bruces no longer appear unparalleled or their 'Celtic alliance' without precedent.

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A list of all those others (scattered, appropriately, throughout Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales) who helped me during the course of my work would resemble an academic Who's Who? and inevitably offend by omission. I hope, therefore, that a general word of thanks will suffice. The subject of this study being what it is, reading-materials for particular aspects were sometimes difficult to track down, and I have met with great generosity from many quarters in my pursuit of them. As a *merus Hibernicus* intruding in their backyard, I have, too, benefited from the scholarly tolerance of Scottish and Welsh experts who shared their thoughts with me. I fear what follows is small recompense for their kindness.

There are, nevertheless, three groups of individuals to whom I should like to say a special word of thanks: my fellow postgraduate students and the staff at the Department of Medieval History in Trinity (in particular, of course, my patient supervisor, Dr Katharine Simms); the Director, staff, and my fellow Scholars (now, friends) at the School of Celtic Studies; and my family, especially my mother and father, for years of quiet encouragement and patient support.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AC* *Annála Connacht: the annals of Connacht, A.D. 1224-1544*, ed. A.M. Freeman (Dublin, 1944)
- AClon* *The annals of Clonmacnoise, being annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408*, ed. Denis Murphy (Dublin, 1896)
- AFM* *Annála rioghachta Éireann: annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, ed. John O'Donovan, 7 vols (Dublin, 1851)
- ALCé* *The annals of Loch Cé: a chronicle of Irish affairs, 1014-1590*, ed. W.M. Hennessy, 2 vols (RS, London, 1871)
- Anderson, Early sources* *Early sources of Scottish history A.D. 500 to 1286*, collected and translated by A.O. Anderson, 2 vols (London, 1922)
- Anderson, Scottish annals* *Scottish annals from English chronicles A.D. 500-1286*, by A.O. Anderson (London, 1908)
- Annals of Clyn* *The annals of Ireland by Friar Clyn and Thady Dowling*, ed. Richard Butler (I.A.S., Dublin, 1845)
- AI* *The annals of Inisfallen (MS Rawlinson B 503)*, ed. Seán Mac Airt (Dublin, 1951)
- ATig* 'The annals of Tigernach', ed. Whitley Stokes, in *Revue Celtique*, 16 (1895), 374-419; 17 (1896), 6-33, 119-263, 337-420; 18 (1897), 9-59, 150-97, 267-303
- AU* *Annála Uladh. The annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*, ed. Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983)
- Annála Uladh: annals of Ulster...: a chronicle of Irish affairs... 431 to 1541*, ed. W.M. Hennessy [and B. MacCarthy], 4 vols (Dublin, 1887-1901)
- BBCS* *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*
- Brut* *Brut y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes. Peniarth MS 20 version*, trans. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1952)
- Brut (RBH)* *Brut y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes. Red Book of Hergest version*, ed. and trans. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1955)
- Cal. just. rolls* *Calendar of the justiciary rolls... of Ireland*, I-II, ed. James Mills; III, ed. M.C. Griffiths (P.R.O.I., Dublin, 1905-56)
- Cal. papal letters* *Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: papal letters*, ed. W.H. Bliss et al. (London, 1893-)
- CDI* *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland*, ed. H.S. Sweetman, 5 vols (London, 1875-86)
- CDS* *Calendar of documents relating to Scotland*, I-IV, ed. Joseph Bain; V, ed. G.G. Simpson and J.D. Galbraith (Edinburgh, 1881-1986)

- Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*
- CMCS*  
'Cottonian annals'
- CS*
- DNB*
- EHR*  
*Foedera*
- JRSAI*  
*I.A.S.*  
*IHS*  
*I.M.C.*  
*I.T.S.*  
*Misc. Irish annals*
- M.G.H.*  
*NHI*
- P.R.I.rep.D.K.*
- PRO*  
*PROI*  
*Proc. R.I.A.*  
*RS*  
*SHR*  
*Tresham*
- VCH*  
*WHR*
- Chartularies of St Mary's abbey, Dublin*, ed. J.T. Gilbert, 2 vols (RS, London, 1884-6)  
*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*  
'Annals in Cotton MS Titus A. XXV', ed. A.M. Freeman, in *Revue Celtique*, 41-4 (1924-7)  
*Chronicum Scotorum. A chronicle of Irish affairs... to A.D. 1150*, ed. W.M. Hennessy (RS, London, 1866)  
*Dictionary of national biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen (1885-1900)  
*English Historical Review*  
*Foedera, litterae, conventiones &c.*, ed. T. Ryder (Record Commission, London, 1816-69)  
*Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*  
*Irish Archaeological Society*  
*Irish Historical Studies*  
*Irish Manuscripts Commission*  
*Irish Texts Society*  
*Miscellaneous Irish annals (A.D. 1114-1437)*, ed. Séamus Ó hInnse (Dublin, 1947)  
*Monumenta Germaniae historicae*  
*A new history of Ireland. II. Medieval Ireland 1169-1534* ed. Art Cosgrove (Oxford, 1987)  
*First [etc.] report of the deputy keeper of the public records in Ireland (Dublin, 1869-)*  
*Public Record Office (London)*  
*Public Record Office of Ireland (Dublin)*  
*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*  
*Rolls Series*  
*Scottish Historical Review*  
*Rotulorum patentium et clausorum cancellariae Hiberniae calendarium*, ed. E. Tresham (Irish Record Commission, London, 1828)  
*Victoria History of the Counties of England*  
*Welsh History Review*

## INTRODUCTION

The brief reign of the Scottish prince, Edward Bruce, as king of Ireland (AD 1315-18) is a subject which has fascinated students of Irish history through the years. For many, though, the appeal lies not in the new 'king of Ireland' but in his older brother, Robert the Bruce, the invasion appearing as a sudden and startling transference onto Irish soil of the remarkable war of independence then being waged by the victor of Bannockburn over his unequal counterpart on the throne of England, the hapless Edward II.

It must be said, however, that this tendency to view the invasion as a unique and extraordinary experiment that failed has had deleterious consequences. It has deflected attention from its broader context, both chronological and geographical. The comfortable notion that the Bruce invasion was *sui generis* has deterred the search for parallels and precursors over the preceding centuries. The perception that it was a response to an unprecedented concatenation of circumstances in the early fourteenth century has unconsciously suppressed investigation of a more fundamental kind: the question of whether or not Edward Bruce's expedition fits into a long-established pattern of reaction against Anglo-Norman and English attempts to dominate the other nations in these islands. In that question lies the germ of this dissertation. It may be put bluntly as follows: are there grounds for regarding the Bruce invasion as part of an attempt by Scots, Irish, and Welsh to form a league, a 'Celtic alliance', directed against England, and, if so, what is there in past relations between these countries that makes such a conclusion possible? The examination of that theme is a primary aim of this study.<sup>1</sup>

It needs to be stressed at the outset that in mooting the possibility of a 'Celtic alliance' it is not intended to suggest that any of the countries in question had a sense of 'Celticness'.<sup>2</sup> It goes without saying that the Scots were aware of the Gaelic inheritance which they shared with Ireland, and were happy to trumpet it for public effect (as in the reading aloud by a *senchaid* of the royal pedigree all the way back to Scota, Pharaoh's daughter, at the inauguration of King Alexander III in 1249)<sup>3</sup> or when it suited their purposes (as when Robert I boasted of sharing 'one seed of birth' with the kings of Ireland).<sup>4</sup> It is true too that the Scots could

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<sup>1</sup> I have published a summary of the argument in 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world, 1306-29', *CMCS*, 21 (1991), 55-86.

<sup>2</sup> On this point, see F.J. Byrne, 'Senchas': the nature of Gaelic historical tradition', in *Historical Studies IX*, ed. J.G. Barry (Belfast, 1974), 137-59 (at p. 144).

<sup>3</sup> M.D. Legge, 'The inauguration of Alexander III', *Proc. Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 80 (1945-6), 73-82.

<sup>4</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum V. The acts of Robert I*, ed. A.A.M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1988), no. 564.

attempt to soft-soap the Welsh with memories of a glory-filled Albanic and Britannic past, before the Saxon.<sup>5</sup> But they did not remember a 'Celtic' past, and the only justification for the use of the term here, which may seem tendentious in the medieval context, is as a convenient shorthand for the Celtic-speaking countries concerned. As such, it is used synonymously with 'the Irish Sea region', a term coined by the geographers and archaeologists, here intended to represent primarily the nexus of relationships between the native kingdoms and principalities of Ireland, Wales, Man and the Isles, and Scotland, whose response to the external stimulus of domination by England this thesis is intended to analyse.

It would, however, be the height of folly to seek to reduce the separate and complex experiences of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in that age to a 'Celtic' reaction against Anglo-Norman aggrandizement. For one thing, we are not always comparing like with like, the experience of Scotland in particular being generally at odds with that of Ireland and Wales, at least until the late thirteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, although, unlike Scotland, a cultural homogeneity prevailed there, the fragmented nature of power in native Ireland and Wales should discourage us from imposing a false unity of purpose on the actions of individuals; truly 'national' impulses rarely if ever shaped men's actions, and the differences in the actions and reactions of individuals *within* these countries are often as marked as those *between* them. Nevertheless, considerable progress has been made in analysing the discrete experiences of Anglo-Norman expansionism to which these countries were subjected, and no reader could but be struck by their similarities. As a result, there have been calls for a comparative, supranational approach to the investigation of certain historical themes such as this - an approach which, one hastens to add, would complement rather than demolish the 'national' model.<sup>7</sup>

Professor Rees Davies has been prominent in this movement and has recently published a collection of essays on the theme of 'domination and conquest' as experienced by Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries,<sup>8</sup> while Robin Frame has produced a pioneering full-length narrative on the transnational model.<sup>9</sup> What it is proposed to do below is to study one facet of this theme by comparing the various politico-military responses of the Irish, Scots and Welsh to the process. Perhaps this will serve to test Professor

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, no. 571; see also, J. Beverley Smith, 'Gruffydd Llwyd and the Celtic alliance, 1315-18', *BBCS*, 26 (1976), 463-78.

<sup>6</sup> For an assessment of the difficulties which this disparity poses, see R.R. Davies, *Domination and conquest. The experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100-1300* (Cambridge, 1990), p. x.

<sup>7</sup> The case is persuasively argued by Professor Davies in his essay 'In praise of British history', in *The British Isles 1100-1500. Comparisons, contrasts and connections*, ed. idem (Edinburgh, 1988), 9-26.

<sup>8</sup> See note 6 above. For earlier criticism by Professor Davies of the anglocentric nature of history-writing and history-teaching, see *Historical perception: Celts and Saxons*. An Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, on 22nd November 1978 (Cardiff, 1979), 24.

<sup>9</sup> Robin Frame, *The political development of the British Isles, 1100-1400* (Oxford, 1990); in the integrative approach adopted, Professor Frame's monograph is a significant advancement on the still valuable contribution of Geoffrey Barrow in his *Feudal Britain* (London, 1956).

Frame's theory that such a wider perspective 'has the advantage that it refreshes those parts of the past that 'national' history does not reach'.<sup>10</sup> It will involve the examination of outbreaks of warfare or rebellion in the Irish Sea region, many of them already well-trawled, but, for a change, pondering whether their timing may have been influenced by events elsewhere in the region, and if so, whether the grievances of the insurgents or the targets of the assault are linked in both instances, whether contemporaries viewed them (rightly or wrongly) as interconnected, and whether we should do likewise.

In examining periods of such synchronous insurgency, I deliberately lean heavily on chronicle materials and other such opinion-laden contemporary observations, in a manner which the historian's innate caution (and consequent preference for the solid ground of government record) does not normally allow. I do so for a number of reasons. To start with, government records have a limited utility in this area. In the nature of things, rebels tend to inhabit regions where their would-be masters' writ does not effectively run. Piecing together what happened in peripheral marches from the curt commentary of the chancery clerk is a difficult business. What is more to the point, even where official sources do record the actions of rebels, they rarely elaborate on their motivation. Ironically, however, while the cloistered monk may know little of the course of *events* outside the scriptorium, he captures well the *opinions* of men, and sets down a permanent trace of current gossip and transient emotion. And this is vital to my purposes. If the rumour is wrong, it does not always matter. Men's actions are dictated by false suggestion as much as they are guided by the truth. If, for example, contemporaries *thought* that Scots and Welsh were in league together, or that the Irish were roused to rebellion by news of Welsh successes, that in itself tells us a great deal. Whether or not there was any basis to the claim (and more often than not, one suspects, there was not) individual responses, and frequently government policy, were dictated by the belief that there was.

If, therefore, government records tell us 'what', we must sometimes look to the chronicler or the on-the-scene spectator to explain 'why'. The chronicler has another advantage over the record emanating from central government, in that he is not constrained by regional boundaries. Hiberno-Welsh links, for instance, must be reconstituted from official sources by the indirect route of using Anglo-Irish or Anglo-Welsh documentation; the coeval observer in Ireland or Wales can, however, join the other side of the triangle for us by the direct route. This can yield results. To pick an instance almost at random: both Professors Frame and Lydon have done much to piece together the story of the warfare which seems to have erupted quite suddenly in Gaelic Leinster in the 1270s, continuing sporadically thereafter;<sup>11</sup> great strides, likewise, have been made in sharpening our understanding of

<sup>10</sup> 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 142-59 (at p. 150).

<sup>11</sup> R.F. Frame, 'The Dublin government and Gaelic Ireland 1227-1361' (Ph.D., University of Dublin, 1971); James Lydon, 'A land of war', in *NHI*, II, 256-64.

Edward I's contemporary wars, over a hundred miles away on the other side of the Irish Sea, against Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and the remnants of Welsh leadership who outlived him.<sup>12</sup> In many ways there are remarkable parallels between both theatres of war - in the (accidental or otherwise) simultaneous timing of the various outbreaks, in the objectives of the native leaders on either side, in the identity of the marcher barons whom they opposed, in the methods employed to suppress their actions, and in the consequences that flowed from their collapse - yet these similarities have not been explored.

This is where contemporary reportage may add something to our comprehension. The opinions occasionally expressed by contemporaries that both wars may have been linked are nothing more than that - opinions. Yet they surely bring us a little closer to explaining 'why'. If, for instance, an informed on-the-spot observer of the Irish scene, with no particular axe to grind, could account for rampant unrest there as native euphoria at Welsh successes on the field of battle,<sup>13</sup> then we, no less than those at whom his warning was directed, would do well to take heed. And if, for instance, a native Irish chronicler should articulate his disapproval of Welsh treatment at English hands,<sup>14</sup> I think we can take it that there were those outside the monastery walls who felt likewise, and that this animus found a political expression. Although such utterances have rarely gone unnoticed by modern commentators, effort has unfortunately been spared on tracing their manifestation. I look at the matter in some detail below, and at similar such manifestations of Celtic restiveness under the English hegemony. We must not get carried away. It would be fatuous indeed to read too much into the concomitant outbreaks of warfare in countries where such was in any case sometimes little short of endemic, but I hope to demonstrate that in the density of smoke there is some fire.

THE proper construction of this project requires that certain essential building-blocks be put in place. Over a decade has passed since Geoffrey Barrow published an insightful essay outlining the relationship between Scotland and Wales in the later Middle Ages,<sup>15</sup> but, to my knowledge, there does not exist a similar wide-ranging narrative of either Hiberno-Scottish or Hiberno-Welsh relations in the centuries immediately preceding the Bruce invasion. Until 1266, a quasi-independent kingdom existed also in Man and the Isles, yet its history has been quite neglected.<sup>16</sup> It has a direct bearing on our story since it acted at times as a linchpin

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<sup>12</sup> To pick but a few examples, A.D. Carr, 'The last days of Gwynedd', *Trans. Caernarvonshire Hist. Soc.*, 43 (1982), 7-22; R.R. Davies, 'Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, prince of Wales', *Journ. Merioneth Hist. Soc.*, 9 (1981-3), 264-77; J.G. Edwards, 'Edward I's castle-building in Wales', *Proc. British Academy*, 32 (1950), 15-81; J. Griffiths, 'The revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, 1294-5', *Trans. Caernarvonshire Hist. Soc.*, 16 (1955), 12-24; J.E. Morris, *The Welsh wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901); J.B. Smith, 'The origins of the revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd', *BBCS*, 21 (1964-6), 151-63; D. Stephenson, *The last prince of Gwynedd* (Buckingham, 1983).

<sup>13</sup> *CDI*, III, 366.

<sup>14</sup> *AI* s.a. 1295.

<sup>15</sup> G.W.S. Barrow, 'Wales and Scotland in the Middle Ages', *WHR*, 10 (1980-81), 302-19.

<sup>16</sup> I have published a discussion of its connexion with Ireland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in 'Irishmen and Islesmen in the kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052-1171', *Ériu*, 43 (1992).



between Ireland, Scotland, and Wales - indeed, one contemporary thought that Edward Bruce intended to make himself both king of Ireland and 'conqueror of the Isles'.<sup>17</sup> To fill in these three historiographical gaps, to examine the course of Irish relations in turn with Wales, Scotland, and the Isles, is clearly a desideratum. It is a prerequisite to any search for interconnexion or reciprocity in their responses to Anglo-Norman domination, and will therefore need to be a central part of this dissertation. In order to improve the perspective, the chronological lens has been widened, so that I present below a survey of Ireland's relations with its Celtic neighbours for the century and a half from the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland to Edward Bruce's death at Fochart in 1318, with an introductory chapter (covering more nebulous terrain since the sources are less illuminating) bringing the story back to the death of Brian Bóruma at Clontarf. Such bricks-and-mortar narrative is not to be regarded as an end in itself, but has been deemed necessary here in order to provide a solid base for the rather more substantial building-operation in hand.

There is one further thread which runs through the narrative. The Bruce invasion has stood out as a landmark in the history of later medieval Ireland because it has seemed to indicate a resurgence in native Irish opposition to the English rule which the country had experienced over the preceding one hundred and fifty years or so. This is a view which has been undermined to some extent by recent work, since its authority rested heavily on the insidious, almost osmotic, influence of texts the authenticity of which has been called into question,<sup>18</sup> and which, in the words of Professor A.A.M. Duncan, 'must be rigorously excised from our thinking about the situation'.<sup>19</sup> This is a not unwelcome development. To perceive the Bruce invasion as harbinger of an Irish *risorgimento* is to put the cart before the horse; it may, though, represent its apogee. To demonstrate that Edward Bruce's intervention was, in part, but an episode in a strategy of Irish counteraction to English hegemony, a campaign which had been ongoing in Ireland since the earliest days of the conquest, is another aim of this study.

As is suggested by such a concentration on Irish affairs, this is not a history of the Irish Sea region. The perspective is very much an Irish one. This view out over the Irish Sea is taken with feet planted firmly on Irish soil, the lens pointing in turn at Wales, Scotland, or the Isles. As a result, there is a disproportionate emphasis on Ireland's fate, and historians of Scotland and Wales could not but be unhappy with the short shrift which their affairs obtain, and, even

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<sup>17</sup> See Seán Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet: a new source for the Bruce invasion', *Proc. R.I.A.*, 91, C (1991), 303-15.

<sup>18</sup> See Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, 'Is the O'Neill-MacCarthy letter of 1317 a forgery?', *IHS*, 23 (1982-3), 61-7; Seán Duffy, 'The date and authorship of *Cath Fhochairte Brighite*' (M.Litt., University of Dublin, 1987), and idem, 'The Gaelic account of the Bruce invasion *Cath Fhochairte Brighite*: medieval romance or modern forgery?', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, 13 (1988-9), 59-121.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland, 1315', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 104 (commenting on the text known as *Cath Fhochairte Brighite*).

then, its obviously derivative nature. That said, this work is intended primarily as a contribution to Irish historiography. It will have served a useful purpose if, in re-introducing students of Irish history to forgotten cross-channel neighbours, even a nodding acquaintance is struck up. Of all the regions in these islands, the writing of Ireland's history in the later Middle Ages has been the most isolationist, the country's insular status making the fault understandable if not excusable. With very rare exceptions, such as the Bruce invasion itself, study of Ireland's external relations has been confined to the consequences of the establishment of the constitutional link with England in the late twelfth century. There are many reasons for this, no doubt, ranging from the perhaps justifiable perception of this relationship's priority over the others, to the fact that it is, quite frankly, easier to relate the course of Anglo-Irish relations than to attempt to reconstruct Ireland's relationship with Scotland or Wales, since our substantially anglocentric sources all the time work at cross-purposes to the task.

Nevertheless, it is a real indictment of the writing of Irish history that the story of this island's association with Scotland and Wales remains largely untold. In the darkness, Irish historiography has been the real loser, and it is hoped that the present study may begin the process of illumination; if, amid many blunders and misapprehensions, there is some light thrown on matters of interest to students of Scottish and Welsh history, that will be a bonus. I take as my apologia an observation of Professor Davies in his introduction to an important series of essays recently published on the theme: 'Opening windows into other people's gardens might help us to notice issues which have been undercultivated in ours - or neglected in theirs'.<sup>20</sup> There remain few important issues in Irish history which are as 'undercultivated' as the nature and course of its relationship with the other Celtic-speaking regions in these islands, while Ireland's involvement with and contribution to Scotland and Wales in the later Middle Ages is a subject neglected by those on the other side of the Irish Sea.

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<sup>20</sup> *The British Isles*, ed. idem, 1.

## CHAPTER ONE

### IRELAND AND ITS CELTIC NEIGHBOURS, 1014-1169

This chapter is a survey of Ireland's relations with Wales, with Scotland, and with Man and the Isles, in the period from the battle of Clontarf in 1014 to the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169. The metamorphosis fashioned by the latter event radically altered the relationship between Ireland and the other kingdoms and principalities in the archipelago. It is a primary aim of this dissertation to examine the effects on that relationship of the Anglo-Norman presence in Ireland, concentrating in particular on the reaction in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland against the Anglo-Norman expansionism that dominated the age. It will be seen, I hope, that there were occasions when inhabitants of the Celtic countries combined to counter Anglo-Norman aggression, but that to view the history of the Irish Sea region in the period in terms of 'native *versus* Norman' alone is grossly to distort the picture. The inhabitants of the region enjoyed a complex inheritance of interrelationships and it is this, overwhelmingly, which dictated their actions. Therefore, an examination of Ireland's relationship with its Irish Sea partners in the post-invasion era must guard against the assumption that everything which the investigation reveals is a product of the new age. Continuity is no less important than change. To be able to distinguish between the two is essential, and that comes from a study of the precedent established in the pre-invasion period. That is the purpose of the present chapter in which the preceding century and a half of the story is briefly reviewed.

## *Ireland and Wales*

The following obit of the Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, occurs in the annals of 'Tigernach' for AD 1072: 'Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, king of the Britons and of the Isles and of Dublin and of the Southern Half [of Ireland] was killed (*Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, Rí Breatan ⁊ Indsi Gall ⁊ Átha Cliath ⁊ Leithi Mogha Nuaghad, do marbadh*)'.

In an admirable study of Diarmait's career, Donnchadh Ó Corráin has noted that 'these inflated claims are clearly propaganda on behalf of Leinster', though he has demonstrated that in his heyday Diarmait mac Máel na mBó was the most powerful king in the Leth Moga (the southern half of Ireland), *did* assert his authority over the Hiberno-Scandinavian (or Ostman) city of Dublin, and, under the leadership of his son Murchad, *did* extend the family's sway into the Isle of Man. But Professor Ó Corráin makes no attempt to explain the basis of the claim to kingship in Wales which, we may infer, he regards as mere bombast.<sup>1</sup> To see it as such may, however, be a mistake.

Panegyrists almost always exaggerate their heroes' achievements; doubtless they sometimes lie. But the lie is seldom so blatant as to merit instant rebuttal, the exaggeration rarely so great that it exposes the hero to ridicule, by the pretentiousness of the claims made on his behalf. Of course the annalist's assertions are a gross exaggeration, but they are not meaningless: he is reminding us that just as Diarmait mac Máel na mBó was the most powerful man in the south of Ireland, and the overlord of Dublin, so too had he cast his net into the Irish Sea and influenced events in Wales. It is wrong to assess his career without taking stock of such involvement, and, to the extent that his activities were not untypical, it is wrong to acquiesce in a version of Irish history in which such contacts are ignored or forced to the margins. Even allowing for the exiguity of source materials (especially from the south-east of Ireland - a pity, since geography, if nothing else, pushed it into close transmarine contact), the surviving evidence for this period bespeaks a level of interest by contemporaries in the affairs of the Irish Sea region which it is foolhardy, not to say anachronistic, for us to ignore. What, then, are we to make of the annalist's statement that Diarmait was 'king of the Britons'? Is there anything in the relationship between Ireland and Wales in this age which would serve to explain it?

This chapter having begun with an obit, it may be worth looking at other such notices in Welsh and Irish sources, to see what light they throw on the relationship. Welsh chronicles

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<sup>1</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'The career of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, king of Leinster', *Old Wexford Soc. Journ.*, 3 (1971), 27-35; 4 (1972-3), 17-24 (at vol. 4, 23).

record the deaths of five kings (or would-be kings) of Ireland in this period: Brian Bóruma (d.1014) at Clontarf (along with his son Murchad and his opponent Máel Mórda, the Uí Fáeláin king of Leinster), Donnchad mac Briain (d.1064), Diarmait mac Máel na mBó (d.1072), Toirrdelbach ua Briain (d.1086), Muirchertach Ua Briain (d.1119), and Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair (d.1156).<sup>2</sup> It is not perhaps a very revealing litany, but it is odd that it does not include Máel Sechnaill Mór (d.1022); also, one wonders if the absence of the Cénél nEógain king Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (d.1166) is symptomatic of a decline in interest in Irish matters by that stage or merely displays the Welsh writers' ignorance of northern Irish affairs. All of the individuals named above had to contend during their lifetime, in their bids to be accepted as overking of all Ireland, with the counterclaims of rival provinces. Some of them were only marginally more successful than competing province-kings. Yet none of these others is mentioned. This may be mere chance - the Welsh chroniclers may never have heard of any others - but it is quite likely that they chose not to do so because they knew enough about the nuances of Irish politics to tell the difference between a winner and a loser.

Diarmait mac Máel na mBó is perhaps the best case in point. He was never 'king of Ireland' - only the partisan Book of Leinster goes so far as to call him king 'with opposition (*rí Herend co fressabra*)'<sup>3</sup> - and he had more than one competitor for power to contend with during his career. But these are not accorded the honour of an obit by Welsh writers. Not alone that, but in fact he gets a more resounding tribute in the Welsh chronicles than any other Irish king: 'Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, the most praiseworthy and bravest king of the Irish - terrible against his foes and kind towards the poor and gentle towards pilgrims - was slain in an unforeseen and unexpected battle'.<sup>4</sup> Why? Geography and commercial intercourse, and the familiarity they bring, may be at work, but such considerations would have applied equally to others. The probability must be that there is a link between this accolade and the Irish annalist's boast that Diarmait was 'king of the Britons'.

Perhaps the most likely point of contact came through the power he wielded over the Hiberno-Scandinavian city state of Dublin and the lesser enclave at Wexford, because the Ostmen display a great interest in Welsh affairs. It is important to trace these links:<sup>5</sup> they form an inheritance that fell to the Irish dynasties - including Diarmait's - when they obtained suzerainty over the Ostmen.<sup>6</sup> The *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*,<sup>7</sup> a famous and powerfully

<sup>2</sup> See *Brut*, *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson or the kings of the Saxons*, ed. Thomas Jones (Cardiff, 1971); *Annales Cambriae*, ed. John Williams ab Ithel (RS, London, 1860). I use 'mac' and 'ua' for true patronymics and 'Mac' and 'Ua' for family names.

<sup>3</sup> *The Book of Leinster formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, ed. R.I. Best *et al.* (Dublin, 1954-), I, 3155-66.

<sup>4</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1072.

<sup>5</sup> There is a lengthy study of the subject in K.L. Maund, *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century* (Woodbridge, 1991), chap. IV.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Irish overlordship of the Ostmen, and Dublin in particular, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see Seán Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in the kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052-1171', *Ériu*, 43 (1992).

<sup>7</sup> *A medieval prince of Wales. The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, ed. D. Simon Evans (Lampeter, 1990). For a discussion of the Irish matter in the *Historia*, see Appendix I below.

propagandist twelfth-century biography of the prince of Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Cynan (d.1137), claims that his maternal grandfather was Amlaíb (or Olafr),<sup>8</sup> king of Dublin (d.1034?). It adds that Amlaíb was also king of a fifth part of Ireland, of the Irish Sea islands, of Galloway and the Rhinns (at the tip of Galloway), Anglesey, and Gwynedd. Interestingly too, it says that Amlaíb built a castle in north Wales which still bore his name over a century later. Like the Irish annalist's claims for Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, this is in the realm of hyperbole, but it is not fantasy. There is other evidence that some sort of link existed at this time between the Dublin Ostmen and Wales. When Amlaíb's father, the famous Sitriuc Silkenbeard, resigned his kingship in 1036, having been expelled by a rival, he was forced to flee overseas.<sup>9</sup> It seems that he went to Wales: his son Gofraid was slain there in the same year by another member of the family, a son of Glún Iairn, Sitriuc's other son.<sup>10</sup> Sitriuc's family were clearly carrying on in Wales where they had left off in Dublin; Wales was now the arena of their internecine squabbles. The annals, therefore, indicate that in the 1030s the exiled Dublin dynasty was able to find a refuge in Wales, and that makes the claim of the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* that Sitriuc's son Amlaíb had a castle there somewhat more credible.

A case can be made for seeing in the events of the period tension between rival Irish and Hiberno-Scandinavian dynasties caused by their activities in Wales. According to Welsh sources, in 1022 an Irishman called 'Rein', pretending to be a son of Maredudd ab Owain ap Hywel Dda, was accepted by the men of Deheubarth (or South Wales) as chief, and actually held territory there; but he was opposed by Llywellyn ap Seisyll, king of Gwynedd, who put him to flight and he was never seen in Wales again.<sup>11</sup> This 'Rein' was not simply a Welshman with the epithet '*Gwyddel* (the Irishman)', which might be accounted for by a range of circumstances. He was in fact '*nebun Yscot* (a certain Irishman)', who 'would have himself called Rein', and he incited his men to battle 'as is the custom among the Irish'. He was, therefore, an Irish intruder into Welsh affairs. But who was Rein? In this same year, Máel Sechnaill Mór, king of Mide, and claimant to the kingship of Ireland, died. Among those competing for the succession was a certain Roen (or Raen, or Roin). He was a member of the same dynasty, but is an obscure figure.<sup>12</sup> The coincidence of the simultaneous accession to power in Wales and Ireland of two Irishmen with almost identical, and highly unusual, names is curious. Roen as an Irish name is so obscure, in fact, that the author of the B text of the Annals of Ulster has written over the name: '*Ní thuigim so* (I do not understand this)!' The annalist's difficulty with it may be caused by the fact that this Mide dynast bore the Welsh

<sup>8</sup> I have in general chosen to adopt a Gaelic spelling for the personal names of individuals who lived in a predominantly Gaelic-speaking milieu.

<sup>9</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1036.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Incidentally, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó also had a son called Glún Iairn (*AFM* s.a. 1070), which may suggest a family relationship.

<sup>11</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1022.

<sup>12</sup> See Paul Walsh, 'The Ua Maelsechlainn kings of Meath', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 57 (1941), 165-83 (at p. 168).

forename Rhain. Although he was an Ua Máel Sechnaill, when the annals mention him they tend - like the Welsh in talking of Rein - to call him by his forename alone.<sup>13</sup> This suggests the possibility of his illegitimacy; hence, perhaps, Rein's claim that his father was, in fact, Maredudd ap Owain.

One cannot say for certain whether the 'Rein' in Wales and the 'Roen' in Mide are one and the same person, but it does at least raise the intriguing possibility that a claimant to the kingship of Tara in the early eleventh century hoped also to make himself king of South Wales. There was considerable rivalry between Roen and the Dublin Ostmen and it is possible that they were part of the Gwynedd-led force that defeated him. Five years later, in 1027, the Dubliners actually killed him, and in their host was Donnchad Ua Duinn, king of Brega:<sup>14</sup> the year after Rein's Welsh exploit, the Dublin Ostmen had captured Ua Duinn and brought him 'eastwards over the sea ( $\neg$  a bhreith dar muir sair)'.<sup>15</sup> This seems to refer to a journey across the Irish Sea to Britain, rather than northwards to Man or the Isles, since it is precisely the phrase used of the banishment of Diarmait Mac Murchada to Bristol in 1166.<sup>16</sup> It may be further evidence for an Ostman presence in Wales in this period.

Irish activity in Wales continued after Roen's death. It was in 1033 that 'the Irish slew Rhydderch ap Iestyn', who had held the kingship of Deheubarth for the previous decade.<sup>17</sup> Just eleven years, therefore, after an Irishman had tried to set himself up as king in South Wales, men from Ireland were responsible for the death of the reigning king there, surely testimony to a vigorous and ongoing Irish intrusion into the affairs of Wales. It may have been in connexion with the activities of Irishmen in Deheubarth at this point that the Ostmen, allied it seems with the English, plundered Wales in 1030.<sup>18</sup> Sitriuc of Dublin presumably visited Wales on his oft-mentioned passage to Rome in 1028; his son Amlaíb probably did likewise on his 1034 pilgrimage, during the course of which he was killed passing through England.<sup>19</sup> When Amlaíb was captured by the king of Brega in 1029 he was able to give as ransom 120 Welsh horses (which we know from sources such as the *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* were a valued commodity in Ireland),<sup>20</sup> again evidence of a significant level of contact.

It may have been on one of these encounters that a marriage was arranged between Amlaíb's daughter Ragnallt and Cynan, the son of Iago of Gwynedd, a match that was to

<sup>13</sup> 'A battle was gained by Roen over the foreigners of Dublin' (*AFM* s.a. 1026); 'Scrin-Choluim-Cille was plundered by Raen, and a great prey of cows was carried off' (*AFM* s.a. 1027); 'Roin, king of Mide, and Donnchad Ua Duinn, king of Brega, fell by each other in battle' (*AU* s.a. 1027); 'Roin was slain by the foreigners of Dublin' (*AI* s.a. 1027); 'Roen was killed in the battle of Monad Mílain' (*Book of Leinster*, I, 5977).

<sup>14</sup> *AU*; *AI*.

<sup>15</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1023.

<sup>16</sup> 'eastwards over the sea (*dar muir sair*)': *AI* s.a. 1166.

<sup>17</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1033.

<sup>18</sup> *ATig*.

<sup>19</sup> *AU*; *AFM* s.a. 1028; *AU*; *AFM*; *CS*; *AClon* s.a. 1034.

<sup>20</sup> *AICé*; *ATig*; *AU*; *AFM*; *CS* s.a. 1029; *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, ed. K.H. Jackson (Dublin, 1990), ll. 565, 1328.

produce Gruffudd ap Cynan.<sup>21</sup> As Sitriuc found a refuge in Wales in 1036, Cynan was later to find one in Dublin. If any reliance can be placed on some annalistic entries found only in Powel's edition of the *Brut* chronicles,<sup>22</sup> Cynan launched several unsuccessful attempts from Dublin in the middle years of the century to reclaim Gwynedd for himself. One of these abortive invasions of Wales seems to have taken place in 1052; it ended with many of his men being killed and drowned. Perhaps there is some corroboration of the incident in the reference in the more reliable *Brut* chronicles to an Irish fleet foundering off Wales in this year.<sup>23</sup> According to Powel, by the time Cynan was forced to beat a retreat to Ireland, he had made common cause with Harold Godwinsson of Wessex, who joined him in seeking refuge there. This is partly confirmed by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which has Harold spending the winter of 1051-2 in Ireland 'under the king's protection' and returning to England with nine ships.<sup>24</sup> According to the *Life of Edward the Confessor*, that king was Diarmait mac Máel na mBó.<sup>25</sup> Thus, we have Cynan allied with Harold and Harold allied with Diarmait; we may reasonably suppose that Cynan and Diarmait were similarly in alliance. Now I doubt if it is a coincidence that in this year, 1052, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó had taken the remarkable step of installing himself as king of Dublin.<sup>26</sup> It is arguable that in doing so, he donned the mantle of protector of the exiled Venedotian dynasty, in return for some acknowledgement of suzerainty from them. If so, the colourful claims of Diarmait's Irish obituarist, and the generosity of his Welsh, make a little more sense.

So much for Welsh notices of Irish deaths. Obits of Welshmen in Irish annals in this period tell their own story. I have come across only four such notices for the period under review. The process by which Irish writers become aware of the deaths of individuals overseas, the date at which their obits are added to the corpus of surviving annals, and the motives for recording one death as opposed to another, are, needless to say, obscure. But it is perhaps fair to assume that in each of these four cases the individual involved did something to bring himself to the attention of Irish-based writers. Thus, Llywelyn ap Seisyll, the king of Gwynedd who defeated Rein the Irishman, died within a year, and a record of his death is preserved in the Irish annals.<sup>27</sup> The family who opposed Llywelyn ap Seisyll seem to have had close Irish links. Of the other three death-notices, one does not occur in the main corpus of Irish

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<sup>21</sup> *The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 23, 53.

<sup>22</sup> David Powel of Ruabon, *The Historie of Cambria, now called Wales* (London, 1584), 92-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Brut*; *Brut* (RBH); *Brenhinedd y Saesson*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1052.

<sup>24</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock *et al.* (London, 1961), 116-21. See also, Ben Hudson, 'The family of Harold Godwinsson and the Irish Sea province', *JRSAL*, 109 (1979), 92-100.

<sup>25</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, ed. Frank Barlow (Edinburgh, 1962), 120. After Hastings the sons of Harold Godwinsson fled to Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, who provided them with a fleet of sixty-six ships for one of their unsuccessful attempts to reinstate themselves in England; Orderic Vitalis makes the interesting observation that the failure of this invasion 'filled Ireland with mourning' (*Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969-80), II, 224).

<sup>26</sup> *AU*; *AFM*; *CS*.

<sup>27</sup> *ALCé*; *ATig*; *AU*; *CS*; *AClon* s.a. 1023.



annalistic materials but is exclusive to the Munster chronicle known as the Annals of Inisfallen. I shall deal with this presently. The other two are concerned with the family of Gruffudd ap Cynan ab Iago of Gwynedd: we hear of the death of Iago in 1039 and the killing of Llywelyn ap Seisyll's famous son Gruffudd at the hands of Cynan ab Iago in 1063.

The very singularity of these references suggests that they hold some significance. They demonstrate an interest of sorts by Irish writers in the affairs of Gruffudd ap Cynan's family: and this goes some way to easing the mistrust sometimes expressed about the historicity of Gruffudd's Dublin background, as so elaborately propounded in his twelfth-century biography. It is important, therefore, that they stand up to scrutiny, in particular, the equation of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's killer with Cynan ab Iago, doubt over which has been expressed by Dr Karen Maund in a recent study of the subject.<sup>28</sup> In spite of her persuasive arguments, however, it is my view that the equation is sound. Briefly, the background is as follows. Gruffudd ap Cynan's grandfather, Iago, succeeded to Gwynedd in 1023 on the death of Llywelyn ap Seisyll. Sixteen years later, Iago was killed; we do not know who did it, but the Irish annals claim that the deed was done *a suis*. Dr Maund implies that this rules out Llywelyn ap Seisyll's son Gruffudd, but as we know next to nothing about the ancestry of Seisyll,<sup>29</sup> there is no reason to presume that Gruffudd's party cannot have been responsible. The *Annales Cambriae* have it that Iago was killed 'pro quo Grifut ap Lewelyn regnavit', which probably means nothing more than that Gruffudd took Iago's place, though there may be an implication of responsibility in the remark; hence, the vernacular *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, elaborating on the *Annales Cambriae* statement, credits Gruffudd with the mortal deed. It may be rash to conclude from this one source alone that Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ap Seisyll was the slayer, but, at the very least, he is the one who profited by it: he ruled Gwynedd, Iago's son Cynan ended up in exile. It must be a near certainty that they were foes.

I presented above some slight evidence for a link between Cynan and Harold Godwinsson: we are not short of evidence of Harold's opposition to Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ap Seisyll. Indeed, Harold led an expedition against Gruffudd that briefly preceded, and probably caused, his death, and received his severed head after the murder.<sup>30</sup> This suggests the possibility that Cynan ab Iago and Harold were allied in opposition to Gruffudd. But what evidence have we that Cynan was involved? Welsh sources claim that Gruffudd was killed in 1063 'through the treachery of his own men'.<sup>31</sup> As in the case of Iago's death *a suis*, this does

<sup>28</sup> K.L. Maund, 'Cynan ab Iago and the killing of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn', *CMCS*, 10 (1985), 57-65.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, J.E. Lloyd, *A history of Wales from earliest times to the conquest*, 2 vols (London, 1911); I, 347. Dr Maund herself admits that there 'is surprisingly little genealogical evidence about Llywelyn': *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 60.

<sup>30</sup> See J.E. Lloyd, 'Wales and the coming of the Normans', *Trans. Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1899-1900, 122-79 (at p. 137); David Walker, 'A note on Gruffydd ap Llywelyn', *WHR*, 1 (1960-63), 83-94 (at p. 92); J.W. James, 'Fresh light on the death of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn', *BBCS*, 30 (1982-3), 147.

<sup>31</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1063.

not rule out the possibility of Cynan's complicity, as we know nothing of the precise relationship between both families. But we have one strong piece of evidence that points directly at Cynan. According to the Irish annals, Gruffudd was killed by 'the son of Iago (*m. Iacoib*)'.<sup>32</sup> In spite of this, Dr Maund regards Cynan as only 'a possible if unlikely candidate',<sup>33</sup> since, firstly, no other source (not even the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*) ascribes responsibility to Cynan; since, secondly, Iago is a not uncommon name, so that we may be talking about an entirely different person; and since, thirdly, even if it is the same Iago, he may have had more than one son! But this seems to be needlessly sceptical. The main Irish annals only note three events in the mainstream of Welsh politics for the entire eleventh century: if the second of these is '*Iaco rí Bretan (Iago, king of Wales) a suis occisus est*' and the third is '*M. Leobelem rí Bretan do marbadh la m. Iacoib (The son of Llywelyn was killed by the son of Iago)*', I can see no sensible reason for doubting that the '*m. Iacoib*' of the latter is son of the '*Iaco*' of the former, and is likewise the only son that we know of, Cynan ab Iago.

This long and perhaps tedious digression has been necessary to establish that the Irish annals probably intended Cynan ab Iago when they note the killer of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, the greatest Welsh king of the eleventh century, and they are probably right. Cynan's career and, all the more so, that of his son, Gruffudd, serve to illustrate the importance of seeing Irish and Hiberno-Scandinavian activity in Wales in this period, not as predatory vestiges of the Viking age, but as politically motivated expeditions in pursuit of their allies' dynastic ambitions. A brief glance at Gruffudd ap Cynan's career demonstrates the point quite well. If my assessment of the historicity of his biography is correct,<sup>34</sup> when he came of age in the mid-1070s Gruffudd sought help from Muirchertach Ua Briain and others, who aided him and, we are told, rejoiced greatly at the initial success of 'their kinsman and fosterson' in retaking Gwynedd. It was not to last long: in a revolt soon afterwards by the men of Llŷn, Gruffudd lost fifty-two of his Irish 'knights' and guards. However, he maintained the support of the men of Anglesey and Arfon, along with 'a few of the men of Denmark and the Irish'. These are Ostmen (and/or Islesmen) and native Irish, and the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* like other Welsh sources of the period usually distinguishes between the two. The terms are rarely used carelessly and interchangeably,<sup>35</sup> and it is an important point: when Welsh sources speak of the activities of *Yscotyeid* or *Gwydyl*, as distinct from those of 'the men of *Denmarc*' or the *Kenedloed* (the Heathens), they are talking about the intrusion of native Irish into Wales, and these are telling events, the significance of which can easily be lost sight of if historians choose to see them all as mere Viking raids.

<sup>32</sup> AU; ATig; CS.

<sup>33</sup> Maund, 'Cynan ab Iago and the killing of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn', 64.

<sup>34</sup> For which, see Appendix I.

<sup>35</sup> Dr Maund, in *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 160, n. 38, cites examples of what may be a confusion in terminology in describing both groups, but on balance I think her criticism is unjustified.

That Gruffudd ap Cynan's biographer meant what he said when he claimed Gruffudd had with him, not merely 'men of Denmark' but native Irish, is implicit in the statement that those captured or slain with him included not only his Ostman fosterfather but the Irish lord of Corcu Duibne in County Kerry, leading part of the Munster fleet. Similarly, Gruffudd was forced to flee Wales and landed in Ireland at the port of Wexford; from there he journeys to the king (unnamed, but almost certainly native Irish), complaining bitterly to him and his chieftains (*tywysogyon*), and is supplied with a fleet of 30 ships full of 'Irishmen and men of Denmark'. Again he is unsuccessful. He returns to Ireland, spends a year there as a guest of Toirrdelbach ua Briain's son Diarmait, and then assembles a royal fleet from Waterford with which Diarmait provided him. It was made up of Ostmen (*Daenysseit*), Irishmen (*Gvydyl*), and Welshmen (*Brytaiyeit*), and we can only suppose that there were substantial numbers of the latter eking out some sort of existence in the Irish east-coast towns. They join with Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of Deheubarth, and the famous Mynydd Carn campaign follows. Gruffudd ap Cynan's biography gives an interesting account of the composition of his army at this battle. One contingent consisted of the Hiberno-Scandinavians 'with their two-edged axes', the second of the Irish 'with their lances and their sharp-edged iron balls', the third of the men of Gwynedd 'with their spears and shields'.<sup>36</sup> Together they won the day for Gruffudd, whose opponent as ruler of Gwynedd, Trahearn ap Caradog, was slain by one of the Irish battalion.

Mynydd Carn was a crucial encounter, 'a turning-point in eleventh-century Welsh history',<sup>37</sup> which 'left its imprint permanently on the history of Gwynedd and Deheubarth',<sup>38</sup> and it was won using Irish might. It removed the last native opponent Gruffudd ap Cynan had to face on his path to power, and it meant major changes in South Wales also where Rhys ap Tewdwr was secured in his kingship. For the Irish, booty seems to have been the most immediate implication, judging from the laconic comment of the Munster chronicler, referring to what was perhaps part of the groundwork of the campaign: 'Diarmait Ua Briain brought a fleet to Wales and took great spoil therefrom'.<sup>39</sup> But in the longer term it was to establish an alliance between the Uí Briain royal house of Munster and the family of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth which had serious, and at times potentially enormous, consequences. In the same year, William the Conqueror visited Wales. His expedition was more than a pilgrimage to St Davids in spite of what the chauvinistic Menavian chronicler would have us believe;<sup>40</sup> he established some sort of *modus vivendi* with Rhys ap Tewdwr but cannot have been happy with Toirrdelbach ua Briain's meddling in affairs there. It was, after all, in the early 1080s that he is said to have accused his brother Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, of oppressing the kingdom during

<sup>36</sup> *The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 36, 67.

<sup>37</sup> K.L. Maund, 'Trahaearn ap Caradog: legitimate usurper?', *WHR*, 13 (1986-7), 468-76 (at p.472).

<sup>38</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 384.

<sup>39</sup> *AI* s.a. 1080.

<sup>40</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1081. See Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 393-4; R.R. Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change. Wales 1063-1415* (Oxford, 1987), 33.

his own absence across the channel, and of 'misleading my knights, whose duty is to guard England against the Danes and Irish (*contra Danos et Hibernenses*) and other enemies who hate me'.<sup>41</sup> So, when Toirrdelbach died in 1086 William had cause to welcome the vicious succession struggle that broke out between his sons. He may have had plans to involve himself in it but died in the following year, at which point the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* enigmatically comments: 'If he could have lived two more years, he would have conquered Ireland by his prudence, without any weapons'.<sup>42</sup>

Overtly, of course, Rhys ap Tewdwr's links were with hired Ostman fleets, but as these were at the discretion of the kings of Munster, only friends of the Uí Briain could obtain access. When Rhys was expelled from Deheubarth in 1088, he fled to Ireland, gathered a fleet there, returned and defeated his opponents, rewarding his 'pirates' with treasure.<sup>43</sup> In 1093, he was killed by 'the French' - his death notice is the fourth Welsh obit to occur in Irish sources in this period - and there fell alongside him 'Turcaill mac Eola',<sup>44</sup> who is unidentified, but is almost certainly an Ostman and quite possibly the eponym of the twelfth century Mac Turcaill rulers of Dublin. That it is the Annals of Inisfallen alone which record their deaths attests to the importance of the Munster connexion. It is an interest that is reciprocated by the Welsh chronicler, based at St Davids in Deheubarth, in noting the death of Toirrdelbach ua Briain in 1086. Sulien (d. 1091), the famous bishop of St Davids at this point, is said to have studied in Ireland for many years,<sup>45</sup> and one wonders if he played any part in cementing the alliance: we know that he was induced against his will to end his retirement and resume the episcopacy in 1080 when his predecessor was murdered in an assault on St Davids by 'heathen folk', and assuming that this is the recorded raid on Wales by Diarmait Ua Briain's Waterford fleet, it may be the case that Sulien was regarded as more acceptable to the Munstermen.

In any case, the Munster alliance remained intact even after Rhys's death. This was a traumatic affair. When the Welsh chronicles tell us that 'with him fell the kingdom of the Britons', it is no late interpolation: Florence of Worcester has the same view that 'from that

<sup>41</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, IV, 42-3.

<sup>42</sup> *Anglo-Saxon chronicle*, ed. Whitelock, 164. William's successor, Rufus, made more than one expedition to Wales against men who were allies of Toirrdelbach's son, Muirchertach Mór. Gerald of Wales records the tradition that on one of these visits, on reaching St Davids, Rufus boasted of plans to subjugate Ireland; Muirchertach, so the story goes, responded by saying that Ireland could not be conquered without God's help (Gerald of Wales, *The journey through Wales and the description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1978), 168-9). There may be no basis in fact for this colourful yarn, but it is interesting that both the late Anglo-Irish chronicler Hanmer and Geoffrey Keating in his *Forus Feasa ar Éirinn* have a tale of William Rufus sending to Ireland in 1098 for timber with which to roof Westminster Hall (Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship* (Oxford, 1989), 48, n.130). This too may be apocryphal, and even if true does not necessarily carry any implication of tributary status.

<sup>43</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1088.

<sup>44</sup> *AI* s.a. 1093.

<sup>45</sup> See J.E. Lloyd, 'Bishop Sulien and his family', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 2 (1941), 1-6; for an edition of the poem by Sulien's son Ieuan, describing his sojourn in Ireland, see Michael Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin poetry of Sulien's family', *Studia Celtica*, 8-9 (1973-4), 68-104 (at pp. 80-88).

day kings ceased to bear rule in Wales'.<sup>46</sup> The Normans quickly overran Dyfed, which William Rufus conferred on Arnulf de Montgomery.<sup>47</sup> The latter captured and imprisoned Rhys ap Tewdwr's younger son but was always likely to be vulnerable in South Wales while the elder, Gruffudd, remained at large; and this the young boy managed to do because he was brought by kinsmen to Ireland in search of asylum.<sup>48</sup> There is no better reminder of the dimness of our understanding of inter-dynastic relations among the Welsh and Irish at this point than that which comes from contemplation of what followed. Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr was to spend the next twenty-two years in Ireland. When he returned, 'wearied by an exceedingly long exile', in 1115 (perhaps consequent on the fall from power in the previous year of Muirchertach Ua Briain, who was probably his host), his cause had an almost messianic appeal: Welsh sources report that 'it was alleged that the minds of all the Britons were with him, scorning the royal power of king Henry', and that 'there had gathered around him many young hotheads from all sides, lured by a desire for booty or by an urge to restore and renew the Brittanic kingdom'.<sup>49</sup> If Gruffudd failed to live up to men's expectations, his long sojourn in Ireland was not the cause. When he was expelled again by the Anglo-Normans in 1127, he returned to Ireland,<sup>50</sup> and, as we hear nothing of him for nearly a decade, we may suppose that another lengthy period of exile in his adopted homeland followed.

Munster's involvement in South Wales continued during the course of Gruffudd's first exile at least, presumably in connexion with his presence there. His Norman ejector, Arnulf de Montgomery, whose caput was at Pembroke, quickly found that he had more to contend with than native resistance when his family, under the leadership of his older brother, Robert de Bellême, risked all in a rebellion against the new king of England, Henry I.<sup>51</sup> The effort to hold out against Henry caused the de Bellêmes to sup with unlikely devils. Hugh, the eldest brother, had been killed in a confrontation in 1098 with the king of Norway, Magnus III Barelegs, and yet Robert sued for his assistance on his reappearance in the Irish Sea four years later; Arnulf held South Wales in opposition to the refugee Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr, and yet now turned to the latter's patron for aid. He had a vital intermediary. Gruffudd ap Rhys's sister was the famous Nest, as Professor Davies succinctly puts it, 'a lady of easy charm and many lovers'.<sup>52</sup> One of the more permanent of the latter was Arnulf's steward of Pembroke,

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<sup>46</sup> *Florentii Wigornensis chronicon ex chronicis*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols (English Historical Society, London, 1848), s.a. 1093.

<sup>47</sup> See Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, chap. XII. There is a full discussion of the Norman penetration of the area in L.H. Nelson, *The Normans in South Wales 1070-1171* (Austin, Texas, 1966). See also I.W. Rowlands, 'The making of the March. Aspects of the Norman settlement of Dyfed', *Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, 3, ed. R.A. Brown (Woodbridge, 1981), 142-57.

<sup>48</sup> The brothers' fate is revealed in *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1115.

<sup>49</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1115, 1116.

<sup>50</sup> *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1127.

<sup>51</sup> For the family and their rebellion, see J.F.A. Mason, 'Robert de Montgomery and his sons 1067-1102', *Trans. Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 13 (1963), 1-28.

<sup>52</sup> Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 71.

Gerald of Windsor (a quo the Irish Geraldines, and maternal grandfather of Gerald of Wales).

And thus, when things began to look bleak for Arnulf in 1102, he

thought to make peace with the Irish and to obtain help from them. And he sent messengers to Ireland, that is, Gerald the steward and many others, to ask for the daughter of king Muirchertach (*Murtart*) for his wife. And that he easily obtained; and the messengers came joyfully to their land. And Muirchertach sent his daughter and many armed ships along with her to his aid. And when the earls [Robert and Arnulf] had exalted themselves with pride because of those events, they refused to accept any peace from the king.<sup>53</sup>

For once, we get here a little bit of background detail. It is hardly a coincidence that the man sent to Ireland to negotiate with Ua Briain was a brother-in-law of the exiled prince of Deheubarth. We know that when Gruffudd ap Rhys did eventually return to Wales in 1115, Gerald of Windsor was one of those who helped him find his feet.<sup>54</sup> So his mission in 1102 may have been an attempt at working out a compromise deal with Gruffudd. It is curious too that the Welsh chroniclers regard Arnulf's olive-branch as an effort 'to make peace' with the Irish, which presumably refers to enmity between the Normans of South Wales and the king of Munster, possibly provoked by the killing of Gruffudd's father, Rhys ap Tewdwr, in 1093. Finally, the claim that the Normans became 'exalted with pride' as a result of their Irish alliance, and refused therefore to accept any peace from Henry I, is an interesting reminder of the importance of the Irish input into Welsh warfare.

What Muirchertach Ua Briain hoped to gain from mending fences with the de Bellêmes is a matter of speculation. He supplied not only his daughter but 'many armed ships' and we shortly hear of Arnulf's men raiding as far east as Staffordshire and making off with many horses, cattle and captives:<sup>55</sup> some of the latter may have ended up on the thriving Irish slave market.<sup>56</sup> At a broader level, there can be little doubt that the coastal regions of Dyfed, Pembroke in particular, were focal points on the trade route from Waterford to South Wales and the Bristol Channel. Strongbow's capture of Waterford in 1170 is, therefore, in one sense at least, paralleled by Muirchertach Ua Briain's alliance of 1102. The aim may have been in part the same - the controller of one end of this vital navigational path was trying to make secure the other end. If this was Muirchertach's concern, it explains the reaction of Henry I. At some point, probably linked to these events though we cannot be certain, Henry placed an embargo on trade with Ireland, in order, it would appear, to choke off any further collusion between Ua Briain and de Montgomery, an embargo that produced William of Malmesbury's famous quip: '[Ua Briain's] insolence subsided, for of what value could Ireland be if deprived of the merchandise of England?'.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1102; see also *Brut; Brenhinedd y Saesson*. The marriage-alliance is noted in the Irish annals (see *AI* s.a. 1102). For a discussion, see Edmund Curtis, 'Muirchertach O'Brien, high king of Ireland, and his Norman son-in-law, Arnulf de Montgomery, circa 1100', *JRSAI*, 6th ser., 11 (1921), 116-24.

<sup>54</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1115.

<sup>55</sup> There is a useful survey of the course of the rebellion in Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 412-14.

<sup>56</sup> For which, see Paul Holm, 'The slave trade of Dublin, ninth to twelfth centuries', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 317-45.

<sup>57</sup> *Gesta regum*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (RS, London, 1887-9), II, 484-5.

The Welsh chronicles tell us that Gerald the steward was sent to Ua Briain's court with 'many others'. Arnulf de Montgomery may have taken the opportunity to despatch with Gerald a sample of his fighting men, not merely to impress the Irish king by their formidable bearing, but to suggest to him the practical advantages that might accrue in the longer term should his new son-in-law prove able to return the favour. Muirchertach Ua Briain was at this very moment busy trying to force his prime opponent in Ireland, Domnall Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain, to acknowledge that which his friends abroad were happy to: his claim to be king of Ireland.<sup>58</sup> There can be little doubt that he saw precisely the same merits in the fighting power of the Normans of South Wales that the Leinster king Diarmait Mac Murchada was to see some sixty-five years later. Ua Briain was also in a vulnerable position at this point because of the threatening presence in the Irish Sea of the Norse king, Magnus Barelegs. Although a marriage-alliance was arranged between the Norse king's son Sigurd and Ua Briain's daughter, with Sigurd being set up as king in Man and the Isles, and probably also in Dublin,<sup>59</sup> one wonders if Muirchertach did not enter into his pact with Arnulf as an insurance policy should his other son-in-law prove treacherous.

According to Orderic Vitalis, after the collapse of the de Bellême rebellion, Arnulf took the extraordinary step of withdrawing to Ireland. He thus found himself an emigré with a bleak future ahead of him, dependent upon the generosity of his wife's father, the king of Munster, a dispossessed adventurer attendant at the very court that played host to the man he himself had dispossessed, Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr. One treats with a pinch of salt Orderic's claim that Arnulf hoped 'to secure his father-in-law's kingdom' in his wife's right (though a more famous successor as earl of Pembroke was to do just that two generations on), but there may be a little more justification for his claim that Magnus Barelegs

prepared an expedition against the Irish and approached the Irish coast with his fleet. Greatly alarmed by the king's might, the Irish sent for the Normans and Arnulf hurried to their aid with his retainers...When the Irish had tasted blood by killing King Magnus and his companions they grew more unruly and suddenly turned to kill the Normans. Their king took his daughter away from Arnulf and gave the wanton girl in an unlawful marriage to one of his cousins. He resolved to murder Arnulf himself as a reward for his alliance, but the latter, learning of the execrable plots of this barbarous race, fled to his own people and lived for twenty years afterwards with no fixed abode...<sup>60</sup>

The inevitable bias against the Irish need not concern us, but the implication that Ireland provided a haven for Anglo-Normans two-thirds of a century before their full-scale invasion is, in the circumstances, not unreasonable. In the interval between Arnulf de Montgomery's forfeiture by King Henry and his later emergence attached to the Angevin court, his father-in-law's favour was maintained, as we know from Muirchertach's letter to Archbishop Anselm of

<sup>58</sup> For his career, see Anthony Candon, 'Muirchertach Ua Briain, politics and naval activity in the Irish Sea, 1075 to 1119', in *Keimelia: studies in medieval archaeology and history in memory of Tom Delaney*, ed. Gearóid Mac Niocaill and P.F. Wallace (Galway, 1989), 397-415.

<sup>59</sup> For Magnus's expedition, see Rosemary Power, 'Magnus Barelegs' expeditions to the west', *SHR*, 65 (1986), 107-32; Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>60</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica*, VI, 48-51.

Canterbury thanking him for interceding with Henry on Arnulf's behalf.<sup>61</sup> It must be a near certainty that Ua Briain's mediation was performed while Arnulf was resident at his court, and it must be at least a probability that substantial numbers of his retainers stayed in de Montgomery's service for the duration, being employed to at least add some colour to the composition of the Munster army. There is not the least mention of this in the Irish annals, but it is worth pointing out that when Diarmait Mac Murchada returned from banishment in August 1167 he brought a band of strange and ferocious Flemings in tow, yet neither the Annals of Inisfallen nor the Annals of Ulster bother to mention them (and there must be some doubt about the hindsight vision of those annals which do): chroniclers are obviously used to witnessing small contingents of alien mercenaries walking on and off the Irish stage.

These events owe their origin, in large part, to the disruption caused by the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr, and the quickening advance of Norman settlement throughout Wales that followed it, something which had previously been spasmodic and half-hearted. From 1066 to Rhys's death in 1093, there are more notices concerning Irishmen and Islesmen in the Welsh chronicles than there are mentions of Normans,<sup>62</sup> and, although the chroniclers' own location on the western seaboard undoubtedly affected their perspective, Welsh eyes do seem to be firmly fixed as yet on the Irish Sea. This begins to change with the Norman influx of the 1090s. Nevertheless, the heady events of these years inspired the chroniclers to more comment, so that, *inter alia*, we get a good deal more detail on Welsh contacts with Ireland. Whether this is merely the product of the thickening out of the sources or whether Welsh leaders, now squeezed by the Normans' westward expansion, found themselves with little choice but to make recourse to Ireland, we cannot say. Either way, we can build up quite a comprehensive picture of the subsequent transmigrations to Ireland of discomfited Welshmen and of the activities in Wales of men from Ireland.

The latter, in so doing, ran an unenviable gauntlet: all the Irishmen and Islesmen captured with Gruffudd ap Cynan by the Normans, not long after his short-lived success at Mynydd Carn, had the thumb of their right hand cut off before being released.<sup>63</sup> However, there were always others to take their place. After Gruffudd's escape from a long imprisonment by the Normans at Chester, he sailed to Ireland, then to the Isles, returning with sixty shiploads of mercenaries who helped him wrest Gwynedd from the 'French'. Gruffudd employed one of these ships to plunder a passing trading vessel coming from Chester:<sup>64</sup> such prospects were obviously part of what enticed Irish and Hiberno-Scandinavian support to Gruffudd's cause. But one would be wrong to see in them the sole explanation. When the Normans, led by the two earls Hugh, of Shrewsbury and Chester, invaded Gwynedd in 1098,

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<sup>61</sup> James Ussher, *Veterum epistolarum Hibernicarum sylloge* (Dublin, 1632), no. XXXVII.

<sup>62</sup> A point made in Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 32; see also, *idem*, *Domination and conquest*, 25.

<sup>63</sup> *The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 38, 69-70.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 72.



Gruffudd, his biographer tells us, repaired to a fortress in Anglesey surrounded by the sea. There, sixteen ships came to his aid from Ireland, equipped with long keels for fighting on the sea against the earls' fleet; but the Normans bribed them with booty, in the form of human captives, so that they broke their pledge to Gruffudd.<sup>65</sup> The treachery of mercenaries is hardly unexpected but when these Ostmen, having betrayed Gruffudd ap Cynan, returned to Ireland, the 'ruler at that time', presumably Muirchertach Ua Briain, caused some of them to be maimed and the others 'were expelled ruthlessly from his entire kingdom'.<sup>66</sup> If this is true, disloyalty to the Irish-born prince of Gwynedd was treated very seriously in Ireland.

This 1098 invasion of Gwynedd was a violent episode.<sup>67</sup> Many of the inhabitants were put to the sword and, when the men of Gwynedd saw that they could no longer withstand the Normans, the *Brenhinedd y Saesson* reports that their forces retreated to Anglesey: they did so, it explains, 'to seek support from the men of Ireland or pirate ships at sea', an important statement of the pivotal role of the island as a conduit of communication with Ireland. The treachery, as we have just seen, of their Irish mercenaries caused Gruffudd ap Cynan and his son-in-law, Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, to flee before the Normans to Ireland. Thereupon the latter came into Anglesey and 'slew some of the Welsh who had been left there', which seems to suggest that many of the others had gone to Ireland with Cadwgan and Gruffudd. In the next year, Gruffudd returned home;<sup>68</sup> well might Gruffudd's biographer note that he did so 'according to his usual practice'.<sup>69</sup> His ceaseless toing-and-froing might be explained away by his Irish origins, were it not a way of life for so many others that we know of at this point. Cadwgan and Gruffudd patched up a peace with the Normans on their return from exile in 1099, but others continued to feel the pinch. Thus, in this same year, Hywel ab Ithel, ruler of Rhos and Rhufoniog, between the rivers Conway and Clwyd, was pushed out, and made for Ireland: nothing is heard of him for nearly twenty years,<sup>70</sup> until his death in 1118, by which point he was fully back in command, so we may assume his Irish exile did him no harm either.

In 1109, when Cadwgan ap Bleddyn's son Owain found himself in hot water, and out of favour with his father, he too sailed to Ireland, 'and king Muirchertach, the chief of the Irish (*amurcard vrenhin y penaf or Gwydyl*), received him honourably, for it was with him that he had been before that, when the war in Anglesey had been waged by the two earls [i.e. in 1098], having been sent by his brother with gifts for the king'.<sup>71</sup> He did not flee alone, and some of those who had gone to Ireland with him returned soon afterwards. But it was only when Owain himself returned that events begin to boil over. He joined with his cousin, Madog ap Rhirid ap

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<sup>65</sup> This is confirmed by the Welsh histories: *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1098.

<sup>66</sup> *The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 47, 79.

<sup>67</sup> For Welsh reaction to the Norman influx of the 1090s, see Davies, *Domination and conquest*, 27.

<sup>68</sup> *Brenhinedd y Saesson* s.a. 1099.

<sup>69</sup> *The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan*, 47, 79.

<sup>70</sup> *Brut* s.aa. 1099, 1118.

<sup>71</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1109.

Bleddyn, and they committed 'much mischief on the lands of the French and the Saxons'; Owain and his comrades 'went on forays to Dyfed and they plundered the land and seized the people and carried them off with them bound to the ships which Owain had brought with him from Ireland'.<sup>72</sup> His activities, and no doubt the strong whiff of Irish complicity, so disturbed Henry I that he dispossessed Owain's father in response. Owain's reaction was to make for Ireland again, along with his cousin Madog who, however, returned soon afterwards 'unable to suffer the evil ways and evil customs of the Irish'.<sup>73</sup> Owain too returned a short time later, but must not have stayed too long, because in 1111, when the king restored his lands to Cadwgan, Henry 'promised peace to Owain, his son, and he bade messengers be sent after him to Ireland'.<sup>74</sup> The English king was obviously aware of the dangers of having recalcitrant Welshmen receive a sympathetic hearing across the Irish Sea, where Muirchertach Ua Briain seems to have gone out of his way to set himself up as protector of displaced Welsh dynasts bearing grudges and seeking aid.<sup>75</sup>

When Owain ap Cadwgan was coaxed into returning, he 'went to the king [Henry] and after giving hostages and promising much money he received the territory [Powys] from him'.<sup>76</sup> Almost the same phrase is used of the return of Owain's father and of Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1099: 'Cadwgan ap Bleddyn and Gruffudd ap Cynan returned from Ireland; and, after making peace with the French, they received a portion of the land and the kingdom'.<sup>77</sup> The favourable response to their return in both instances may suggest an English policy of detaching Welsh princes from their transmarine alliances: Henry's anxiety in 1111 to compromise with the unruly Owain may have been an effort to entice him away from a pact with Ua Briain. The latter's dominance in the region ended with the illness that crippled him in 1114. This was the same year that Henry chose to make his massive expedition to Wales in an effort to subdue it; he may have done so confident in the knowledge that the Welsh were without their long-standing prop across the Irish Sea. In this case, remarkably, neither Gruffudd ap Cynan nor Owain ap Bleddyn made what had formerly been an almost instinctive response on their part to such pressure, the voyage to Ireland. Instead, even though Henry was allegedly 'planning to exterminate them completely or to drive them into the sea, so that the Britannic name should never more be mentioned',<sup>78</sup> they stayed put and came to terms.

The fall from power of Muirchertach Mór in 1114 may have meant a significant decline in Irish contacts with southern Britain. His successor as the most powerful ruler in Ireland was

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<sup>72</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1110.

<sup>73</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1110.

<sup>74</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1111.

<sup>75</sup> For an important study of Henry's policy towards the Welsh, see R.R. Davies, 'Henry I and Wales', in *Studies in medieval history presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London, 1985), 132-47.

<sup>76</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1111.

<sup>77</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1099.

<sup>78</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1114.

the Connacht king, Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair. However, the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns were the focal points of a great deal of Ireland's contact with England and Wales, and it was the misfortune of the kings of Connacht (and, even more so, those of Ulster) that the towns were far out of their way and next to impossible for them to control. This may explain why Welsh writers seem to know nothing of the affairs of the north of Ireland, so that Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (d. 1166) is all but unique in not having his death while king of Ireland recorded in Welsh annals, and the death of Magnus Barelegs in Ulster in 1103 is said to have occurred in Scandinavia!<sup>79</sup> Connacht fares little better. The early twelfth-century English writer, William of Malmesbury, in discussing affairs in Ireland, mentions Muirchertach Ua Briain of Munster, and 'his successors, whose names have not come to our notice'.<sup>80</sup>

Thereafter, we must content ourselves with notices of contact which the Welsh had with the Hiberno-Scandinavians. These were largely the product of Gruffudd ap Cynan's upbringing in Dublin. The Dublin fleet was in Wales in 1144. They were there interfering in the power-dispute between Gruffudd ap Cynan's sons, Owain and Cadwaladr. Both brothers, of course, could claim some sort of Dublin kinship through their father's mother and Owain had perpetuated the connexion by marrying, or at least bedding, an Irish girl by whom he had his son Hywel, well known as a poet of the later twelfth century.<sup>81</sup> We know from a piece written by another poet to commemorate a later event in Owain's career that he made use of Irish and Hebridean naval power,<sup>82</sup> but in 1144 it was Cadwaladr who brought in the Dublin fleet. The Welsh chronicles list the names of three leaders of the Ostmen - Ottar son of Ottar, the son of Turcall, and the son of Cherwlf - in a way that suggests they were familiar figures in Wales.<sup>83</sup> In any case, the expedition ended disastrously for the Dubliners: Owain and Cadwaladr made up, whereupon the Ostmen, who had been promised the massive reward for their efforts of two thousand captives (or marks or cattle, depending on the chronicle), took Cadwaladr for ransom, were attacked by Owain, and 'they, with some of them killed and others captured, fled ignominiously in the direction of Dublin'.<sup>84</sup> It is one of the last clear glimpses we get of Irish involvement in native Welsh affairs of the age.

When next we see the Ostmen in Wales, they are aligned with the Anglo-Normans in opposition to the Welsh. In 1165, Henry II led a massive expedition to Wales. His efforts were

<sup>79</sup> *Brenhinedd y Saesson* s.a. 1103.

<sup>80</sup> *Gesta regum*, II, 484-5. Not that Connacht was entirely bereft of contact through the south-eastern seaway, isolated glimpses of which we get from time to time: for instance, there is a fascinating claim in an early twelfth-century life of Elgar the Hermit, in the *Book of Llandaff*, that the latter was sold by pirates as a slave in Ireland and eventually became executioner to the then king of Connacht, Toirrdelbach's father Ruaidrí na Saide Buide Ua Conchobair (d. 1118) (*Reotri nepotis Conchor*), from whom he escaped, was shipwrecked off Wales, and spent the rest of his days as a hermit on the island of Bardsey, off the Lleyn peninsula in Gwynedd (*The text of the Book of Llan Dav reproduced from the Gwysaney manuscript*, ed. J.G. Evans (Oxford, 1893), 1).

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Cecile O'Rahilly, *Ireland and Wales, their historical and literary relations* (London, 1924), 130-31.

<sup>82</sup> See Thomas Parry (ed.), *The Oxford book of Welsh verse* (Oxford, 1962), 24-5.

<sup>83</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson* s.a. 1144; see Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man', n. 148.

<sup>84</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1144.

directed against an uprising of 'all the Welsh' who had 'united to throw off the rule of the French',<sup>85</sup> an uprising led by the princes of Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth. In the past, these men had been led to expect solidarity from the Irish and Ostmen in their struggles against Welsh rivals and Anglo-Norman trespassers. Yet, in 1165 the fleet of Dublin was employed by Henry II to subdue them.<sup>86</sup> According to the Irish annals, they served in Wales for a full half-year.<sup>87</sup> The Welsh *Brut* chronicles have a different story, which looks more plausible. About September 1165, after a disastrous start to his campaign, Henry 'moved his host to Chester. And there he encamped many days, until ships from Dublin and from the other towns of Ireland came to him. But since that number of ships was not sufficient for him, he rewarded the ships of Dublin with much wealth and sent them back to their land. And he himself and his host returned a second time to England.'<sup>88</sup>

This was the first occasion since the Norman Conquest of England that troops from Ireland were used (or intended to be used) in the army of the Anglo-Norman kings. That they were prepared to do so is a poor reflection on their loyalty to former friends, to say nothing of any pangs of sympathy one might (in retrospect, and quite anachronistically) have expected them to feel for the long-suffering Welsh. Be that as it may, the presence of the Ostman fleets in Wales in 1165 is proof that either they or their Irish overlords were more than willing to partake in an expedition the purpose of which was, so the Welsh thought, 'to carry into bondage and to destroy all the Britons'.<sup>89</sup> How ironic, then, that within five years all three east-coast Ostman towns, first Wexford, then Waterford, and finally Dublin itself, had themselves fallen to Anglo-Norman arms, a revolution in which the primary role was played by men from Wales.

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<sup>85</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1165.

<sup>86</sup> For the most recent account of the expedition, see Paul Latimer, 'Henry II's campaign against the Welsh in 1165', *WHR*, 14 (1989), 523-52.

<sup>87</sup> *AU* s.a. 1165.

<sup>88</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1165.

<sup>89</sup> *Brut (RBH)* s.a. 1165.

## *Ireland and Scotland*

The most striking conclusion of any study of Ireland's relations with Scotland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is the near total lack of evidence for political or military contact between the two. This is quite remarkable, in view of the widely held perception that one politico-cultural ascendancy prevailed in at least part of both countries throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> That perception may be regarded as essentially correct. But the lack of evidence for politico-military interaction between Ireland and Scotland in this epoch must, nevertheless, be accounted for. Overwhelmingly, one suspects, the explanation lies in the nature of the sources. Study of the extant corpus of Irish annalistic materials indicates that such records almost invariably fail to describe the activities of Irishmen abroad. The only witness to this activity, therefore, is the diligent annalist at the receiving end. For the period under discussion here, Wales had an unbroken line of such conservators and they help to fill in the picture of Hiberno-Welsh relations. Scotland had not. When it started to catch up, towards the end of the period, we get to hear a little about Irishmen in Scotland. However, Latin chronicle-writing was concentrated in an area which, for historical reasons, was well removed from that with which Irish contacts were strongest, and this has not helped the matter.<sup>2</sup> For the earlier period under review here, we must content ourselves with other indicators of contact.

We gain some insight thanks to the happy fact that chroniclers took it upon themselves to record the deaths of famous individuals. In the period from 1014 to 1169, Irish annals preserve the death-notice of only four Welshmen but of twenty-five Scots men and women (excluding those of Galloway). Several factors contribute to this disparity, while not accounting for it fully. First, the long-standing closeness between the churches of Ireland and Scotland explains the presence of four of the names on the Scottish list, which are the obits of bishops and abbots: no Welsh clerical obits occur in Irish annals in this period. Second, the lay obits partly reflect the fact that the Scots kings were, quite frankly, widely perceived as being of greater distinction than those of Wales and were better known outside the country. The fact that there was one 'king of Scots' (*rí Alban* in Irish sources) but that in Wales, as in Ireland, a number of province-kings contended for supremacy, served to enhance the status of Scottish kingship. Irish annals have, therefore, a full list of contemporary kings of Scots - Máel Coluim II (1034), Donnchad I (1040), Mac Bethad (1058), Lulach (1058), Máel Coluim III (1093), Donnchad II (1094), Domnall Bán (1097), Edgar (1106), Alexander I (1124), David I (1153),

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<sup>1</sup> For some perceptive comments on this theme, see Steven G. Ellis, 'Nationalist historiography and the English and Gaelic worlds in the late middle ages', *IHS*, 25 (1986), 1-18.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of the difficulties posed by this and other problems in piecing together the history of western Scotland, see G.W.S. Barrow, 'The sources for the history of the Highlands in the Middle Ages', in *The Middle Ages in the Highlands*, ed. Loraine Maclean of Dochgarroch (Inverness Field Club, Inverness, 1981), 11-22.

and Máel Coluim IV (1165) - and of several members of the royal family - Domnall (1085), apparently a son of Máel Coluim III; Ladmann (1116), a son of this Domnall; Edward (1093), another son of Máel Coluim III, killed with his father; Queen Margaret (1093) who died of grief shortly thereafter; Mary (1118), daughter of Máel Coluim III and wife of Henry I;<sup>3</sup> and Henry (1152) earl of Northumbria, son of David I.

The presence of these obits is sufficient to show that Irish annalists (whether entirely contemporaneously or by interpolation at a later date is impossible to say) made it their business to keep as full a record as possible of the kings who ruled on the other side of the North Channel. They also knew, however, a good deal about the circumstances of the death and the status of individual kings. For instance, we hear that Donnchad I 'was killed by his own [people] at an unripe age'.<sup>4</sup> Of Lulach we are told that he 'was killed in battle by' the future Máel Coluim III; another Irish chronicler has it that the deed took place on St Patrick's day.<sup>5</sup> Máel Coluim II was 'the dignity of the West of Europe (*ordan iartair Eorpa*)', a phrase usually reserved for Irish kings.<sup>6</sup> David I was king of Scotland 'and England',<sup>7</sup> in acknowledgement of his success during the reign of Stephen in expanding the bounds of his kingdom southwards to include the earldom of Northumbria. And Máel Coluim IV was 'the best Christian among the Gaídil [who reside] to the east of the sea, for almsgiving, hospitality, and piety',<sup>8</sup> a strong reminder of the Irish annalist's continued belief in the 'Gaelic' credentials of the Scots kings.

But the mere fact that the Irish annals record Scottish royal obits reveals little about the relations between Scotland and Ireland at this point; more significant is the interest the Irish annals take in the affairs of the province of Moray. This is occasioned by more than the polite reportage of the affairs of foreign kings. The dynasty which had all but monopolized the Scottish throne was drawn from the so-called 'line of Fergus mac Eirc', and their heartland was in central Scotland, though by the beginning of our period their eyes were firmly fixed to the south, and they were busy solidifying possession of Lothian and even exerting pressure on Cumbria.<sup>9</sup> A rival dynasty, the 'line of Loarn mac Eirc', ruled to the north of them in the old and vast province of Moray. Hemmed in by their Scotto-Pictish rivals to the south and east, and by the Norse-dominated earldom of Caithness to the north, Moray looked instead westwards. While the main Scottish royal house voluntarily embraced, first, the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>3</sup> Though the annalist has slipped up here: Mary was married to the count of Boulogne, the girl who died in 1118 was Matilda (see Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 54-6).

<sup>4</sup> *CS* s.a. 1038=1040; cf. *AU* s.a. 1040.

<sup>5</sup> *ATig*; 'Chronicle of Marianus Scotus', ed. G.H. Pertz, in *Monumenta Germaniae historicae: scriptores*, V (Hanover, 1844), s.a. 1058 (p. 558).

<sup>6</sup> *CS* s.a. 1032=1034.

<sup>7</sup> Or of 'Britain' or of 'the borders of England': *ATig*; 'Cottonian annals'; *AClon* s.a. 1153.

<sup>8</sup> *AU* s.a. 1165.

<sup>9</sup> The best brief introduction is perhaps G.W.S. Barrow, *Kingship and unity. Scotland 1000-1306* (London, 1981), chap. 2; for more detailed treatment, see A.A.M. Duncan, *Scotland. The making of the kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), chaps. 4-6; A.P. Smyth, *Warlords and holy men. Scotland AD 80-1000* (London, 1984), chap. 7.

and, then, the Anglo-French worlds - never perhaps turning its back on the Gaelic world but certainly losing something of its earlier closeness - the house of Moray was constrained (by geography if nothing else) from doing likewise.<sup>10</sup> This may explain why it is that Irish annalists seem to be so interested in the affairs of Moray. They give, by and large, only bare obits of the main Scottish line, but highlight the doings of the rulers of Moray as if of special significance. In consequence, it seems reasonable to conclude that they had closer contact with Moray and a greater sense of affinity with its rulers. Let us look at some of this matter.

Findláech mac Ruaidrí, better known as the father of Macbeth, was ruler of Moray at the commencement of this period. He was a *mormaer* or 'great steward' - it was latinized *comes* and thus became 'earl' in English - and he was indeed styled '*mormaer Moreb* (great steward of Moray)' in one set of Irish annals, those of 'Tigernach'.<sup>11</sup> The man normally regarded as king of Scotland at this point was Máel Coluim II mac Cinaéda of the opposing line, but the other surviving Irish annals, in support of Moray's claim to that title, call Findláech *rí Alban* at his death.<sup>12</sup> 'Tigernach' is thus out of step here in not acknowledging the entitlement of the ruler of Moray to call himself king of Scotland, but he makes up for it shortly afterwards. Those who murdered Findláech were the sons of his brother Máel Brigte, and when one of these, Máel Coluim, died in 1029, he was dutifully styled *rí Alban* by 'Tigernach'.<sup>13</sup> In the early eleventh century, therefore, there was rivalry between the line of Fergus and the line of Loarn, or Moray, for the kingship of Scotland, but the Irish annalists are in little doubt as to the entitlement of the latter to claim it.

These events are of extreme importance for the development of Scottish kingship. The line of Fergus did manage to re-assert itself under Máel Coluim III (Malcolm Canmore) and his sons, but these notices in the Irish annals are testimony to the opposition which that house was facing from the rulers of Moray. They also reveal the incipient divisions within the latter (as witnessed in the assassination of Findláech by his nephew). Yet we would know nothing of them if it were not for the Irish annals. And the fact that Irish writers are more interested in commenting on the fraternal squabbles in Moray than on the activities of the Scottish kings themselves is a matter of some significance. To give some examples, they go on to note that another nephew of Findláech, Gilla Comgáin, was burned to death along with fifty of his men in 1032.<sup>14</sup> This Gilla Comgáin was married to Grouch, daughter of one Baete mac Cinaéda, and Irish annals record the slaying, in the next year, of her nephew, *mac mic Boete*, by the

<sup>10</sup> One of its kings, Macbeth (or Mac Bethad) had, however, been the first Scottish king to enlist Norman aid: *Florentii Wigorniensis monachi chronicon ex chronicis*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols (London, 1848-9), I, 210; see also, Barrow, *Kingship and unity*, 26.

<sup>11</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1020. For the term *mormaer*, see Kenneth Jackson, *The Gaelic notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), 102-10; Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man', n. 150.

<sup>12</sup> *AU*; *Book of Leinster*, I, 3152; *ALCé* s.a. 1020.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *AU*; *AFM*; *ALCé* s.a. 1029.

<sup>14</sup> *AU*; *ALCé* s.a. 1032; he is styled *mormaer Murebe*.

reigning Scots king, Máel Coluim II.<sup>15</sup> After Gilla Comgáin's death, Grouch married his cousin Macbeth (Mac Bethad mac Findlaích). When Donnchad I, king of Scots, was killed in 1040, we are almost entirely dependent in Irish sources for information on the event: Marianus Scotus tells us that the deed was committed on August 14, by Macbeth, described as his *dux*, who then succeeded to the kingdom, and reigned for seventeen years. Marianus, likewise, has the only account of Macbeth's well-known pilgrimage to Rome in 1050 where 'he scattered money like seed to the poor'.<sup>16</sup> Irish sources report Macbeth's death at the hands of the future Máel Coluim III Cennmór (son of Donnchad I) in 1057, his succession by Lulach, his wife's son by her former husband Gilla Comgáin, and Lulach's death in turn within months, which the Irish annals are quick to call treachery on the part of Máel Coluim.<sup>17</sup>

Lulach was the last member of the house of Moray to ascend the Scottish throne, but Irish-based writers do not immediately lose interest in their affairs. We hear of the death of his son Máel Snechta, in 1085, whom an Irish annalist, interestingly, calls '*king of Moray*':<sup>18</sup> perhaps, resigned to the fact that the kingship of Scotland was always going to be denied to their friends in Moray, Irish writers console themselves by elevating its ruler from a *mormaer* to a *rí*. When in 1116 the men of Moray killed an obscure member of the reigning dynasty, one Ladmann son of Domnall (? son of Máel Coluim III),<sup>19</sup> again it is an Irish source alone which notes the fact. Fourteen years later, the dying gasps of Moray's bid for the kingship were felt when Lulach's grandson Áengus did battle with the Scots, and died in the encounter; though widely reported,<sup>20</sup> Irish sources have the fullest account of the event: 'A battle between the men of Scotland and the men of Moray in which four thousand of the men of Moray fell with their king, .i.e. Áengus son of the daughter of Lulach; a thousand, or a hundred, which is more accurate, of the men of Scotland [fell] in the counter-attack.'<sup>21</sup> And, as a mark of the significance that was thought to attach to the event, it is worth noting that it even made its way into the Munster annals of Inisfallen, a rare admission of interest by the latter in the affairs of the region.

On this point, the very fact that, this incident apart, there is barely the least mention of Moray in the Munster chronicle suggests the possibility that the preoccupation of other Irish annal-compilations with the affairs of the men of Moray reflects the links, not between Ireland as a whole and that province, but rather between Moray and merely that part (or those parts) of Ireland from which our surviving body of annals emanates. And perhaps if we had a full set of annals reflecting the perspective of a different region, we might hear more about that area's

<sup>15</sup> *AU* s.a. 1033.

<sup>16</sup> *M.G.H., scriptores*, V, 557-8; cf. *ATig* s.a. 1040; the event is recorded also in the 'Chronicle of Melrose' and in Florence of Worcester, but both are dependent on Marianus.

<sup>17</sup> *ATig*; *CS*; cf. *AU* s.aa. 1057, 1058.

<sup>18</sup> *AU* s.a. 1085.

<sup>19</sup> See *AU* s.a. 1085.

<sup>20</sup> See Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 173-4; idem, *Scottish Annals*, 166-7.

<sup>21</sup> *AU* s.a. 1130.



links with the rest of Scotland. Leinster is one such area. There were indeed those in Leinster who had an interest in Moray. The two great twelfth-century codices, Rawlinson B 502 and the Book of Leinster, were both compiled in the province, and both follow their genealogy of the main Scottish line with one of the house of Moray.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the Rawlinson manuscript, which was probably compiled at Glendalough about 1130,<sup>23</sup> the main line, that is, the one descended from Fergus, is called '*Genelach Ríg nAlban* (Genealogy of the kings of Scotland)', and ends with Máel Coluim II (d. 1034), whereas that of the line of Loarn in Moray continues to Máel Snechta (d. 1085); the latter is also called, incidentally, a genealogy of the kings of Scotland. This is another illustration of the status accorded the house of Moray by Irish writers. The other aspect we noticed was an interest by Irish writers in the internecine dispute within Moray itself, and this too is reflected in the genealogies which follow their primary Moray list (Máel Snechta s. Lulach s. Gilla Comgáin s. Máel Brigte s. Ruaidrí, etc.) with a brief pedigree to explain just where Macbeth fits into the scheme (Mac Bethad s. Findláech s. Ruaidrí, etc.). The Book of Leinster genealogy is in the hand of Áed Mac Crimthainn and was probably penned in the mid-1160s;<sup>24</sup> it differs from Rawlinson in that the main line extends to David I (d. 1153), and the line of Loarn is entitled '*Genelach Clainde Lulaig* (Genealogy of Clann Lulaig)'; we can perhaps take this as an indication of the author's awareness of the ascendancy of the line of Fergus within Scotland itself and of the descendants of Lulach (d. 1058) within Moray.

However, notwithstanding this evidence of Leinster interest in Moray, there does seem to be reason to postulate some connexion between Leinster and other parts of Scotland. A.O. Anderson unearthed what he took to be evidence of such contact: a marriage-alliance between the reigning Scottish dynasty and the Uí Cellaig Cualann, a relatively minor Leinster dynasty based in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains.<sup>25</sup> In this particular instance I believe the identification to be erroneous,<sup>26</sup> but that does not rule out the possibility of other such connexions. For instance, the so-called verse 'Prophecy of Berchán' alleges that King Máel Coluim II (d.1034) son of Cináed II (d.995) was the 'son of a woman of Leinster...son of the cow that grazes upon the countryside of the Liffey'.<sup>27</sup> As we do not know the date of the supposed marriage between Cináed and the Leinsterwoman, it is dangerous to speculate on the possible identity of her father. Cináed became king of Scotland in 971 when the reigning king of Leinster was Murchad mac Finn of Uí Fáeláin (d. 972), father of the famous Gormlaith. Murchad's son Máel Mórda became king of Leinster when he murdered a rival in 999,<sup>28</sup> which the Book of Leinster claims he did at the instigation of Máel Sechnaill Mór

<sup>22</sup> They are printed in M.A. O'Brien, *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1962), 328-30.

<sup>23</sup> See Pádraig Ó Riain, 'The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B502', *Éigse*, 18 (1980-81), 161-76.

<sup>24</sup> See William O'Sullivan, 'Notes on the scripts and make-up of the Book of Leinster', *Celtica*, 7 (1966), 1-31.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, I, 520.

<sup>26</sup> The question is discussed in Appendix 2.

<sup>27</sup> A.O. Anderson, 'The prophecy of Berchan', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 18 (1930), 1-56, stt. 181-2; see also, *idem*, *Early sources*, I, 574.

<sup>28</sup> *AU* s.a 999.

(d.1022), king of Mide.<sup>29</sup> When, in 1006, Máel Sechnaill revived the ancient Lammass assembly known as Óenach Tailten,<sup>30</sup> the poet Cúán Ua Lothcháin commemorated the occasion by a poem in which he claimed that an unbroken truce prevailed throughout Ireland and Scotland while it lasted.<sup>31</sup> Even if this is not just poetic licence, it is not by any means indicative of influence wielded by Máel Sechnaill over Scottish affairs; but it may be worth pointing out that he had a son who, though his proper forename was Flann, was called simply '*In tAlbanach* (the Scotsman)' in one set of annals when he was killed in 1013.<sup>32</sup> There is presumably no reason for applying the nickname unless the family did have some notable connexion with Scotland.

It is conceivable, therefore, that the reigning kings of both Leinster and Mide in this period had aligned themselves with factions in Scotland. They were on opposing sides at the battle of Clontarf in 1014, where, it may be pointed out, the earl (*mormaer*) of the Scottish province of Mar, Domnall mac Emine mic Cainnaich Móir, was slain in the army of Máel Sechnaill's ally, Brian Bóruma.<sup>33</sup> One set of Irish annals also claims that Brian was opposed in the battle by forces from the Rhinns of Galloway.<sup>34</sup> What a Scottish earl was doing in the army of the king of Munster we can but guess at, and presumably he was nothing more than a hired mercenary. But in view of the other hints available to us of inter-dynastic links between the two countries at this point, it might not be unreasonable to read more into it. There was an extraordinary degree of turbulence and disputed succession in Scottish kingship during these years,<sup>35</sup> particularly by comparison with affairs in Ireland under Brian Bóruma. We have seen that Irish annalists took a great deal of interest in the question, and we can be fairly sure that that interest was shared by others outside the monastic scriptorium. It is not beyond doubt that one of the rival segments to kingship in Scotland had acknowledged Brian's overlordship in pursuit of its ambition, and perhaps it is this which accounts for the military aid provided (repaid?) to him by the earl of Mar.

When Brian confirmed the primacy of Armagh by his visit there in 1005, he had his secretary inscribe into the highly venerated Book of Armagh an entry recording the occasion, and styling him *Imperator Scottorum*.<sup>36</sup> The *Scotti*, of course, were the Irish, but it was in this very period that the term was acquiring its restricted application to the descendants of the Scottic colonists in northern Britain;<sup>37</sup> it therefore had about it an ambiguity and an

<sup>29</sup> *Book of Leinster*, I, 5469-70.

<sup>30</sup> For which, see D.A. Binchy, 'The fair of Tailtiu and the feast of Tara', *Ériu*, 18 (1958), 113-38.

<sup>31</sup> *The metrical Dindshenchas*, ed. Edward Gwynn, Todd Lecture Series, IX (R.I.A., Dublin, 1924; reprinted in six volumes, Dublin, 1991), IV, 146-62 (at pp. 152-3).

<sup>32</sup> *AI* s.a. 1013; cf. *AU*.

<sup>33</sup> 'Cottonian annals'; *CS*; *AFM*; *AU*; *ALCé* s.a. 1014.

<sup>34</sup> *ALCé* s.a. 1014.

<sup>35</sup> For which, see Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 97, 113.

<sup>36</sup> See Aubrey Gwynn, 'Brian in Armagh (1005)', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, 9 (1978-9), 35-50.

<sup>37</sup> T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish history and mythology* (Dublin, 1946), 386, n. 2. The process and chronology of the semantic shift in the term is deserving of further study. One may note the efforts of contemporaries to clarify the matter, for instance, the statement of an amanuensis of Marianus Scotus writing at Mainz in Germany in 1072 in a marginal note on his chronicle: '...scripsi hunc librum pro caritate tibi et Scotis omnibus, id est Hibernensibus, quia sum ipse Hibernensis' (James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (New York, 1929; reprinted Dublin, 1979), 615, n. 316).

inclusiveness which could come in handy. Certainly, the title *Imperator Scottorum* was a new one, and the choice of Armagh as location for its adoption may have been deliberate: the unique fact of the burial of Brian, a Munster king, in the 'Mausoleum of the Kings' at Armagh smacks of the same deliberation. It was a device by which his stature as monarch of Ireland would be enhanced by association with a single ecclesiastical capital. As Armagh's dignity and status were advanced, so too were those of the king of Ireland. And this is where Scotland may have come in. Armagh had very firm links with Scotland. When Dub-dá-leithe, *comarba* of Patrick at Armagh, undertook the headship of the Columban family of churches in AD 989, he did so 'by the counsel of the men of Ireland and Scotland'.<sup>38</sup> When Dubthach *Albanach* ('the Scotsman') died at Armagh in 1064, he was described as 'chief confessor of Ireland and Scotland'.<sup>39</sup> When the most illustrious of all Patrick's successors, St Malachy, died in 1148, he was described as *caput religionis totius Hiberniae et Albaniae*.<sup>40</sup> He was, of course, not only a friend of the Scots king, David I, but is claimed by St Bernard to have saved the life of his only son, Henry earl of Northumbria, and to have colonized a religious house at Soulseat near Cairngarroch in Galloway with Cistercian monks from Ireland.<sup>41</sup> Irish kings, therefore, in patronizing Armagh, were associating themselves with what was a centre of religion and learning for the people of both Ireland and Scotland. And the classic illustration of this was the gesture made in 1169 by the then king of Ireland, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, to provide a perpetual grant of 'ten cows every year from himself, and from every king [of Ireland] that should succeed him, for ever, to the lector of Armagh, in honour of Saint Patrick, to instruct in learning the students of Ireland and Scotland'.<sup>42</sup>

These are blinkered glimpses of what was obviously a continuous criss-crossing of the maritime frontier between Ireland and Scotland, of which we have precious few other indicators in the period. We find another hint in the 'Prophecy of Berchán', to the effect that during the reign in Scotland of Domnall Bán (1094-7) there was some sort of enforced exodus of Scotsmen who ended up in Ireland: 'After that, Domnall Bán will take [Scotland]; ah! ah! my heart is tortured. In his time, the men of Scotland will come hither, to Ireland'.<sup>43</sup> It adds that Domnall will 'leave Scotland to the gentiles' which is probably a reference to the invasion by King Magnus Barelegs of Norway. Domnall Bán's power base was in the west, having been raised in the Isles,<sup>44</sup> and we have information from Norse sources that some Islesmen fled into Ireland at the time of Magnus's expedition.<sup>45</sup> Some at least of these appear to have established

<sup>38</sup> *AU* s.a. 989; or perhaps, 'with the consent': see Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry. The history and hagiography of the Monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), 84 and n. 24, 120 and n. 38.

<sup>39</sup> *AU*; *AFM*; *ALCé* s.a. 1064.

<sup>40</sup> *CS*; *ATig* s.a. 1148.

<sup>41</sup> *St Bernard of Clairvaux's life of St Malachy of Armagh*, ed. H.J. Lawlor (London, 1920), 76-7, 120.

<sup>42</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1169.

<sup>43</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 93.

<sup>44</sup> John of Fordun, 'Chronica gentis Scotorum', ed. W.F. Skene, in *Historians of Scotland*, vols I and IV (Edinburgh, 1871-2); I, 188; IV, 180.

<sup>45</sup> See Power, 'Magnus Barelegs' expeditions to the West', 118; see also Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

(or made use of) links with the Inishowen peninsula. Among those who sought to make their escape to Ireland was Lagman (Lōgmadr), son of the former king of Dublin and the Isles, Godred Crovan. In 1167, the death took place of the petty ruler of Fortruim in Inishowen: his name was Muirchertach son of Lagman Ua Duibdíorma,<sup>46</sup> whose father's approximate *floruit* and, for an Irish dynast, highly unusual forename, suggests some link with the other better-known Lagman. When the Ulaid attacked Mac Lochlainn in 1102 there were two Irishmen called Sitriuc among those slain in the latter's army, at least one of whom came from Inishowen,<sup>47</sup> which again suggests some influence from the Gaelo-Scandinavian world. King Domnall Bán was succeeded by several nephews, one of whom was David (d.1153) and it may just be relevant that an Ua Dochartaig dynast from Inishowen who died in 1208 had the forename David, very rare in Irish families, perhaps in honour of King David.<sup>48</sup>

A member of the Ulaid dynasty likewise had the name: David became king of Scots in 1124, a David Mac Duinn Sléibe died in 1164.<sup>49</sup> The king of Ulaid at this juncture was Eochaid Mac Duinn Sléibe (1158-66), and a genealogical poem produced during his reign still survives, which its editor dates to 1165-6, and which may have a bearing on the situation.<sup>50</sup> The author devotes a quatrain to each of Eochaid's predecessors as kings of Ulaid over a period of nearly seven hundred years, but all of the last eight quatrains to Eochaid himself. This concluding section is a *caithréim*, a list of the hero's military victories, a feature of Gaelic praise-poetry.<sup>51</sup> In one of these quatrains there is what appears to be a reference to three specific battles fought by Eochaid (though the vagueness of the allusions makes it difficult to link them with particular incidents). Then we are told that under Eochaid 'the sea [is] full of ships as far as Iona (*In muir co Hí lán do longaib*)'. This statement of the seafaring activities of the Ulaid concurs with the picture gained from other sources; in particular, they had an involvement in the Isle of Man which resulted in intermittent conflict with the Hiberno-Scandinavian rulers of Dublin.<sup>52</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the poem makes allusion to Eochaid's 'storming of Dublin of the swords (*brised Átha cloidmig Cliath*)'. Although its editor regards this as 'mere anticipatory hyperbole',<sup>53</sup> it may in fact refer to his involvement in Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn's march against the Dubliners in 1162.<sup>54</sup> Finally, the poet describes Eochaid as 'the invader of Scotland (*innsaigthech Alban*)'. Professor Byrne sees this too as hyperbole but, given that the author intended this as part of Eochaid's celebratory *caithréim*, there is

<sup>46</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1167.

<sup>47</sup> *AU*; *AFM*; *AI* s.a. 1102.

<sup>48</sup> A quo the Meic Daibhéid (MacDaid's, MacDevitt's, etc.): *AFM* s.a. 1208.

<sup>49</sup> *AFM*; *ATig* s.a. 1164.

<sup>50</sup> F.J. Byrne, 'Clann Ollaman Uaisle Emna', *Studia Hibernica*, 4 (1964), 54-94 (at p. 59).

<sup>51</sup> See Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords. The changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1987), 5.

<sup>52</sup> See Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>53</sup> 'Clann Ollaman Uaisle Emna', 93.

<sup>54</sup> *AU* s.a. 1162 (Mac Lochlainn was joined by 'most of Leth Cuinn [the northern half of Ireland]'). See also, Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

presumably some basis to the suggestion, and it possibly records some incident of cross-channel conflict during his career.

King David's brother Edgar reigned from 1097 to 1107. His is an Anglo-Saxon personal name virtually without precedent in the Gaelic world (it is rendered 'Étgair' in the Irish annals), but it is curious that the Irish tale *Caithréim Cellaig*, which has been dated to the first half of the twelfth century, has the eponymous hero take up residence on an island in Loch Conn in County Mayo called 'Oilén Étgair (Edgar's island)'.<sup>55</sup> Edgar was certainly known in Ireland. The Annals of Inisfallen recall for 1105 that 'in that year a camel, which is an animal of remarkable size, was brought from the king of Scotland to Muirchertach Ua Briain'. The function of the gift was presumably no more than normal diplomatic courtesy, but gift-giving in medieval Ireland 'was an act of superiority; acceptance an act of submission'.<sup>56</sup> No one was more aware of the subtleties involved than Muirchertach Ua Briain; indeed, the text known as *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* which may have been composed under his auspices, has Brian Bóruma bestowing twelve score steeds on Máel Sechnaill when the latter submitted to him in 1002.<sup>57</sup> So, the gift probably had strings attached. In the nature of things, a certain 'oneupmanship' must have existed between the kings of Ireland and Scotland. King Edgar's father, Máel Coluim III Cennmór (and just as much - perhaps more so - his queen, Margaret), had uplifted the fortunes of the Scottish kingship, a process of regeneration which their sons, especially David I (1124-53), ably continued. Whereas, let us say, in the early eleventh century, Muirchertach's great-grandfather, as king of Ireland, Brian Bóruma, enjoyed pre-eminence over his counterpart in Scotland, a century or so later that position had, arguably, been reversed, and the gap in status (that is, the perception of their status that was abroad) widened considerably thereafter. The camel sent to the king of Ireland had presumably been brought to Scotland by foreign emissaries or traders, or by returned crusaders: if Scotland was playing host to these in greater numbers than Ireland, the gift may have been a delicate reminder to Muirchertach Ua Briain of this new international stature.

As they embraced the new world of Gregorian reform and, more so, of Anglo-French feudal organization, Scottish kings found themselves contributing to the efforts of the kings of England to dominate the other inhabitants of these islands. This was, in ways, a less than voluntary development. Their earlier history of conflict with the *Saxain* and *Fraingc* was almost guaranteed a mention in Irish sources, as when, in 1006, there was 'a battle between the men of *Alba* and the Saxons, and the *Albanchu* were defeated', or in 1054 when there was 'a battle between the men of *Alba* and the Saxons' in which fell 3000 of the one and 1000 of the latter, or in 1072 when 'the French went into Scotland and brought away the son of the king of

<sup>55</sup> Ed. Kathleen Mulchrone (Dublin, 1933), 7; see also, p.xv; for a discussion of the language of the text, see Myles Dillon, 'The verbal system of *Caithréim Cellaig*', in *Revue des Études Indo-Européennes*, 1 (Bucharest, 1938), 45-60 (at p.45).

<sup>56</sup> Charles Doherty, 'Exchange and trade in early medieval Ireland', *JRSAI*, 110 (1980), 67-89 (at p. 73).

<sup>57</sup> *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, ed. J.H. Todd (RS, London, 1867), 130.

Scotland as hostage'.<sup>58</sup> And one suspects that there was a good deal of sympathy felt in Ireland and Wales for them in their struggles. That certainly was the suspicion in English circles. It shows itself in the way that their writers juxtapose the hostile activities of the Scots with those of other enemies as if in some way connected: the 'Life of Edward the Confessor', in describing the conflicts of his reign, claims that 'there rose, for example, almost at the same time, on this side Gruffudd [ap Llywelyn], king of the West Britons, and, on the other, the king of the Scots with an outlandish name [i.e. Macbeth]'.<sup>59</sup> Geoffrey Gaimar says of the events of the early 1060s that 'there was no more trouble with the Welsh, but the Scots made war against [the English]'.<sup>60</sup> The 'Book of Ely' says that William the Bastard called off his siege of Ely in 1070 because he was faced with inroads 'by land and sea on all sides by barbarians from neighbouring kingdoms, namely, Scotland and Ireland, Wales and Denmark.'<sup>61</sup> In 1091 William Rufus 'returned to the kingdom with both his brothers, because disturbances of Scots and Welsh were calling him'.<sup>62</sup>

And considerable sympathy was felt in both Ireland and Wales at the treacherous way in which Máel Coluim III and his heir Edward met their ends in 1093. Here is the full entry in the *Brut y Tywysogyon* for that year:

[1093] was the year of Christ when Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of the South, was slain by Frenchmen who were inhabiting Brycheiniog - with whom fell the kingdom of the Britons. And after his death Cadwgan ap Bleddyn plundered Dyfed on the Calends of May. And within two months of that, the French overran Dyfed and Ceredigion - what was not in their power before that - and made castles in them and fortified them. And then the French seized all the lands of the Britons. And Máel Coluim, son of Donnchad, king of the Picts and the Scots, and Edward, his son, were slain by the French. Queen Margaret, wife of Máel Coluim, when she heard that her husband and her son had been slain, placing her trust in God, prayed that she might not live longer than that in this world. And God listened to her prayer and then by the seventh day she died.<sup>63</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that 1093 was a momentous one for both Wales and Scotland. In the course of it, in what must have seemed to contemporaries one fell swoop, the Normans had succeeded, coincidentally but quite devastatingly, in depriving both countries of their leaders. A very clear impression is given by the Welsh chronicler's summary of the year's events that both the death of the king of Deheubarth and that of the king of Scotland were linked. Irish chroniclers thought likewise. The Annals of Inisfallen were compiled contemporaneously with these incidents. It is a point worth noting that they have no mention whatever of the Norman conquest of England. Neither do they tell us anything of its aftermath or, indeed, of any of the actions of the Normans in Britain - until, that is, this year, when they had such deadly effect in Scotland and Wales. But both these traumatic events are recorded, and both are blamed on 'the French (*Rancaib* (sic))'.

<sup>58</sup> *AU* s.aa. 1006, 1054, 1072.

<sup>59</sup> Barlow, *Vita Edwardi*, 42.

<sup>60</sup> *Estoire des Engles*, ed. T.D Hardy and C.T. Martin 2 vols (RS, London, 1888-9), I, 215-7.

<sup>61</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd ser., XCII (London, 1962), 176.

<sup>62</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. William Stubbs 2 vols (RS, London, 1887-9), II, 365.

<sup>63</sup> *Brut*, s.a. 1093.

In Scotland, in the aftermath of these events, Máel Coluim's sons were little more than the dependent clients of the Anglo-Norman kings of England, and so, when Henry I led his expedition to Wales in 1114, Welsh sources note that he 'gathered a host over all the island of Britain, from the promontory of Penwith in Cornwall to the promontory of Blathaon in Scotland', all of whom combined against the men of Gwynedd and Powys. One of the commanders of the northern contingent was the new king of Scots, Alexander mac Maíl Coluim, of whom the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* says that he 'succeeded to the kingdom as King Henry granted him'.<sup>64</sup> Now he was part of an expedition which Henry and his men were conducting, having 'set their minds upon exterminating all the Britons, so that the name of the Britons should never more be called to mind from that time forth'.<sup>65</sup> This Scottish king may have left us less visible traces than either of his brothers who ruled before and after him of a voluntary effort at Normanising the kingdom,<sup>66</sup> but his action in joining Henry's expedition shows that little sympathy was felt for the rather less than voluntary Norman embrace then tightening its grip on Wales.

After Henry's death, however, this situation changed. When King Stephen arrived in England in 1138, he found himself facing a rebellion: 'the most powerful of the rebels recklessly steeled themselves to resist, and entered into an alliance with the Scots and Welsh and other rebels and traitors, bringing down ruin upon the people'.<sup>67</sup> King David mac Maíl Coluim led a destructive raid on the north of England, the alleged savagery of which produced quite the most extraordinary outburst of vitriol from English chroniclers: it is, too, duly reported in Irish annals as 'the devastation (*indred*) of the north of England by the men of Scotland, who carried off countless captives, and numerous spoils'.<sup>68</sup> Despite losing heavily at the battle of 'the Standard', David was for most of his reign *de facto* ruler of much of northern England, and this is acknowledged by Irish annalists in the various titles they bestow upon him at his death in 1153: 'Tigernach' calls him *rí Alban* ᵹ *Saxan*; the 'Cottonian' annals have *rí Alban* ᵹ *Bretan*, which Conell Mageoghagan, the seventeenth-century translator of the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, has made 'king of Scotland, Wales, and the borders of England, the greatest potentate in these parts of Europe' - I assume that the *Bretan* of the original refers, however, to the Brittonic peoples of southern Scotland and northern England, rather than to Wales.

The Scottish kings had ambitions elsewhere also. The *Manx Chronicle* says of Gofraid Méránach (d.1095), king of Man and the Isles, that he 'had so tamed the Scots that no one who built a ship or boat dared use more than three iron bolts'.<sup>69</sup> When this chronicle talks of 'the Scots' it does not mean Islesmen (who are referred to throughout its account as

<sup>64</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle. A revised translation*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock *et al.* (London, 1961), s.a. 1107.

<sup>65</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1114.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 128-32.

<sup>67</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, VI, 494.

<sup>68</sup> *ALCé* s.a. 1138.

<sup>69</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 33v.

*insulanos*). These people whom Gofraid had 'tamed' were, therefore, men theoretically subject to the king of Scots, and, if the statement is to be relied upon, the Scots kings must have borne considerable resentment against him. There was no love lost at the best of times between the Scots and Manx, but one imagines that the demise of Gofraid was especially welcome in that quarter. Unfortunately for the Scots, though, it was followed by an assertion of Irish overlordship in the region.<sup>70</sup> If we assume that a tussle for supremacy, however subtle and imperceptible, was an ongoing feature of relations between the kings of Ireland and Scotland, this Irish intrusion into the affairs of Man and the Isles must have been even more resented by the Scots king. In 1098 the brand new King Edgar did a deal with Magnus Barelegs of Norway whereby the latter gained control over all the Isles.<sup>71</sup> Was this Edgar's attempt to stop Irish encroachment in its tracks?

Edgar may also have had other causes for worry. The high-water mark of Irish involvement in the Irish Sea region in this period was reached when a nephew of the Irish king Muirchertach Ua Briain managed to make himself king of the Isles: he did so at least once (in 1111) and possibly twice (in the mid-1090s).<sup>72</sup> But, according to Irish genealogies, this individual, Domnall son of Tadc Ua Briain, also managed to assert himself in Galloway.<sup>73</sup> This may seem unlikely, but, if the evidence of a variety of sources is to be believed, Galloway was a subject of Irish attention: men from the Rhinns of Galloway opposed Brian at Clontarf, Sitriuc Silkenbeard's son Amlaíb held power there a decade or two later, and another king of Dublin did likewise in the mid-eleventh century.<sup>74</sup> Galloway was, in fact, not forced into submission to the kings of Scots until 1160, and it may be relevant that that event followed, by at most eight years, an invasion of the province by Hiberno-Scandinavians from Dublin.<sup>75</sup> Separately, the various pieces of evidence for Irish intrusion into Galloway are not terribly convincing and each lacks corroboration, but they are surely not *all* wrong. Taken together, they are evidence that for the kings of Scots Galloway was a vulnerable flank, and that it was exploited as such by men from Ireland.

The Dubliners who invaded Galloway in the mid-twelfth century murdered the king of the Isles, Amlaíb, son of Gofraid Móránach. According to the Manx Chronicle, he had 'all the kings of Ireland and Scotland as confederates in such a way that no one dared disturb the kingdom of the Isles during his lifetime'.<sup>76</sup> After Amlaíb's death his son Gofraid succeeded him, but not without the opposition of the Argyllsman Somerled mac Gilla Brigte mic Gilla

<sup>70</sup> I discuss the subject in 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>71</sup> See Power, 'Magnus Barelegs' expeditions', 121.

<sup>72</sup> See Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>73</sup> The genealogy in *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, for instance, has 'isé go-ghabh ríghhe Inse Gall agus Gallghaedhlu'; ed. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (I.M.C., Dublin, 1940), 299.

<sup>74</sup> The evidence for Irish contacts with the Rhinns is discussed in Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>75</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol.36r.

<sup>76</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 35v.



Ádamnáin. The latter, whose family claimed descent from the northern Irish kings of Airgialla,<sup>77</sup> went into rebellion at the death of David I in 1153.<sup>78</sup> In the following year, the king of Cenél nEógain, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn, made use of a fleet drawn from Galloway, Arran, Kintyre, Man, 'and the territories of Scotland in general (*centair Alban archena*)', and possibly led by an illegitimate son of Somerled.<sup>79</sup> Somerled died in 1164 attempting to overthrow King David's successor, Máel Coluim IV (d.1165); several accounts of the event stress the fact that his invading army included men from Ireland.<sup>80</sup> For the kings of Scots in this period, therefore, the closeness of their inherited entanglement with Ireland could be a very mixed blessing.

We may perhaps end this section with one of the few other details we have of Somerled's career: his effort, made in the same year as his fatal invasion of Scotland, to revive Iona's position at the head of the family of Columban churches in the Gaelic world.<sup>81</sup> The proposal foundered perhaps in large part due to the fact that it would have meant a demotion in the status of Derry, favoured by Mac Lochlainn, then the reigning king of Ireland. But what is significant too about the move is that it would, of course, have revived Iona's links with Ireland, and perhaps it is no great surprise that the development was also opposed by the new Scots king William (1165-1214): he struck at Iona's renaissance by depriving it of churches it held in Galloway and transferring them to the modern Augustinian royal foundation at Holyrood.<sup>82</sup> It is ironic that the original efforts to revive Iona's fortunes - which 'had fallen into ruins as a result of its great age and the ravages of war' - had been made, if Orderic Vitalis is correct, by Máel Coluim III's queen, Margaret.<sup>83</sup> But in the ultimate demonstration of their lack of affinity with the early Irish church traditions that Iona represented, neither Máel Coluim, nor any of his sons or their successors, was buried in the former royal burial ground at Iona. It marks an important stage in the emergence of Scotland as a distinct nation-state. As its kings began to fit in more and more comfortably among the second-rank monarchies of western Christendom, they turned their back on the Gaelic past and they severed their links with Ireland.

<sup>77</sup> See W.D.H. Sellar, 'The origins and ancestry of Somerled', *SHR*, 45 (1966), 123-42.

<sup>78</sup> See *Regesta regum Scottorum I. The acts of Malcolm IV king of Scots 1153-1165*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1960), 8.

<sup>79</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1154. The fleet was led by an individual called Mac Scelling, and a late source has it that Somerled had an illegitimate son of this name: see 'The Book of Clanranald', in *Reliquiae Celticae*, ed. Alexander Cameron, 2 vols (Inverness, 1892-4), II, 148-59.

<sup>80</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1164; *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. Wiliam Stubbs, 4 vols (RS, London, 1868-71), I, 224; 'Chronicle of Melrose', s.a. 1164, in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 254; cf. Barrow, *Regesta regum Scottorum*, I, 20.

<sup>81</sup> For brief discussions, see Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry*, 120; P.J. Dunning, 'Sidelights on the bishops of Raphoe from the register of Pope Innocent III', in Terence O'Donnell (ed.), *Father John Colgan O.F.M. 1592-1658. Essays in commemoration of the third centenary of his death* (Dublin, 1959), 50-59 (at pp. 54-7); Alan Macquarrie, 'Kings, lords and abbots: power and patronage at the medieval monastery of Iona', *Trans. Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 54 (1984-6), 355-75 (at pp. 355-7).

<sup>82</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum II. The acts of William I*, ed. G.W.S. Barrow (Edinburgh, 1971), no. 141.

<sup>83</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica*, IV, 272.

### *Ireland and the Isles*

As we have seen, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, on his death in 1072, was acclaimed by an Irish annalist as *rí Innsi Gall*. These were the islands between Britain and Ireland which had been settled by or made subject to the Vikings, who were the original *Gaill* of the title. At a later period the application of the term may have been limited to the outer Hebrides, but in the period under discussion here it clearly refers to any of the Irish Sea islands north of and including Man, periodically subjected to the control of Gaelic or Scandinavian (or Gaelo-Scandinavian) rulers. As such, it is synonymous with the *Sudreyiar* of Norse usage. Such an all-embracing term, however, applied to so many islands in such a fractious region, is likely to have been an exaggeration if used to describe the sphere of direct authority of any one man; frequently, it may have meant no more than that an individual ruled one of the larger islands, Man or Islay or Lewis or Skye, and *sought* to rule the others. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, because of the Isle of Man's close connexion with the affairs of Dublin in particular, the title *rí Innsi Gall* seems in most instances to refer to the ruler of Man and would-be ruler of the other islands.<sup>1</sup>

There is a near total silence by Irish writers about the affairs of Man and the Isles for the first two-thirds of the eleventh century. This makes it very difficult to chart the progress of Irish involvement in the region or, for that matter, to say with any degree of certainty whether the ruling dynasty of Dublin held sway there. It is interesting, though, that we have a good deal of information about the contacts of the Dublin Ostmen with the east-Ulster kingdom of Ulaid. This is the Irish territory that lies closest to the Isle of Man and the intrusion of Dubliners into its affairs is probably due to the latter's Manx links.<sup>2</sup> The first hard evidence, though, only comes in 1052 when Diarmait mac Máel na mBó expelled the reigning king of Dublin, Echmarcach mac Ragnaill, who thereupon went '*tar muir* (over the sea)'.<sup>3</sup> Even then we cannot be sure that he fled to Man because when Echmarcach died in 1065 the Irish chronicler Marianus Scotus called him king of '*na Renn* (the Rhinns)'.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it does look as though he took initial refuge in Man. After Diarmait mac Máel na mBó seized Dublin he appointed his own son Murchad to rule the city.<sup>5</sup> But in 1061 the Irish annals record that

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<sup>1</sup> I have discussed the relationship at length in 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man' and what follows is a summary of the evidence.

<sup>2</sup> See s.aa. 1000 (*AI*); 1001 (*AFM*); 1022 (*AFM*; *ATig*); 1038 (*AFM*; *ATig*); 1045 (*AFM*; *ATig*; *AI*; *AClon*).

<sup>3</sup> *AU*; *CS*; *AFM* s.a. 1052.

<sup>4</sup> See Anderson, *Early sources*, I, 592; F.J. Byrne, 'Onomastica 2: Na Renn', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 267. Marianus knew what he was talking about because he entered the monastery of Mag Bile (Moville) in the Ards peninsula directly across the channel from the Rhinns of Galloway in the very year of Echmarcach's expulsion (Kenney, *Sources: ecclesiastical*, 615).

<sup>5</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1059 calls him '*tigherna Gall* (lord of the foreigners)'. See Ó Corráin, 'The career of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó', pt. 1, p. 35.

Murchad invaded the Isle of Man, took tribute (*cáin*) from it, and defeated mac Ragnaill, presumably Echmarcach.<sup>6</sup> The taking of *cáin* was 'a definitive right of kingship'.<sup>7</sup> Although it could be exercised by an over-king without displacing an existing subject ruler, the fact that Echmarcach shortly turns up as king only in the Rhinns of Galloway suggests that he fled there after 1061. The events of 1061 are a most revealing glimpse, the first clear insight we get into the way in which Irishmen were sucked into the politics of the Irish Sea as a result of their assertion of authority over the Ostmen.

In a way that no previous Irish king had attempted, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó's son Murchad was able to maintain his rule over Dublin for many years, and presumably over Man for the best part of a decade until his death in 1070.<sup>8</sup> At his death, his father resumed control over Dublin (and, one assumes, Man). When Diarmait himself was killed in battle in 1072, it was at the head of an army made up not just of Leinstermen but of Ostmen, many hundreds of whom were slain.<sup>9</sup> This assumption of his son's place is the justification for one annalist's application to him of the title *rí Laigen ⁊ Gall*.<sup>10</sup> But, as we have seen, the annals of 'Tigernach' include among his subjects not only the *Gaill* of Dublin but also those of *Innsi Gall*; if we accept that the jewel in the crown of the latter is the Isle of Man, overlordship of which his son Murchad had established in 1061, the obituarist cannot be said to be taking too great a liberty.

After Diarmait's death his former ally, the Munster king Toirrdelbach ua Briain, intent upon enforcing his claim to the kingship of Ireland, led an expedition to Dublin. There, the Ostmen *granted* to him what Diarmait mac Máel na mBó had forcibly *snatched* exactly twenty years earlier, the kingship of Dublin.<sup>11</sup> This was an extraordinary development, the start of a half-century of intrusion by the Uí Briain royal house of Munster into the affairs of Dublin. Hand in hand with that went a thirst for adventure in the Isles. The Leinstermen had been kings of Dublin for nearly a decade before we hear of any involvement in the Irish Sea islands; but, remarkably, the Munstermen turn up in Man within a year of their annexation of Dublin. In 1073 two members of the Uí Briain were killed in the Isle of Man along with a certain Sitriuc mac Amlaíb.<sup>12</sup> The circumstances of their deaths are unclear. Who Sitriuc was, who exactly the *dá H. Briain* were, whether or not they had the backing of Toirrdelbach ua Briain, is all open to conjecture. But it can hardly be doubted that their presence in Man a year after Toirrdelbach seized Dublin was part and parcel of Munster's attempt to control the city and its insular possessions.

<sup>6</sup> *AFM*; *ATig* s.a. 1061.

<sup>7</sup> Simms, *From kings to warlords*, 132.

<sup>8</sup> See Ó Corráin, 'The career of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó', pt 2, 18-21.

<sup>9</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1072.

<sup>10</sup> *AU* s.a. 1072.

<sup>11</sup> *AI* s.a. 1072: 'co tucsat Gaill ríge Átha Cliath dó'.

<sup>12</sup> *AU*; cf. *ALCé* s.a. 1073.

The early stages of that struggle are largely hidden from us, but we know that in 1075 Toirrdelbach decided to do as Diarmait mac Máel na mBó had, and he installed his own son Muirchertach as king of Dublin; it seems too that another of Toirrdelbach's sons, Diarmait, had begun to act as governor of the other main Ostman state of Waterford, from where he led a raid on Wales in 1080.<sup>13</sup> But the advances the Munstermen had made in dominating Dublin's affairs suffered considerably when a succession dispute broke out after the death of Toirrdelbach ua Briain in 1086. Muirchertach attempted to seize the kingship of all Munster and had Diarmait banished. The latter then seems to have gained control of the entire Ostman fleet.<sup>14</sup> The sons of another brother, Tadc, also played a part in undermining their uncle.<sup>15</sup> According to the *Banshenchas*, Tadc was married to a daughter of the former Ostman king of Dublin, Echmarcach mac Ragnaill.<sup>16</sup> A year after Toirrdelbach ua Briain's death, the Annals of Ulster report that there was 'a sea expedition by the sons of mac Ragnall and by the son of the king of Ulaid into Man, and in it fell the sons of mac Ragnall'. Clearly, in the confusion of the Munster succession race, the Meic Ragnaill had re-emerged to threaten Man. They were probably backed by the sons of Tadc Ua Briain, one of whom was killed in Man in 1096,<sup>17</sup> another of whom, as we shall see, was later to make himself king of the Isles. Since Muirchertach was at this point still hoping to make good his claim to be king of Dublin - and with that went an effort to wield authority in Man - this alliance of his enemies appears to have been an attempt to undermine it.

The instability produced by the Munster squabbles meant that Dublin came within the sights of others. It is important to bear in mind that we are not dealing merely with Irishmen who were brought to contemplate expansion into the Isles by virtue of their success in annexing Dublin. The reverse also happens: men come to power in the Isles for whom it is a natural next step to seek to add Dublin to their domain. At least four times from now until the end of the period under discussion here, the pretensions of the ruling Ostman élite within the city's walls, and the claims of Irish kings to overlordship of its citizens, were cast aside, so that the Dubliners embraced the overtures of a sea-lord from Man, or the Scottish isles, or Scandinavia. The first of these was Godred Crovan.

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<sup>13</sup> *AI* s.aa. 1075, 1080; we still have a letter from the people of Waterford to Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, circa 1095-6, which is co-signed by 'Dermeth Dux': James Ussher, *Veterum epistolarum Hibernicarum sylloge* (Dublin 1632), no. XXXIII.

<sup>14</sup> *AI* s.a. 1087 reports that Diarmait led a naval force 'on a circuit' and plundered Cloyne in County Cork. But the other Irish annals report the following encounter for the same year: 'Great slaughter of the foreigners of Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford by the Uí Echach Muman on the day they intended to plunder Cork' (*AU*; *AFM*; *ALC*). They may both be describing different episodes on the same naval expedition along the Cork coast led by Diarmait Ua Briain.

<sup>15</sup> See *AFM* s.a. 1091.

<sup>16</sup> He had by her three sons, Donnchad, Domnall and Amlaíb, and a daughter, Bé Binn (*Revue Celtique*, 48 (1931), 196).

<sup>17</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1096.

In spite of his success in implanting a dynasty that ruled over the kingdom of Man and the Isles, whole and in part, for nearly two hundred years, very little is known about the origins of Godred Crovan or about the way in which he managed to do so.<sup>18</sup> One set of Irish annals calls him Gofraidh mac mic Arailt,<sup>19</sup> which most probably means that he was a son or nephew of the Ímar mac Arailt (d. 1054) who ruled as king in Dublin from 1038 to 1046, and who in turn was probably a nephew of Sitriuc Silkenbeard.<sup>20</sup> He therefore had good credentials. He seems to have made a career for himself as a mercenary and allegedly fought at Stamford Bridge.<sup>21</sup> From there he fled to Man, but nothing further is heard of him for some thirteen years or so until he eventually conquered the island for himself, about 1079, with the help of men from the other islands in the region. It is only in 1091 that Godred (or Gofraid) makes his first appearance in Dublin. The annals of 'Tigernach' have simply, in an entry recounting the events of this year, '*Gofraid mac mic Arailt rí Átha Cliath* (Gofraid son of mac Arailt king of Dublin)', which presumably means that he assumed the kingship of the city at that date. If the Manx chronicle is to be believed, Gofraid 'subdued Dublin and a great part of Leinster (*subiugavit sibi dubliniam & magnam partem laynestir*),<sup>22</sup> patently an exaggeration, but it may record a tradition that he had gained control not merely over the city of Dublin but over the full extent of its hinterland, Fine Gall, with, possibly, suzerainty over some neighbouring territories.

Gofraid Mэрánach only lasted a few years in Dublin. The Annals of Inisfallen say of 1094 that there was 'Great warfare in [this] year between Ua Briain and the northern half of Ireland, and Gofraid, king of Dublin'. This seems to be a significant statement: it marks Gofraid out as a man apart. He was not simply one of the small fry making up the host of Muirchertach Ua Briain's enemies: the partisan Munster chronicle reveals the perception of those in the latter province that its king faced a war on two fronts, a land army made up of many of the kings of the north of Ireland (led by his chief opponent, Domnall Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain) and a battle-hardened naval force from the Irish Sea region allied to them (under Gofraid). In the struggle, Muirchertach's forces expelled Gofraid from Dublin.<sup>23</sup> He

<sup>18</sup> The Manx chronicle claims that he was 'filius Haraldí nigri de ysland' (*Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 32v.). This presumably refers to Iceland, but if so we know nothing of this part of his life.

<sup>19</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1091.

<sup>20</sup> Sitriuc had a brother Aralt (d. 999): *AU*. Godred's Irish background probably accounts also for his soubriquet (in the Manx chronicle) 'Crovan', which appears Gaelic, though in Irish sources he is referred to as 'Mэрánach'. Professor Ó Cuív is the only scholar to attempt to explain the connexion, if any, between the two (*mэрánach* from *mэр*, 'a finger', *crovan* from *crobh-bhán*, 'of the white hand'): 'A poem in praise of Ragnall, king of Man', *Éigse*, 8 (1957), 283-301. See also George Broderick, 'Irish and Welsh strands in the genealogy of Godred Crovan', *The Journal of the Manx Museum*, 8 (1980), 32-8.

<sup>21</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 32v. It is just possible that he formed part of an Irish contingent there, if Adam of Bremen is right (which may be doubted) in saying that a *rex Hiberniae* was killed in the battle: *M.G.H. Scriptores*, VII, 356; Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 16, n. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 33r.

<sup>23</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1094; cf. *AU*; *AClon*; *AI*.

died in Islay in the following year,<sup>24</sup> which may suggest that Ua Briain was able to oust him from Man as well. In his obit, Gofraid is called by the Four Masters '*tighearna Gall Átha Cliath ḡ na nInnsedh* (lord of the foreigners of Dublin and of the Isles)'. The Inisfallen annalist also calls him *rig Átha Cliath ḡ Inse Gall*. This is a title granted, as noted above, to Diarmait mac Máel na mBó in one set of annals, but, as far as I am aware, no other person ever bore it. That is not to say that no other person ever exercised kingship simultaneously in both Dublin and the Isles; many of those whom the Irish annals classify simply as '*rí Gall* (king of the foreigners)' clearly did. But its use in both these late eleventh-century cases may be by way of emphasis. In the case of Diarmait, the annalist appears to be stressing his achievement in extending his authority into the Isles. As for Gofraid, it was this Islesman's accession to power in Dublin that was the important point.

Dramatic developments followed Gofraid's death. It was apparently at this point that all the noblemen of the Isles sent an embassy to Muirchertach Ua Briain, 'requesting that he send some worthy man of royal stock to act as regent until Amlaíb, son of Gofraid, came of age'; he willingly agreed, and sent a certain Domnall son of Tadc.<sup>25</sup> This is a development of some importance. That the king of Munster or any other Irish king should have a role in the provision of a king of the Isles is all but unique. It may be partly the consequence of Muirchertach's stature abroad; it is more likely to have arisen from a position of authority in the region which he had lately attained.<sup>26</sup> Domnall son of Tadc was Muirchertach's nephew and his decision to send him to the Isles sits ill with what we know of the earlier opposition which the sons of Tadc had shown to Muirchertach. Furthermore, the Irish annals have no mention of these developments.<sup>27</sup> But the claim has one important piece of corroboration: an Amlaíb son of Tadc was killed in Man in the following year.<sup>28</sup> This is Domnall's brother,<sup>29</sup> and his death in conflict on the Isle of Man surely reflects the brothers' efforts to gain control of the island. In any case, whatever the circumstances of Domnall's elevation to kingship in the Isles, what matters is not so much *when* he ruled there (and whether he had Muirchertach's approval) as that he did so at all. It was a remarkable episode - the culmination of a period of rapid intensification of Irish dominance in the region - and boded ill for those for whom such a development would be unwelcome. That was a surprisingly large body of opinion which included the kings of England and Scotland, the Uí Briain's opponents within Ireland, and the would-be suzerain of the Isles, the king of Norway.

<sup>24</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 33v.

<sup>25</sup> 'Domnaldum filium Tadc': *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 33v.

<sup>26</sup> When the bishop of Dublin, Donngus Ua hAingliu, died towards the end of 1095, his successor, Samuel, was chosen by 'Muriardach, king of Ireland', along with the clergy and people (Eadmar, *Historia Novorum*, ed. M. Rule (RS, London, 1884), 73).

<sup>27</sup> *AI*, in fact, has Domnall son of Tadc seizing the kingship of the Isles in 1111.

<sup>28</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1096.

<sup>29</sup> See note 16 above.

It was possibly this Irish intrusion into the region that brought King Magnus Barelegs of Norway west in 1098. Several sources of Irish, Scandinavian, Welsh, Manx and Anglo-Norman origin are in agreement in citing his activities as an act of aggression against Ireland.<sup>30</sup> His first western expedition was in 1098 during which he took into his hands the Orkneys, that part of the northern Scottish mainland which the earls of Orkney were used to controlling, the Western Isles (which the new Scots king, Edgar, happily ceded to him, having little or no authority there in any case), and Man. If forcing its inhabitants to provide timber for his encastellation process is any guide, he may have exercised suzerainty over Galloway. He may too have received the submission of Gwynedd.<sup>31</sup> It was, on paper, a sizeable achievement, but there is no hard evidence of contact with Ireland on this occasion. In fact, if we were dependent on Irish sources alone we would not know that Magnus's first expedition ever took place. The only whiff of involvement is preserved in a record of conflict in 1098 between the Ulaid and 'three of the ships of the foreigners of the Isles',<sup>32</sup> in which the entire crews, a little over 120 men, were killed.<sup>33</sup>

Only on the second expedition in 1102 do Irish sources have a good deal to report of his actions. This time he seems to have come to deal specifically with the Irish. His arrival certainly frightened them. It is noticeable that the annalists see Magnus as a threat to every side in Ireland.<sup>34</sup> The *Brut* histories have Magnus 'hoisting his sails against the men of Scotland' obviously mistranslating the *Scottos* (= Irish) of the Latin original.<sup>35</sup> Orderic Vitalis says that Magnus 'planned an attack on the Irish (*Irenses*) and prepared a fleet of sixty ships to sail against them'.<sup>36</sup> His envoys, the Manx chronicle reports, told him of Ireland's beauty and fertility, and 'when Magnus heard this he thought of nothing other than to subjugate the whole of Ireland to his sway'.<sup>37</sup> The Annals of Ulster bluntly state that in 1102 Magnus came to the Isle of Man with a great fleet and made 'a year's peace' with the Irish. This in itself is

<sup>30</sup> There is an authoritative analysis of the subject in Power, 'Magnus Barelegs' expeditions to the west'.

<sup>31</sup> The Manx chronicle says that 'he sailed to Anglesey...and subjected the island to his rule'; Norse sources relate that after defeating the Normans in Anglesey he went on to possess the whole island, 'the most southerly place where former kings of Norway had owned dominion' (The *Heimskringla* Magnus Barelegs' Saga, quoted in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 112). On his second expedition, Welsh sources have it, Gruffudd ap Cynan provided Venedotian timber for his castles (*Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*, s.a. 1102); for the possible practice of rendering timber as tribute, see Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, 48, n. 130.

<sup>32</sup> 'tri longa do longaibh Gall na nInnsi': *AU*; *AFM*; *ALCé* s.a. 1098.

<sup>33</sup> This may have been in response to what Norse sources describe as having happened during Magnus's voyage south in that year: in sailing southwards by Kintyre, he 'plundered on both boards - up in Scotland, and out in Ireland. He accomplished there many great deeds in both kingdoms'. So says the *Fagrskinna*, a version of the kings' sagas, compiled in Norway in the 1220s (Carol J. Clover, *The medieval saga* (Ithaca N.Y. and London, 1982), 170-72); I have again used the translation by Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 109, n. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Magnus and the *Gaill* of Lochlainn came, they tell us, to invade Ireland ('tangattar diondradh Éreann': *AFM*); he came to take Ireland ('do thiachtain do ghabhail Éreann': *CS*; *AFM*); he intended to besiege Ireland ('fer ro triall forbais for Éirinn': *ATig*).

<sup>35</sup> *Brut*, 25 and note.

<sup>36</sup> Later he tells us that 'the noble-minded king prepared an expedition against the Irish and approached the Irish coast with his fleet' (*Historia ecclesiastica*, V, 218-9; VI, 48-9).

<sup>37</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 36r.

indicative of enmity, as these peaces were diplomatic devices developed to provide a breathing-space for a country where warfare was sometimes close to endemic. But implicit in the annalist's remark that he came to Man and thereupon made peace with the Irish is that arriving in Man put Magnus into an Irish context. The Four Masters add that this truce was agreed after 'the men of Ireland made a hosting to Dublin to oppose Magnus (*Sloighedh fer Éreand co hÁth Cliath i naghaidh Maghnusa*)' which is a strong hint that he had taken or was attempting to take the city.<sup>38</sup> That the Irish compromised with him in reaching peaceful terms suggests an acknowledgement of his position there. This is precisely what Magnus Barelegs's Saga claims for him: 'King Magnus proceeded with his host to Ireland, and plundered there. Then King Muirchertach (*Myrjartak*) came to join him, and they won much of the land - Dublin and Dublinshire'.<sup>39</sup>

It is probably incorrect to see Magnus and Muirchertach as allied from the start. The effect, and presumably the original intention, of Magnus's assertion of overlordship in the Irish Sea was to circumscribe Munster's sphere of influence. From Ua Briain's point of view, the threat to Dublin was more worrying still. Furthermore, the collision course with Ua Briain upon which Magnus had entered made him the natural bedfellow of Domnall Mac Lochlainn, with whom Muirchertach was at war. But the 'year's peace' negotiated at Dublin in 1102 probably changed the situation and removed the threat for Ua Briain. The Four Masters claim that Ua Briain then 'gave his daughter to Sichraídh, son of Magnus, and gave him many jewels and gifts'. It is a story confirmed by Magnus Barelegs' Saga.<sup>40</sup> This marriage-alliance copperfastened Munster's Irish Sea interests. Magnus was about to withdraw to Norway but left his infant son, now Muirchertach's son-in-law, as king of the Isles: there can be little doubt as to who the real power in the region would then be. Furthermore, Ua Briain now had an ally in Magnus rather than a rival. And the latter's saga has it that after Muirchertach agreed to Magnus's taking of Dublin and Fine Gall, the Norse king spent the winter of 1102-3 with the king of Munster: 'and when spring came, the two kings with their army went west to Ulster (*Uladstir*); and they had there many battles, and won the land'.<sup>41</sup> However, the king of Norway was killed by the Ulaid in obscure circumstances in 1103 and was buried, the Manx chronicle has it, near the church of St Patrick at Down.<sup>42</sup> His son Sigurd on hearing the news cast aside his child-bride and returned to Norway. Thus ended the period of direct Norwegian rule over the Irish Sea islands. None of their kings visited the region again for over a hundred and fifty

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<sup>38</sup> The author of the *Annales Cambriae* (p. 35) thought so, because he believed that Magnus was eventually killed in Dublin. Verses are extant which are ascribed to Magnus, referring to his Irish lover (we know that he fathered at least one son by her, Harold Gilli, who eventually succeeded him) and which say that his heart is in Dublin (Power, 'Magnus Barelegs' expeditions', 117, n. 1).

<sup>39</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 127.

<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 116-7.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 128.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the matter, see Power, 'Magnus Barlegs' expeditions', 127-9.



years, though their claim to overlordship remained intact and was acknowledged to a greater or lesser extent thereafter.<sup>43</sup>

With Magnus out of the way Dublin seems to have continued to play host to the still dominant Uí Briain, and we may suppose that his death resurrected hopes of securing the Munstermen's hegemony over the Irish Sea region. In this, the prime movers were the sons of Tadc. We hear that Domnall mac Taidc was fettered or imprisoned (*do cuibhreach*) by his uncle Muirchertach in 1107, but immediately released: critically, the deed was done in Dublin, which confirms their continued interest and presence in the area.<sup>44</sup> When, therefore, in 1111 Domnall mac Taidc assumed (or re-assumed) the kingship of the Isles by force (*ar égein*), we may take it that he did so against his uncle's wishes.<sup>45</sup> But perhaps the most interesting part of the annalist's brief account is the information that Domnall 'went into the north of Ireland (*do dul...i tuascert Hérend*)' to seize the kingdom of the Isles. Why should his invasion be initiated from there? Dublin would be the natural launching pad for any attempt to take the Isles by an individual who controlled it. It looks as if Muirchertach in taking Domnall captive in the city in 1107 put an end to his authority there. He later launched an invasion of the Isles four years on with the backing, one assumes, of Muirchertach's northern opponents. It can hardly be a surprise, therefore, to find that Muirchertach went on an expedition to Dublin in 1111, remaining there from Michaelmas (29 September) to Christmas of that year. This is most assuredly connected with his nephew's annexation of the Isles. For Muirchertach to spend a three-month period in the city must mean that he took recent developments very seriously. It must also mean that Dublin was an effective base from which not merely to monitor events but to respond. We can envisage him trying to choke off any naval or victualling assistance the Dubliners may have contemplated giving Domnall, or overseeing armed expeditions to the Isles to counter his actions. It indicates the firmness of Ua Briain's grasp on Dublin's resources, and how much the Ostmen's own independence of action had declined since the days when it had a thriving dynasty of its own at the helm: with the king of Munster in residence there for a quarter of a year, it is almost beginning to look like a home away from home for Irish princes.

If Domnall mac Taidc 'forcibly' seized the kingdom of the Isles, he must have faced internal opposition there too. Amlaíb, Gofraid Móránach's son, died as king of the Isles in 1152, after a reign of forty years, according to the Manx chronicle. If the latter is accurate, he became king almost immediately after Domnall made his bid for power. Quite possibly Amlaíb was foisted on the Islesmen by a patron anxious to put paid to Irish interference there. But by whom? The Manx chronicle may again supply the answer: it says that Amlaíb was

<sup>43</sup> See Arne Odd Johnsen, 'The payments from the Hebrides and the Isle of Man to the crown of Norway, 1153-1263', *SHR*, 48 (1969), 18-34.

<sup>44</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1107.

<sup>45</sup> *AI* s.a. 1111.

conducted to the Isles, by its chief men, from the court of Henry I, where he had presumably been raised since infancy.<sup>46</sup> If this is true (and we have no confirmation of it from elsewhere), it may have important implications. At some stage a decision was made to send Gofraid Móránach's youngest son to the Anglo-Norman court. He was not a ward of court in the sense that that carries of a feudal relationship existing between England and the Isles, but his presence there may represent moves to establish a closer bond. If so, if Amlaíb was Henry I's protégé, the English king must have been opposed to the attempt of the Uí Briain to exert dominance over the Irish Sea islands.

Muirchertach Ua Briain fell from power when stricken by severe illness in 1114 and Domnall mac Taidc was enticed home from the Isles by the prospects of bigger fish in Munster. The personal nature of Muirchertach's dominance over Dublin was such that with his demise Munster's authority there began to melt away almost immediately. The new luminary of the Irish political landscape was Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair of Connacht and in 1118 he successfully laid siege to Dublin and made himself king there.<sup>47</sup> In 1121, when the bishop of Dublin died, there was a disputed succession: Cellach, the *comarba* of Patrick at Armagh was the choice of the Irish, but the citizens elected Gregorius (or Gréne), and sent him off to Canterbury for consecration.<sup>48</sup> Henry I involved himself in the dispute, at the behest, he says, not alone of 'the burgesses of Dublin', but of the 'king of Ireland' (*Mandavit mihi rex Hiberniae per breve suum, & burgenses Dublinae*).<sup>49</sup> So, it seems that Ua Conchobair backed the Dubliners' choice of candidate rather than the highly respected superior of Armagh, and had no qualms about enlisting the support of the king of England in order to secure his consecration.

However, Ua Conchobair always seems to have had difficulty in enforcing his authority over Dublin and his distractions elsewhere allowed a remarkable change in the make-up of Dublin's government to take place in 1142. For the first time in almost exactly a half-century, the city was seized by a Hebridean sea-lord when 'Ottar, the son of Ottar's son, one of the men of the Insi Gall, took the headship and supremacy of Dublin (*Mac mic Ottir .i. Ottir do lucht Insi Gall do gabhail chennais ⁊ forlámhais Átha Cliath*).<sup>50</sup> This individual may have been a grandson of the Earl Ottar who ruled one half of the Isle of Man and who was killed in battle there in 1098.<sup>51</sup> A relative, 'Thorfinn filius Oter', was one of the *principes* of the Isles,

<sup>46</sup> 'miserunt principes insularum propter olauum filium godredi crouan...qui tunc temporis degebat in curia henrici regis anglie filii willelmi, & adduxerunt eum': *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 35r.

<sup>47</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1118.

<sup>48</sup> *AU* s.a. 1121.

<sup>49</sup> For Henry's letter, see Ussher, *Sylloge*, no. XLI.

<sup>50</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1142.

<sup>51</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 34r. It is possible that *AFM* has added a generation and that he was only a son of Earl Ottar (*AClon* calls him 'McOtyr' (s.a. 1134=1142)). If so, he may be the 'mac an Iarla (the Earl's son)' whose involvement in Irish affairs led to his sword becoming a trophy much prized by the men of Ulaid (*AFM* s.a. 1165).

described as being 'more powerful than the rest' in the mid-1150s.<sup>52</sup> How Ottar came to seize Dublin is a mystery but one way or another he was able to unite his patrimony in the Isles with Dublin, and to hold on grimly for a full six years - no mean feat by the standards of past incumbents - until assassinated in 1148. We know from Welsh sources that he commanded a Dublin army in Wales, two years after taking over in Dublin, and that the head of the Meic Turcaill, the leading indigenous Ostman family in the city, was one of his lieutenants.<sup>53</sup> This incident happened when Owain, the son of Gruffudd ap Cynan, banished his brother Cadwaladr, who went to Ireland, and obtained an army and fleet led by Ottar 'son of the other Ottar (*ofter vab ofter arall*)', and by mac Turcaill (*mab twrkyll*), and by the son of Ischerwlf or of Cherwlf (*mab yscherwlf/ mab Cherwlf*). Mac Turcaill is probably Ragnall (d.1146), the head of the family at this point, but I have not identified the *mab Cherwlf*.<sup>54</sup> The Welsh chronicler, however, appears to have no such trouble: it looks as though the lords of Dublin were well known to him.<sup>55</sup>

Curiously, Ragnall mac Turcaill is called *rí Gall Átha Cliath* by several sets of annals when he met his end in battle two years later.<sup>56</sup> However, the Four Masters call him *mór mhaor* ('great steward?') and, since their account is more detailed than the other notices (they mention the death in the same incident of another individual, Iufraigh, apparently a member of the Dublin oligarchy), perhaps they know something the other annalists do not; in which case, Ottar may have been *rí* in Dublin, and Ragnall mac Turcaill mormaer under him.<sup>57</sup> It is just possible, therefore, that Ottar allowed Ragnall to continue to yield some authority in the city under him, and to act as his chief administrator. With Ragnall's death, however, his sons sought to restore the family's pre-eminence and two years later King Ottar was assassinated.<sup>58</sup>

It was about four years later that, according to the Manx chronicle, an army from Dublin invaded the Isle of Man in an attempt to overthrow the reigning king, Amlaíb, son of

<sup>52</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 37v.

<sup>53</sup> The origins of this family are obscure. A Turcaill mac Éola was killed in Wales in 1093 (*AI*). His background may have been Manx (according to a list of the bishops of the Isles appended to the Manx chronicle (fol. 50v.), 'in diebus Godredi Crouan Hamundus filius Iole, Mannicus genere, episcopalem suscepit cathedram'). There was a Torfind mac Turcaill, who was described as '*prímhóigthigern Gall nÉrenn* (chief *óicthigern* (=young lord?) of the foreigners of Ireland' when he died in 1124, and perhaps he was a son of the 1093 Turcaill (*AU*; *ALC2*). A Turcaill is mentioned in *ALCé* s.a. 1133 who may be the 'mac mic Turcaill' who died in 1138 (*AFM*). As the latter is given no title, he may have been a son of the reigning head of the family, who in the mid-1140s was Ragnall mac Turcaill.

<sup>54</sup> 'Cherwlf' may be from Old Norse Heriulf; this occurs as an Hiberno-Scandinavian personal name in the form Erulb, and is attested in the period up to and including the battle of Clontarf, but not to my knowledge afterwards except as the name of an Ostman bishop of Limerick who died in 1151 (*AFM*). The Welsh 'mab Cherwlf' may be Irish 'mac Eruilb'.

<sup>55</sup> *Brur*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, s.a. 1144.

<sup>56</sup> *Misc. Irish annals*; *ATig*; *CS* s.a. 1146.

<sup>57</sup> The latter is a word usually reserved for nobles of Scottish origin, but there is at least one other instance of its usage in an Irish context in a source dating from the early twelfth century: the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* refers, but perhaps anachronistically, to one Osli mac Dubcind mic Imair as '*fer grada do Brian, ocus Mormaer da maeraib e* (an officer of Brian and one of his high stewards)' (ed. Todd, 146; a reference I owe to Máire Ní Mhaonaigh) and later to '*deich mormair Briain* (the ten great stewards of Brian)' (*ibid.*, 168).

<sup>58</sup> *ATig*; *CS* s.a. 1148.

Gofraid M $\acute{e}$ ránach. The invading host was led by Amlaíb's nephews 'who had been reared at Dublin',<sup>59</sup> who came to Man demanding half of the kingdom of the Isles for themselves. They assassinated Amlaíb, divided the island between them, and then sailed to Galloway 'wishing to subject it to their rule'. There they did battle unsuccessfully with the Gallovidians, and fled in confusion back to Man, where they slaughtered or expelled all the men of Galloway who lived there. They managed to hold on to Man for some time until Amlaíb's son Gofraid returned from Norway, whereupon he was elevated to the kingship, and had them executed. If the incident is true, it reveals quite a lot about the links between Dublin and the Isles at this juncture. Ottar was an Islesman who in 1142 managed to seize Dublin for himself. These invaders of Man were Dubliners who, a decade later, decided to do just the reverse, and succeeded, temporarily at least. Dublin and the Isles, therefore, may have had separate kings since the accession of Amlaíb (*circa* 1112), but they continued to be dominated by a clique of aristocrats with a foot in both camps. Any one of these might seek to reunite the two kingdoms. This is what Amlaíb's son now sought to do.

The reign in Man and the Isles of Gofraid mac Amlaíb is said to have commenced in 1154.<sup>60</sup> At this stage the leading contender for the kingship of Ireland was the northern king Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn. And in 1154 the annals report that he led his armies as far as Dublin, where 'the foreigners of Dublin submitted to him as their king, and he gave the foreigners 1,200 cows as their wages (*ina ttuarastal*)'.<sup>61</sup> It was an enormous sum and indicative of a change that appears to have been taking place in the city's fortunes: a generation earlier, when Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair accomplished a similar feat, the gifts were flowing in the other direction and the Ostmen 'did his will completely'.<sup>62</sup> It looks as though the Dubliners, for a time, after the demise of Sitriuc Silkenbeard's dynasty, were at such a low ebb as to acquiesce in handing over tribute as well as performing military service to their overking; now, that situation was reversed, the city's fortunes reviving, the Meic Turcaill oligarchy assertive and self-assured, and the would-be master of the city compelled not merely to do without receiving tribute but having to pay through the nose for their services.

We see what those services entailed, and why they were so necessary to Mac Lochlainn's purposes, from a major incident that occurred that same year. The Four Masters record that in 1154 Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobair gathered together all the shipping available along the Connacht coast. He sent them up the western seaboard under the command of Cosnamaig Ua Dubda (whose family regularly produced admirals of the Connacht fleet), and they raided Tír Conaill and the Inishowen peninsula. Thereupon Mac Lochlainn 'sent over sea to hire, and did hire, the fleet of Galloway, Arran, Kintyre, Man, and the territories of

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<sup>59</sup> 'qui nutriti fuerant apud dubliniam': *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 36r.

<sup>60</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 37r.

<sup>61</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1154.

<sup>62</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1126.

Scotland besides, with Mac Scelling in command of them. And when they arrived near Inishowen, they fell in with the other fleet, and a naval battle was fiercely and spiritedly fought between them...and a great number of the men of Connacht, including Cosnamaig Ua Dubda, were slain by the overseas men (*las na hallmhurachaibh*). The overseas host (*an sluagh nallmhurach*) was defeated and slaughtered; and they left their ships behind, and Mac Scelling's teeth were knocked out'. It says something of the contacts which the Meic Lochlainn had in the Isles and Scotland if they were able to assemble such a disparate flotilla of vessels at such apparently short notice. The identity of Mac Scelling, its commander, is uncertain, but I have suggested above that he may have been an illegitimate son of Somerled of Argyll. If that is the case, the formation of an alliance between this important family and Mac Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain is an event of some significance.

We know that Somerled was bitterly opposed to the new Manx king Gofraid mac Amlaíb. The Manx Chronicle places on the feast of the Epiphany 1156 a naval battle between them which resulted in the kingdom of the Isles being divided between both sides: 'the kingdom has existed in two parts from that day until the present time [i.e. the mid-thirteenth century], and the reason for the collapse of the kingdom emanated from the time the sons of Somerled got possession of it.'<sup>63</sup> The peculiar settlement arrived at left Gofraid in control of Man and the northern Hebrides (apparently only Lewis and Skye), with Somerled's family dominating the islands in between. The ambition of Somerled was, however, not satisfied by the compromise and the Manx Chronicle records a subsequent invasion of Man by him, apparently in 1158, in which his fleet of fifty-three ships was sufficient to send Gofraid into flight: but Somerled merely ravaged the island and then went away. Gofraid went abroad in pursuit of assistance against him: we have evidence for his presence in England later that same year, then in Scotland in 1159, and, apparently, in Norway in the spring of 1161.<sup>64</sup>

If one is right to see Somerled and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn as allies at this juncture, this would presumably have put the latter too at loggerheads with Gofraid mac Amlaíb. Mac Lochlainn was then overlord of Dublin, but the Manx chronicle places in 1156 an extraordinary development whereby the populace of Dublin sent for Gofraid mac Amlaíb to rule over them (*miserunt propter illum dublinienses ut regnaret super se*). He assembled a large fleet and a substantial army, came to Dublin, and was received graciously by its citizens who elevated him to the kingship by common decision and agreement (*communi concilio & consensu eum in regem sullimauerunt*). The citizens had again chosen a warlord from the Isles to rule over them - one just returned from doing homage to the king of Norway - and seem to be expressing a clear preference for non-Irish overlordship. That meant, necessarily, repudiating the declarations of fealty which the citizens had made to Muirchertach Mac

<sup>63</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 37v.

<sup>64</sup> A.L. Brown and A.A.M. Duncan, 'Argyll and the Isles in the earlier middle ages', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 90 (1956-7), 192-220 (at p.196, n. 5).

Lochlainn. Not surprisingly, therefore, we are told that when Murecardus *rex ybernie* heard of this 'he collected a countless host of Irishmen and hastened towards Dublin to expel Gofraid and to subject the place to his rule'. He pitched his camp at a city (*ciuitatem*) which the chronicle calls Cortcelis.<sup>65</sup> No 'city' near Dublin springs to mind, however, except perhaps Cenannus, that is, Kells in County Meath, an important ecclesiastical centre the application to which of the term *civitas* would not be inappropriate. The following day Mac Lochlainn sent 3,000 horsemen under the command of his uterine brother to parley with the townsmen, but Gofraid with his men and all the citizens of Dublin charged them, put them to flight and killed the half-brother; Muirchertach, in mourning for his lost kinsman, instructed his army to return home.

It is, of course, impossible to say whether this alleged incident is real or otherwise, but there hardly seems much reason for inventing it, and the details, if vague, are at least plausible. However, if the Manx chronicle's dating of it is correct - that is, the third year of a reign commencing in 1154 - there is no mention of it in Irish sources. On the other hand, chronology is not the Manx chronicle's strong point: one should not therefore be deterred from looking elsewhere in the Irish annals for a reflex of the same turn of events. And, in the Annals of Ulster for 1162 we hear of 'a hosting by Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn with most of the Leth Cuinn to Mag Fitharta, so that they were a week there burning the corn and townlands of the foreigners (*ic loscad arba*  $\neg$  *bailed Gall*). However, the foreigners inflicted a defeat on their horse-host, so that they killed six, or seven, of them, and they [Mac Lochlainn's army] did not get their demand (*a réir*) on that occasion'. Mag Fitharta has not been satisfactorily identified, but Hogan places it in north Meath or Louth<sup>66</sup> - if so, the monastic city of Kells is in the vicinity. Both the Manx chronicle and the Annals of Ulster, therefore, refer to a cavalry expedition by Muirchertach to the Boyne valley area in opposition to the Ostmen, in which his army was worsted and losses inflicted. Both may refer to the same event: an attempt by the king of Man and the Isles to annex Dublin to his kingdom in 1162, and a less than successful strike by the king of Ireland with the object of pre-empting it.

The Four Masters confirm the Manx chronicle's description of Mac Lochlainn leading a vast host to Dublin to lay siege to it (*co hÁth cliath, dforbais for Ghallaib*). They admit, likewise, that the expedition was a failure and that he returned without obtaining the Ostmen's hostages, but having done some raiding in its hinterland, Fine Gall. They claim, though, that 'he left the men of Leinster and Mide at war with the foreigners. A peace was afterwards concluded between the foreigners and the Irish, and seven score ounces of gold were given by the foreigners to Mac Lochlainn'. It appears, then, that a negotiated settlement was reached with the Manx and Dubliners, and the price of peace may have been an agreement by the

<sup>65</sup> Though the editor expresses doubt about the spelling: *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 37r., n. 2.

<sup>66</sup> Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum* (Dublin, 1910), 520.

citizens to send Gofraid packing: the Manx chronicle makes no further allusion to his kingship of the city, and says that 'after a few days Gofraid returned to Man, and let all the chieftains of the Isles (*omnes principes insularum*) return home'.<sup>67</sup> According to the Annals of Ulster, the outcome was sealed by a pillaging (*argain*) of the foreigners of Dublin by the Leinster king, Diarmait Mac Murchada, and 'great power was obtained over them, such as was not obtained over them for a long time (*nert mór do gabáil forro, amail ná rogabad reime re céin móir*)'.

This remark about Diarmait Mac Murchada's near unprecedented mastery over the city may be more than literary flourish. The most visible signs of the 'great power' over Dublin obtained by Mac Murchada in 1162 are his grants to churches of property in Fine Gall, especially that of lands to the north of the city at Baldoyle to his confessor, Áed Ua Cáellaide, bishop of Louth, for the use of the canons of the priory of All Hallows.<sup>68</sup> The grant is made completely free of all dues and services to which he and all his successors in the government of Leinster and Dublin were entitled, and one of the witnesses was his brother-in-law, Lorcán Ua Tuathail, whose elevation to the archbishopric of Dublin in this very year may itself be evidence of Diarmait's dominance over its affairs.<sup>69</sup> Among the other witnesses are two members of the Meic Turcaill, Echmarcach and Aralt; the latter, thereby, acknowledge Mac Murchada's right to grant away lands in their kingdom. Diarmait may have been anxious to impress the city fathers, spiritual and temporal, by his munificence, but his action should not be allowed to conceal his assumption of a licence to dispose of the city-state's assets.

Bearing this in mind, we may again refer to the events of 1164, when Somerled of Argyll led his famous invasion of Scotland against the young, rather unpopular, and gravely ill king of Scots, Máel Coluim IV, 'with the desire of subjecting the whole of Scotland to his rule'.<sup>70</sup> The 'Chronicle of Melrose' records that he landed at Renfrew 'bringing a large army from Ireland and various places',<sup>71</sup> Irish annals noting that his army comprised men of Argyll, Kintyre, and the Isles, along with the Ostmen of Dublin.<sup>72</sup> The venture, as it turns out, was a fiasco, and Somerled, one of his sons, and the great bulk of the Dubliners were wiped out. But it is more than likely that the days had passed when the armed forces of Dublin could line up alongside any combatant who had not received the prior approval of their Irish suzerain. That meant entering into negotiations with Diarmait Mac Murchada or his overlord, the king of Ireland,

<sup>67</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 37r-v.

<sup>68</sup> *Registrum prioratus omnium sanctorum iuxta Dublin*, ed. Richard Butler (I.A.S., Dublin, 1845), 50-1; for a discussion, see Marie Therese Flanagan, 'St Mary's abbey, Louth, and the introduction of the Arrouaisian observance into Ireland', *Clogher Record*, 10 (1979-81), 223-34. The corrupt version of King John's confirmation of the possessions of Holy Trinity (Christ Church) has a grant of 'Rathkyllin' by 'Deartharch son of Imarchadan, King of Leinster' which is presumably also his (*Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c. 1172-1534*, ed. Charles McNeill (Dublin, 1950), 28).

<sup>69</sup> For a brief summary of his background, see A.S. Mac Shamhráin, 'Prosopographica Glindelachensis: the monastic church of Glendalough and its community sixth to thirteenth centuries', *JRSAI*, 119 (1989), 79-97 (at p. 86).

<sup>70</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 39r.

<sup>71</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 254.

<sup>72</sup> AU; cf. *Misc. Irish annals*; ATig s.a. 1164.

Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn: the successful outcome of those negotiations meant that forces from Ireland were committed to the attempted overthrow of the king of Scotland. A year later, as we have seen, the Ostman fleet was hired out again, to assist Henry II in his expedition to subdue Wales, and this may well indicate that Henry had earlier entered into some contractual arrangement with the Ostmen's master, Mac Murchada: the latter looked to have the favour returned the following August.

On 1 August 1166 Diarmait Mac Murchada was ejected from his kingship by a devastating alignment of his opponents. He returned from exile in the following year and recovered his core lands in Uí Chennselaig, but it was a further two years before substantial contingents of foreign aid began to land in Ireland with the aim of restoring him to the kingship of all Leinster and, of course, of Dublin. Eventually, in 1170 Raymond le Gros landed at Baginbun and Strongbow put ashore near Waterford: within weeks of their landing, the Ostmen of Waterford had been massacred and Mac Murchada's new foreign allies were marching on Dublin. Mac Murchada then wreaked harsh vengeance on the Ostmen for their part in his earlier discomfiture: his Anglo-Norman allies slaughtered them inside the fortress of Dublin, and carried off their cattle and goods. Their king, however, Ascall Mac Turcaill, managed to make good his escape, along with the bulk of the inhabitants: according to Gerald of Wales 'the greater part of them, led by Ascall, went on board ship, taking their most precious belongings, and sailed off to the northern isles (*boreales ad insulas se navigio transtulerunt*)', a good indication of the Dubliners' continued bonds with the inhabitants of the Isles.<sup>73</sup>

It is interesting that Ascall's attempt to reinstate himself in Dublin followed, according to Gerald, within about two weeks of the death of Diarmait Mac Murchada about Mayday in 1171.<sup>74</sup> His army consisted of heavily armoured men from Man, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and Norway,<sup>75</sup> the latter led by a man called John 'the Wode' whom the Irish, according to the *Song of Dermot*, believed to be a nephew of the Norse king. The invasion was a failure, John was slain, and Ascall captured and later executed. Others, therefore, had to attempt to fill that vacuum and Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair immediately afterwards commenced his famous siege of the city. With the Dubliners deprived of an internal lord around whom to rally, the archbishop of Dublin, Lorcán Ua Tuathail, and Ruaidrí himself, are said by Gerald to have sent letters to Gofraid mac Amlaíb, the king of Man (and himself king, for a short spell, of the city) and the other men of the Isles (*alios insulanos*), asking them to besiege the port, 'letters in which a generous promise of financial reward accompanied persuasive arguments (*tam verborum invitant persuasione quam larga quoque stipendiorum promissione*)'. This remark reveals, I

<sup>73</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica: the conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), 68-9.

<sup>74</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 304, n. 105; *ATig* s.a. 1171.

<sup>75</sup> *The song of Dermot and the earl*, ed. G.H. Orpen (Oxford, 1892), ll.2257-72; *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 76-7.



suspect, something of the Hiberno-Scandinavian contribution to the Irish polity: yes, the pursuit of a mercenary reward was part and parcel of their existence (though the same is probably true of most military men of the age) but they were motivated by more than mere financial acquisitiveness and could be persuaded by political considerations. In his next sentence, in a very important insight, Gerald spells out his shrewd assessment of those concerns: 'Their fear of the threat of English domination, inspired by the successes of the English, made the men of the Isles act all the more quickly, and with the wind in the north-west they immediately sailed about thirty ships full of warriors into the harbour of the Liffey'.<sup>76</sup> The English conquest of Ireland, particularly the loss of Dublin, which was beginning to take on a look of permanence, was a cause of concern to men who did not live in Ireland but who regarded that development as a threat to themselves.

The blockade was a failure and Dublin stayed in English hands. The English king himself landed in Ireland that same year.<sup>77</sup> Henry II's actions while in Ireland, and more especially the area in which they were confined, indicate his priorities. His efforts were concentrated on asserting authority over the Ostman towns by taking Dublin, Waterford and Wexford into his own hands, thereby bringing to an end the days of native Irish or Hiberno-Scandinavian rule over them. If we take into account the activities of Gofraid M<sup>é</sup>ránach (1091-4), Magnus Barelegs (1102-3), Ottar (1142-8), and Gofraid mac Amlaíb (?1162), Henry was the fifth outsider in three-quarters of a century to seek to conquer Dublin. In accomplishing this, he removed one of the principal avenues of communication between the Irish and the inhabitants of the Isles.

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<sup>76</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 78-9.

<sup>77</sup> The best recent account of Henry II's expedition to Ireland is Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, chap. 6.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE IRISH SEA REGION

#### AFTER THE INVASION OF IRELAND, 1169-1217

This chapter treats of Irish relations with Scotland, with the Isles, and with Wales in the first half-century after the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. For all intents and purposes they are three separate stories, and will be dealt with as such. Occasionally, though, they overlap. At particular moments, Scotland and Wales enter the picture simultaneously: it would be unwise to isolate them. At particular moments, events occur in England - the revolt of the young King Henry in 1173, for instance, or the baronial strife at the end of John's reign - which produce simultaneous reactions elsewhere in the archipelago: incidents such as these will be considered separately as they arise, to see what light they throw, if any, on native responses to the Anglo-Norman advance.

*The Anglo-Norman invasion: the Irish response*

This is not the place to narrate the course of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland and of Irish reaction; that has been done many times before.<sup>1</sup> But, to the extent that the stance adopted by the Irish affected the form of their subsequent relations with their 'Irish Sea' partners, some aspects of it merit mention. In particular, it will be argued in this dissertation that the Anglo-Norman expansion into Ireland caused some of the indigenous population to contemplate throwing in their lot with Islesmen or with such Scots and Welsh who were of similar outlook, and it is important, therefore, to establish when that process began.

The tendency of historians to see the 'Irish rally' as a product of the mid-thirteenth century focusses the eye on an extraordinary sequence of events at that point.<sup>2</sup> But the 'rally', of course, did not have to wait three-quarters of a century to take off. As far as the Irish were concerned, something like a continuous state of warfare existed between them and the invaders from the earliest stage: an obit of St Lorcán Ó Tuathail says that he died in 1181 'making peace between the king of England and the Irish'.<sup>3</sup> There may be a whiff of hindsight about the Dublin chronicler's conclusion, at the end of his account of Hugh de Lacy's death in 1186, that *ibi cessavit conquestus*;<sup>4</sup> but Gerald of Wales, writing at about that point, was of a like mind. The 'conquest' had ended, the Irish were staging a recovery:

This island would...long since have been successfully and effectively subdued from one end to the other...had not the further influx of fresh troops been cut off by royal decree...For when our people arrived there first, the Irish were paralyzed and panic stricken by the sheer novelty of the event...But thanks to the half-hearted dragging out of the conquest over a long period...the natives gradually became skilled and versed in handling arrows and other arms...Consequently this people, which to begin with could have been easily routed, recovered its morale and military strength, and was enabled to put up a stronger resistance.<sup>5</sup>

At his death, Diarmait Mac Murchada, whose enlistment of Anglo-Norman support sparked off the invasion, was roundly denounced by several surviving Irish sources.<sup>6</sup> F.X. Martin, in a worthy attempt at rehabilitating him, has intimated that these denunciations are the product of later nationalist fervour, and has called attention, by contrast, to the polite account of Mac Murchada's passing that appears in the contemporary, albeit partisan, Book of Leinster.<sup>7</sup> It is

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<sup>1</sup> The most detailed recent studies are by F.X. Martin, in *NHI*, II, chaps. II-IV; and Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*.

<sup>2</sup> I have dealt with them in outline in 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world, 1306-29', *CMCS*, 21 (1991), 68-9, 79; for a brief but important reassessment by Dr Katharine Simms of the so-called 'Gaelic recovery' of the mid-thirteenth century, see R.F. Foster (ed.), *The Oxford illustrated history of Ireland* (Oxford, 1989), 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Misc. Irish annals* s.a. 1181.

<sup>4</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 305; the *Annales Cestrienses* (ed. R.C. Christie, Lancashire and Cheshire Record Society, XIV, 1886), s.a. 1186, state that Henry II planned to send Prince John back to Ireland as soon as he heard of de Lacy's death, and that John came as far as Chester, but went no further when he heard of the death of his brother Geoffrey, count of Brittany (pp. 34-5).

<sup>5</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 232-3.

<sup>6</sup> *ATig; AU; ALCé; AFM* s.a. 1171.

<sup>7</sup> F.X. Martin, *No hero in the house. Diarmait Mac Murchada and the coming of the Normans to Ireland*, (O'Donnell Lecture, Dublin, 1979), 7.

only fair to point out, though, that the very next sentence in the latter work complains that 'After that, the English *miserabiliter regnant*'; this is not a million miles off the claim of the annals of 'Tigernach' (one of the targets of Fr Martin's attack) that the arrival of Robert fitz Stephen represented 'the start of Ireland's woe (*tosach uilc na hÉirenn*)'. Equally, there is surely no comfort for Mac Murchada in the cool remark preserved elsewhere in the Book of Leinster, referring to his new allies in these terms: 'The English came into Ireland and there was a complete spoiling of Ireland (*lánlott Herend*) by them'.<sup>8</sup>

Reaction to Diarmait's demise contrasts sharply with that which greeted the death of Tigernán Ó Ruairc, his fiercest opponent, within a year. Gerald of Wales obviously regarded Tigernán's death, in disputed circumstances, as a major breakthrough in the conquest, and claims that his head was despatched to Henry II as a trophy.<sup>9</sup> But the Irish annals are in agreement that Ó Ruairc was assassinated in treachery, beheaded after death, his head hoisted over the gate to the fortress at Dublin - 'a sore, miserable sight for the Irish' - and the rest of the body, in an act of extraordinary vindictiveness, hung feet upwards in another place at the north side of the city; unlike Diarmait, he was 'the deedful leopard of the Irish, Leth Cuind's man of battle and lasting defence, Ireland's raider and attacker, surpasser of all the Irish in might and abundance'.<sup>10</sup> By contrasting both men in such terms the authors, consciously or otherwise, are drawing attention to the reprehensible nature of Diarmait's actions in enlisting Anglo-Norman aid and the general Irish disapproval of the deed.

Gerald of Wales preserves by far the most detailed record of the invasion and its aftermath, and his various observations on the stance adopted by the Irish deserve some consideration. He, of course, sees the invasion as divine punishment for the sins of the Irish,<sup>11</sup> and claims that a national council of all the Irish church meeting at Armagh admitted as much, though he is prepared to concede that the assembled clerics regarded the invasion as 'a disaster [which] had befallen them'.<sup>12</sup> Gerald also has individual Irishmen express forebodings about the danger of conquest, as when Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, 'with a mind prophetic of future troubles, foresaw that danger threatened both himself and the country as a whole as a result of the arrival of the foreigners'.<sup>13</sup> He puts into Ó Conchobair's mouth a speech warning that the

<sup>8</sup> *Book of Leinster*, I, 5504, 3203-4. One might mention that condemnation of Mac Murchada is not confined to Gaelic sources; the Anglo-Irish annals of Duisk, a late source that draws on earlier annalistic materials, tells us that he died 'sine exitu legitimo de corpore suo' (K.W. Nicholls, 'Late medieval Irish annals: two fragments', *Peritia*, 2 (1983), 96).

<sup>9</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 114-5.

<sup>10</sup> *ATig*; *AU*; *ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1172.

<sup>11</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 232-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 70-71.

<sup>13</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 40-41. Also, Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, king of Osraige, saw the appearance in Ireland of the humble but long-banished frog as 'a sure sign of the coming of the English, and the imminent conquest and defeat of his people'. The normally unsympathetic Gerald seems to have some pity for Domnall. He tells us that, shaking his head, 'and with great sorrow in his heart', Domnall remarked: 'That reptile brings very bad news to Ireland' (*The history and topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O'Meara (Dolmen Press edn., Mountrath, Portlaoise, 1982), 52).

English are 'a race most hostile to ours, a race which has long been eager to rule us all alike...a race moreover which asserts that by the Fates' decree they are entitled to jurisdiction over our land'.<sup>14</sup> This is perhaps an echo of an attempt by the Irish, even then, to dispute the legitimacy of the Anglo-Norman title to Ireland. Ruaidrí did indeed send messengers to fitz Stephen in an effort to persuade him 'to leave peacefully and with mutual goodwill this country in which he could claim for himself no right of jurisdiction'.<sup>15</sup> He made several such appeals to Mac Murchada, 'bringing forward many arguments on behalf of his country and his own people', and Gerald does not disguise the reasonableness of Ruaidrí's case: he states that 'as regards Waterford, Desmond, Thomond, and Meath, which were all seized unlawfully, I make no excuses for the Earl (Strongbow)'.<sup>16</sup> He quotes what he claims is the text of a message sent by Ó Conchobair to Diarmait which, one assumes, is Gerald's own composition but is the very essence of wounded restraint:

Contrary to the conditions of our treaty you have invited into this island a large number of foreigners. Yet we put up with this with a good grace while you confined yourself within your province of Leinster. But now, since you are unmindful of your oath and without feelings of pity for the hostage you have given, and have arrogantly trespassed beyond the stipulated limits and your ancestral boundaries, you must either restrain the forays of your foreign troops for the future, or else we will send you without fail the severed head of your son.<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere in the same work Gerald is conscious of the need to attempt to rebutt the 'vociferous complaints that the kings of England hold Ireland unlawfully',<sup>18</sup> and in what is called 'A commendation and defence of fitz Stephen, the Earl and the King', he states:

Fitz Stephen and the Earl cannot in any sense be classed as mere robbers, as far as Leinster is concerned. Both rest their claims on the same legal position, for they both acted within the law in restoring Diarmait to his lands, the one because he had taken an oath of allegiance to him, and the other because he had married his daughter...The remaining princes of Ireland immediately made a voluntary submission to Henry, and thus conferred a legal claim that is beyond dispute. So...it must be clear from the above that in entering Ireland the English were not guilty of injustice *such as is foolishly attributed to them by the ill-informed*.<sup>19</sup>

It seems evident from this that a sense of the 'injustice' of the Anglo-Norman entry into Ireland had emerged. This found a political expression.

### *The 1170s: first stirrings of joint action?*

When 'the alarming news of the arrival of the foreigners became known throughout the island', Gerald tells us that Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair sent emissaries to call together the country's *primates*, in order to co-ordinate a response.<sup>20</sup> And he did indeed assemble something like a

<sup>14</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 42-3.

<sup>15</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 40-43.

<sup>16</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 230-31.

<sup>17</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 68-9.

<sup>18</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 148-9.

<sup>19</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 228-31 (my italics).

<sup>20</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 40-41.

national army on more than one occasion in the early stages of the campaign,<sup>21</sup> so much so that Strongbow's uncle, Hervey de Montmorency, is made to declare:

...the whole population of Ireland has joined in plotting our destruction, not without good reason...Either we must vigorously pursue that end for which we have come here, and with the aid of our armed might and our valour subdue with a strong arm that rebellious people...or...turn our ships round and leave this people which so deserves our pity to enjoy their country and ancestral lands in peace.<sup>22</sup>

The 'plot', as Hervey puts it, found its opportunity in the summer of 1173. When Henry II's eldest son, the young King Henry, rebelled in league with Louis of France, large numbers of the new settlers in Ireland, including their leaders, Strongbow and Hugh de Lacy, withdrew to Normandy to their lord's aid.<sup>23</sup> This was the signal for an Irish revolt: 'The Irish had got to hear of the serious disturbances which had lately broken out in the lands across the sea, and as they are a race consistent only in their fickleness...[Strongbow, on his return] found almost all the princes of that country in open revolt against the king and himself'.<sup>24</sup>

What is interesting is that this revolt in Ireland was matched by disturbances by both the Scots and Welsh. Let us look first at the former. King William of Scotland had clearly been in Louis's camp in 1168 when his envoys were at the French court 'promising help and offering hostages' in order to keep Anglo-French hostilities alive.<sup>25</sup> In 1173, therefore, he invaded England, 'having learned how greatly the king of the English laboured in Normandy'.<sup>26</sup> His invasion was a well-timed onslaught, taking full advantage of Henry's difficulty.<sup>27</sup> Now, almost certainly there was no contact between the Scottish invaders of England (at their most active in the several months leading up to William's capture at Alnwick in July 1174) and the leaders of the Irish counter-offensive taking place at the same time. But a couple of points are worth making. More than one source stresses that William's invading force was not just of southern Scots: it was made up of 'highland Scots whom they call brutes (*montanos Scotos quos brutos vocant*) and the Gallovidians'; they were, we are told, 'a host of barbarians', a phrase usually reserved for the Scots of the highlands and islands; most interestingly of all, Jordan Fantosme's contemporary verse chronicle claims that there was a great host from Moray and Ross among them, a region which, as we have earlier seen, appears to have had quite close

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<sup>21</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 50-51; *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 1570; see also, *NHI*, II, 83.

<sup>22</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 62-5.

<sup>23</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 2864-2945; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, I, 325-6.

<sup>24</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 134-5.

<sup>25</sup> *Materials for the history of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J.C. Robertson, 7 vols (RS, London, 1875-85), VI, 458; see also, Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 228. Professor Duncan has seen in King William's collusion with Louis 'the beginning of the 'Auld Alliance'' (at p. 230).

<sup>26</sup> William of Newburgh, 'Historia rerum Anglicarum', translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 248.

<sup>27</sup> For a recent discussion of the subject, see Judith Green, 'Anglo-Scottish relations 1066-1174', in *England and her neighbours, 1066-1453. Essays in honour of Pierre Chaplais*, ed. Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale (London, 1989), 53-72 (at pp. 69-71).

associations with Ireland.<sup>28</sup> With this in mind, it may just be of relevance that the army which Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair assembled in Ireland that summer to halt the encastellation of Meath seems also to have had a component from the Scottish highlands or the Isles. The *Song of Dermot* lists the northern kings who accompanied him,<sup>29</sup> and among them is a certain Mac Scilling, who appears to have been the leader of a Scottish fleet that aided the northern king, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn, in 1154, whom a late Scottish source identifies as a bastard son of Somerled of Argyll.<sup>30</sup>

If there were Scotsmen aiding in Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair's army of resistance, they were, ironically, more than outmatched by the contribution of the new English settlers in Ireland to the defeat and capture of William of Scotland. The *Song of Dermot* has an important account of the campaign, as follows:

At this time there was, as you know, a great war,  
Throughout all England;  
For the rich king of Scotland  
Was at war with the English king...  
He thought by their war  
To ravage all England,  
While the son of the Empress  
Warred against his son in Normandy.<sup>31</sup>

When the sister invasion to William's, that from the Continent by the Earl of Leicester and his Flemish mercenaries, collapsed with his defeat near Bury St Edmunds, the *Song of Dermot* was of the view that 'They were discomfited in this manner/ By the aid of Leinster (*par le succurs de Leynestere*);/ And by the might of the Irish (*par la force des Yrreis*)/ The field remained with the English.' It goes on to state:

And in his turn within that month  
The king [of Scotland] was taken and conquered.  
And the barons of Ireland (*les baruns de Yrlande*),  
Who were in this brawl,  
All passed over to Normandy,  
And told the news to the King,  
How the Flemings were slain  
And the king of Scotland taken.<sup>32</sup>

It is extraordinary how the *Song*, apparently based on an account of the events supplied by Diarmait Mac Murchada's own *latimer* - a native Irishman, who participated in many of the events it so accurately relates<sup>33</sup> - should describe those forces from the new colony who fought at Bury as 'the Irish'; this was a phrase reserved at this early stage for the native Irish, except

<sup>28</sup> Fordun, 'Gesta annalia', X, in Skene, *Historians of Scotland*, I, 262; II, 257-8; Gerald of Wales, 'De Principis Instructione', in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 284; Jordan Fantosme, 'Chronique de la guerre entre les Anglois et les Ecosais en 1173 et 1174', ed. Richard Howlett, in *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, III (RS, London, 1874), 242-4.

<sup>29</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 3238-79.

<sup>30</sup> See above, 31, n. 79.

<sup>31</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 2950-61.

<sup>32</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 2968-79.

<sup>33</sup> See Joseph Long, 'Dermot and the Earl: who wrote "the Song"?', *Proc. R.I.A.*, 75, C (1975), 263-72.

by those unable to distinguish between both races. It suggests the possibility that levies of Irish troops from the newly conquered areas of Leinster accompanied the Anglo-Norman barons. If so, what may be the near simultaneous presence of Scotsmen fighting against the Anglo-Normans in Ireland, and of Irishmen fighting against the Scots' allies in England, is an indication of how the invasion of Ireland added almost overnight to the complications of Scotland's already complex relationship with Ireland.

Much the same is true of the Welsh situation. Following the death of Owain Gwynedd in 1170, the Lord Rhys of Deheubarth took over as the leading figure in the Welsh polity and maintained loyalty to Henry II throughout the crisis, even sending his son to join Henry's forces. But another, lesser Welsh princeling, Iorwerth ab Owain of Gwynllwg (in the south-east marches, between Morgannwg and Gwent), along with his son Hywel, launched a revolt, in pursuance of the family claim to Caerleon.<sup>34</sup> Gerald of Wales links the Gwynllwg rising with King William's abortive assault on England and Henry's continental troubles:

Hywel, the son of Iorwerth of Caerleon, attacked the neighbourhood and destroyed the whole area. A little later Henry II, King of the English, captured the King of Scotland and so restored peace to his own realm. As a result Hywel had good reason to fear that Henry would be free to take vengeance on him for the war which he had waged...[But Meilyr the soothsayer assured him:] 'You need not fear the King's anger...One of his cities, the noblest which he possesses across the Channel, is being besieged by the King of the French. He will be forced to put aside all other preoccupations and to cross the sea without losing a moment.'<sup>35</sup>

If the revolt of Iorwerth and Hywel was thus indirectly linked with the Scottish invasion, it had a much closer bearing on the Irish situation. The insurgents in both instances were motivated by the same impulse. The object of the Irish offensive led by King Ruaidrí was to overcome some of the recent successes of Anglo-Norman adventurers there, successes which Strongbow personified. Therefore, we find Domnall Mór Ó Briain attacking Strongbow's garrison in Waterford, and a disinherited grandson of Diarmait Mac Murchada revolting against his new uncle by doing battle with the Anglo-Norman settlers in Leinster.<sup>36</sup> But Strongbow was also the target of the Welsh rising. Its high-point was reached in mid-August 1173 when the insurgents swept as far as the very walls of Chepstow, the principal castle of the lordship of Strigoil. When the tide turned against Iorwerth and Hywel, it was Strongbow's men who seized the castle of Usk from them,<sup>37</sup> and when Henry II decided to reach a moderate settlement, Strongbow was ordered to restore the main bone of contention, Caerleon, to them.<sup>38</sup>

There is no evidence of any collaboration between the organizers of the Irish and Welsh revolts, and no reason to suspect such, though it would be perhaps unreasonable to assume that the one was initiated entirely in ignorance of the other. The essential point is that the

<sup>34</sup> For the Gwynllwg revolt, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 545-6.

<sup>35</sup> Gerald of Wales, *The journey through Wales and the description of Wales*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1978), 119-20.

<sup>36</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1173.

<sup>37</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 546, n. 50.

<sup>38</sup> For these events, see Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 275; and Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, 157, n. 88.



convenient absence from both arenas of Strongbow, and of much of the colonists' defensive strength, happened to combine with an all but identical sense of grievance, and a common target, to produce enough tinder to spark off simultaneous revolts on both sides of the Irish Sea. It is of significance only because it represents the first instance of such synchronous insurgency in the period after the Anglo-Norman expansion into Ireland, but it was to become a perennial concern.

In the aftermath of these revolts, Henry II sought to regularize his relations with the respective native leaders. A *modus vivendi* was worked out with the Welsh at a council held at Gloucester in June 1175, and with the Scots and Irish in the so-called treaties of Falaise and Windsor.<sup>39</sup> Contemporaries were not blind to the significance of recent events, Gerald of Wales, for instance, commenting that such power had never previously been wielded by a king of England, not since the Norman conquest, not even since the Anglo-Saxon invasions:

[Henry] triumphed over realms remote and alien, which pertained to none of his predecessors, from the arrival of the Normans, or even of the Angles. Crossing the deep sea, he visited Ireland with a fleet, and gloriously subdued it. Scotland also he vanquished, capturing its king, William. And, adding to the English crown an increment so noble beyond precedent, he remarkably extended the kingdom's limits and boundaries, from the ocean on the south to the Orkney islands on the north, with powerful grasp including the whole island of Britain in one monarchy...<sup>40</sup>

When the king of Scots managed to wrench his realm free from the Angevin grasp in a deal done with Richard I shortly after his succession, the Chronicle of Melrose (not noted for its anti-English sentiment at this point) tells us that 'by God's grace he worthily and honourably removed [Henry's] yoke of domination and of servitude from the kingdom of the Scots'.<sup>41</sup> One of the humiliating provisions of the Falaise agreement had stipulated the subjection of the Scottish church to the English.<sup>42</sup> It was vigorously resisted, and John of Fordun has a Scots cleric remind his English listeners at a legatine council at Northampton in January 1176 that the Scottish church was, in fact, their mother (presumably a reference to the ancient debt owed to the missionary activities of St Aidan and his helpers from Iona):

'Men of England...puffed up by your teeming hosts of knights...ye, through some wrongful lust or greed of mastery, aim at subduing to your sway all the bordering provinces and nations; nations nobler than you - I will not say in numbers or in might - but in blood and antiquity, nations whom, if ye look into the writings of old, ye ought rather humbly to obey...moreover, priding yourselves in all the wickedness ye have wrought, ye are striving...by brute force, to crush the Scottish Catholic Church, your mother...'<sup>43</sup>

The words may be apocryphal, the sentiment is very much in keeping with the prevailing mood:<sup>44</sup> the other inhabitants of the archipelago are clearly conscious of, and some worried about, recent demonstrations of English power.

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<sup>39</sup> See W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), 201-2.

<sup>40</sup> 'De Principis Instructione', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 294-5.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 323.

<sup>42</sup> *Anglo-Scottish relations 1174-1328. Some selected documents*, ed. and trans. E.L.G. Stones (Oxford, 1965), 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> Fordun, 'Gesta Annalia', XV, in Skene, *Historians of Scotland*, I, 266; II, 262.

<sup>44</sup> The best discussion of the Scottish church's struggle to preserve its separate identity in the period is perhaps Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, chap. 10.

### *The conquest of Ulster*

The screw tightened further in 1177. The north of Ireland remained relatively isolated from recent developments until the seizure of the capital of the east Ulster kingdom of Ulaid by John de Courcy in February 1177. This had serious implications for 'Irish Sea' politics. De Courcy was another Anglo-Norman adventurer, whose action in staking out a claim for himself in Ulster may or may not have had official backing.<sup>45</sup> The spectacular success that greeted his actions has given the episode an heroic and adventuresome aspect, but it did not come entirely out of the blue: the groundwork was surely laid quite some time in advance, and it fits in to some extent with the traditional pattern of events in the area. This is suggested by a number of considerations.

To start with, while it has been claimed for John de Courcy that he was of immediate Somerset extraction, he seems to have had firmer links before his conquest of Ulster with that part of England in closest contact with the north of Ireland, Cumbria.<sup>46</sup> Although his family background is obscure and he himself possibly illegitimate, it seems quite likely that his father was William de Courcy II, lord of Stogursey in Somerset: the latter was married to Avise, a daughter of William Meschin, lord of Copeland in Cumberland and of Cecily de Rumilly, heiress of Skipton in Yorkshire. This, rather than Somerset, is the part of the world where John's associations lay. Of those whom de Courcy enfeoffed in Ulster and whose place of origin can be identified, the bulk of them - men such as Gilbert of Furness in Lancashire, Roger, Elias, Arnold, Philip, and Hugh, all of Chester, Richard son of Trouce from Cumberland, William and Henry of Copeland in Cumberland, Brian of Scales in Cumberland, Augustine of Rydal in Westmorland - come from an area of England between Chester and the Scottish border. Just as revealing as a guide to de Courcy's background are his monastic foundations, since he founded only one religious house with a Somerset link, but five which were daughters of houses in the north-west, and another which was dependent on a Scottish house founded by a family with landed interest in the area. The balance of probability must be that the favour de Courcy showed to these churches after his conquest of Ulster, and the fact that most of his followers whose place of origin can be identified hail from the same area, is to be accounted for by his own earlier links with the region. In that case, his very interest in Ulster, and in the possibility of attempting a conquest, may have been the result of his experiences in Cumbria.

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<sup>45</sup> It ran counter to the terms of the treaty of Windsor (see Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship*, 258-9), though one source (*Song of Dermot and the earl*, 2300-04) claims that Ulster was granted to de Courcy by Henry II as far back as 1171-2; de Courcy's activities are recounted in Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 5-23.

<sup>46</sup> For an examination of the case in detail, see Appendix 3.

It is worth noting that one of the English houses which John de Courcy chose to patronize already had a daughter in Ulster before his arrival. According to a lengthy and remarkable account in the Register of Furness, possibly written by Jocelin, the Patrician biographer, Furness had a dependent house at Erenagh (Carraig) in County Down, established as a daughter of Savigny in 1127, by 'Magnellus Makenlefe', king of Ulster.<sup>47</sup> This is a Mac Duinn Sléibe, possibly Ragnall (d. 1131) if the initial letter is miscopied, or 'mac Néill', son of the Niall who died in 1127. The exact date given for the establishment of Erenagh is 8 September 1127; Furness itself was set up by the monks of Savigny only two months earlier. This bears ample witness to the potential for contact between Cumbria and Ulaid. Interestingly too, most of the houses de Courcy favoured had established links with the Isle of Man and were generously provided for by its kings. Furness had a daughter-house on Man - Rushen abbey - founded in 1134 by Amlaíb son of a former king of Dublin and the Isles, Godred Crovan.<sup>48</sup> Holmcultram had no affiliated houses until de Courcy's wife Affreca set up Grey abbey in County Down, but her father, Gofraid mac Amlaíb, king of Man from 1154 to 1187, granted the monks of Holm the right to enter the Isle of Man when they wished and purchase goods without tolls or customs.<sup>49</sup> He also granted the abbey of St Bees in Copeland land near Douglas in Man, and his charter contains mention of an earlier grant on the island to the same monks.<sup>50</sup> The extension of these houses' interests into Man was a natural one, but in a geographical sense at least Man was a stepping-stone to Ulster, and, in the secular sphere, we may perhaps not unreasonably see de Courcy's conquest of the latter kingdom as the bridge linking Cumbria, Man, and Ulaid.

De Courcy's choice of wife indicates the importance of the same axis. 'The marriage bed is', as Professor Davies put it, 'one of the easiest, cheapest and most comfortable routes to domination'.<sup>51</sup> Strongbow legitimized his possession of Leinster by marrying Diarmait Mac Murchada's daughter. Hugh de Lacy then attempted to make firm his grip on Meath by taking to wife a daughter of the king of Connacht and Ireland, Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair. When William de Burgh was given by Prince John a large slice of territory bordering Limerick and Tipperary, he made sure to marry Dómnall Mór Ó Briain's daughter.<sup>52</sup> John de Courcy might have been

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<sup>47</sup> *The Coucher Book of Furness abbey*, ed. J.C. Atkinson [and John Brownbill] 2 vols in 6. (Chetham Soc., Manchester, 1886-1919), new ser., ix, xi, lxxiv, lxxvi, lxxviii; ix (1886), 11-13; William Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore* (Dublin, 1847), 232-3; cf. Aubrey Gwynn and R.N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious houses, Ireland* (London, 1970), 132.

<sup>48</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 35v.

<sup>49</sup> *The register and records of Holm Cultram*, ed. Francis Grainger and W.G. Collingwood, Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, Record Series, VII (Kendal, 1929), no.265 (a), p. 94.

<sup>50</sup> *The register of the priory of St Bees*, ed. James Wilson, Surtees Society, CXXVI (1915), no.43, p. 72.

<sup>51</sup> *Domination and conquest*, 5; see also, 52.

<sup>52</sup> Many years later we learn that one of the early relatives of Raymond le Gros to settle in Cork, Richard de Carew, had married a daughter of Mac Carthaig: *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 372-3. Diarmait Mac Carthaig, king of Desmumu from 1209 to 1221, married a daughter of Thomas Bloet, sheriff of Cork and Waterford (W.L. Warren, 'King John and Ireland', in *England and Ireland in the later Middle Ages*, ed. James Lydon (Dublin, 1981), 29). For intermarriage between the Irish nobility and Anglo-Norman settlers, see Kenneth Nicholls, *Gaelic and Gaelicised Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1972), 16-17.

expected to adopt a similar course by marrying into a compliant branch of the Ulaid nobility or, for instance, the Cenél nEógain, but instead he married the famous Affreca, daughter of the then king of Man and the Isles, Gofraid mac Amlaíb. Why? Why did de Courcy believe that the subjugation of Ulster would be facilitated by marriage to a Manx princess? The simple, perhaps facile, answer is that de Courcy recognized the usefulness of the island's fleet in the event of him being forced out of the maritime province: this, of course, was not to happen until over a quarter of a century later, when he did indeed seek to re-instate himself using Manx and Hebridean naval power. But something more than this is likely to have motivated his actions. We cannot be certain when he married Affreca, as the source for the date usually accepted, 1180, is the so-called 'Dublin' Annals of Inisfallen, an eighteenth-century compilation of very limited merit.<sup>53</sup> We do still have Affreca's dower charter which assigns to her lands almost exclusively in Ulster, proving that the conquest was already well under way, but it may have been drawn up a good deal later than the marriage or the marriage-agreement. The balance of the evidence suggests that we are not dealing with a swashbuckling Somerset knight who seized Ulster by valour and a stroke of good fortune, and then later dug himself in by marrying an island bride for the mercenary fleet that went with her; we are dealing with a man with connexions in Cumbria, and with a fine-tuned appreciation of the nuances of Manx-Ulster politics. More than likely, de Courcy knew before his march on Down that the Manx had a history of unfriendly relations with the Ulaid. More than likely, he was also aware that the success of his venture would largely depend on the attitude adopted by the Meic Lochlainn of Cenél nEógain, the Ulaid's leading Irish opponents. And, more than likely, he knew that the Ulaid were at that precise moment the meat sandwiched between the Manx on one side and the Meic Lochlainn on the other: John's father-in-law, or future father-in-law, Gofraid mac Amlaíb, was married to Mac Lochlainn's daughter.<sup>54</sup> One can, of course, assume that John was ignorant of this strategic nicety prior to his assault on Ulster, but to do so would be to accept as coincidence the extraordinary fact that, either on his arrival at Down or on his very march to seize the city, he was met by the papal legate, Cardinal Vivian, who had just taken ship from Man, where he had given the sanction of the church to the Manx-Cenél nEógain marriage.<sup>55</sup> Surely Vivian was at Down at that precise moment in expectation of meeting de Courcy, and that information must have come from the Isle of Man.

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<sup>53</sup> Orpen (*Ireland under the Normans*, II, 19) obtained the date from these annals and it has been used by several subsequent historians. I have also noted it in a set of unpublished annals in B.L. Addit. MS 4783, entitled "Annals of Ireland from the first arrival of the English, untill the end of the reign of King Henry the 2d", by Sir J[ames] W[are]' (see fol. 94r.).

<sup>54</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 40r.

<sup>55</sup> Roger of Howden (*Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs (RS, London, 1871), II, 28-9) says that Vivian was on his way from Down to Dublin when he encountered de Courcy's army, and then returned to Down with the invaders. According to both William of Newburgh (*Historia rerum Anglicarum*, ed. Richard Howlett (RS, London, 1884), I, 238) and Gerald of Wales (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, 174-5), Vivian was still at Down when de Courcy arrived.

De Courcy's invasion of Ulster may, therefore, have had some of the attributes of an 'Irish Sea' alliance. To some degree it had the effect of consolidating the Cumbria-Man-Ulster link. To some degree it fitted into the traditional pattern of relations in the area, principally in its exploitation of the enmity between Ulaid and Man. It looks too as if John hoped to neutralize the opposition of the Cenél nEógain by his Manx alliance. The 'Irish Sea' aspect impinges in another way. Gerald of Wales is, of course, anxious to justify de Courcy's action. He therefore quotes what he claims is a prophecy of Merlin Silvester to the effect that a man fitting John's description 'will be the first to enter Ulaid and overrun it with hostile intent'; more importantly, he tells us that the Irish saint, Colum Cille, foretold the conquest by the English of various Irish towns, and he lists them: Waterford, Wexford, Dublin, Limerick, and Down.<sup>56</sup> It is an interesting point. Gerald sees the capture of the important ecclesiastical centre at Down in the same light as that of the various Ostman towns. The latter were seized because of their value as concentrations of economic activity and as being the primary entrance-points into the island. This is what Down may have represented for the north-east.

### *Ireland and the Isles after the fall of Dublin*

The only forces outside Ireland whom we know to have reacted negatively to the Anglo-Norman assault were the men of the Isles. This may be because they were the only ones who perceived themselves from the start as having something to lose by it. The principal targets of the assault were the seaports of the east coast, Wexford, Waterford, and Dublin, and these were for all intents and purposes the Islesmen's only remaining footholds in Ireland. They were also, if nothing else, geographically beyond what the reigning king of Ireland, Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, could realistically have hoped to control. Hence the claim in the *Song of Dermot* that when Strongbow offered to hold Leinster of Ruaidrí, the latter demurred, saying he could have the three towns in question and not a whit more.<sup>57</sup> Gerald of Wales may have been reporting an Irish willingness to cede the towns when he records the Irish prophecy that 'almost all the English will be dislodged from Ireland by a king who will come from the lonely mountains of Patrick', adding: 'nevertheless these same prophets assert that (the English) will retain uninterrupted possession of the eastern seaboard of the island.'<sup>58</sup> This the Islesmen at least were loath to accept. Gerald has it that the men of Dublin 'called almost all the inhabitants of Ireland to help in its defence', their king declaring that the failure of their first attempt to recover the city 'will soon be followed by other expeditions on a far larger scale, and having a very different outcome'.<sup>59</sup> Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair and Dublin's archbishop,

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<sup>56</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 174-7.

<sup>57</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 1849 ff.

<sup>58</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 232-3.

<sup>59</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 76-7.

Lorcán Ó Tuathail, the latter acting 'out of patriotic motives (*zelo sue gentis*)', sent letters to King Gofraid mac Amlaíb of the Isles, whose 'fear of the threat of English domination'<sup>60</sup> encouraged him to come to their assistance.

Clearly, if Gerald's assessment is correct, the Islesmen regarded the intrusion of the Anglo-Normans into Ireland as a danger to themselves. This may be for any of a number of reasons. Their days as lords of the Ostman towns were numbered and for many of them this may have meant actual physical ejection: 'the greater part of them...went on board ship, taking their most precious belongings, and sailed off' to start afresh in the Isles, or to make do with inferior holdings there.<sup>61</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the Dublin Ostmen in particular were in expansionist mood in the final decades of their independent existence,<sup>62</sup> but now any hope of annexing further territory in its hinterland was shattered. Their dominance over Irish trade was likewise a thing of the past (though one imagines that Ostmen of the merchant classes, as distinct from their political and military masters, stayed put, and may even have prospered in the new era). But also, to judge from Gerald's remark, they must have been aware that for the longer term the area under 'threat of English domination' was not confined to Ireland's eastern seaboard but included their Manx and Hebridean refuges.

But the Anglo-Norman seizure of Dublin did not bring Manx interests in the city to an end. As we have seen, Dublin's early history is noticeable not merely for the closeness of its association with Man but also with the east Ulster area - probably dictated by its maritime position. The Manx input into de Courcy's conquest may have done something to perpetuate the association between Dublin and Ulster. St Mary's abbey, Dublin, which was founded in 1139, held substantial lands in Ulster, concentrated on the Ards peninsula;<sup>63</sup> some at least of these were probably grants of de Courcy, and Affreca's brother Ragnall, king of Man and the Isles from 1187 to 1226, granted protection on land and sea to the monks of St Mary's,<sup>64</sup> which may have been to facilitate their entry into them. De Courcy also made a grant of lands near Downpatrick to St Thomas's abbey, Dublin.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, lands in the diocese of Down 'within three miles of the sea where ships can pass' were granted by him to the archbishop of Dublin.<sup>66</sup> Other lands in the Lecale district were granted by John to Christ Church.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 78-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 68-9.

<sup>62</sup> See Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man', n. 125.

<sup>63</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 14.

<sup>65</sup> *Register of the abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, ed. J.T. Gilbert (RS, London, 1889), 221.

<sup>66</sup> *Alen's register*, 288; see also 17, 22, 25.

<sup>67</sup> 'Calendar of Christ Church deeds', Appendix VII in *20th P.R.I. rep. D.K.*, no.10; Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities*, 211-13.

As best we can tell, Manxmen continued to occupy lands in and around Dublin.<sup>68</sup> Of course, the converse was also true and considerable pressure must have been brought to bear on Man and the other islands by the influx of Hiberno-Scandinavian refugees after 1170. We get what may be one telling indicator of this. In the immediate aftermath of de Courcy's conquest of Ulster,<sup>69</sup> the Isle of Man was invaded while its king was absent elsewhere (in Ulster with his new son-in-law?). The invasion was a failure and its leader slain. But the latter is named in the Manx Chronicle as Reginaldus filius Eacmarcat, whom it describes as *vir de regali genere*. His identity is unclear but an Echmarcach Mac Turcaill, one of the then ruling family of Dublin, witnessed a charter of Diarmait Mac Murchada sometime between 1162 and 1166;<sup>70</sup> this is perhaps a son of his. If so, it may be of significance because the Meic Turcaill appear to have held on to some of their Dublin lands after the fall of the city: about 1174, Strongbow granted Hamund Mac Turcaill lands at Kinsaley 'held by him before the arrival of the English in Ireland';<sup>71</sup> a 'G. Mactorail' witnessed a grant of Thomas abbot of Glendalough to Archbishop Lorcán Ó Tuathail some time between 1172 and 1181;<sup>72</sup> a late twelfth-century grant of lands in the *villa Ostmannorum* to St Mary's abbey is witnessed by an Alan Mac Turcaill.<sup>73</sup> If it was a Mac Turcaill who invaded Man in the late 1170s, it is not beyond question that Dublin provided the leadership, the manpower, and the resources.

At first sight, this is a rather remote possibility. But evidence suggests that although the independence of action of the Ostmen of Ireland was severely handicapped by the Anglo-Norman assertion of overlordship over their cities, it was not entirely lost, at least not overnight. In 1171 (*after* the fall of Dublin), when Milo de Cogan raided Duleek, we are told that the Dublin Ostmen killed some of his men 'in revenge of Cianán', whose shrine was located there.<sup>74</sup> In 1173 the Cork Ostmen came to Waterford in a fleet of thirty-two ships, and fought a naval battle in which their leader 'Gilbert Mac Turger' was killed.<sup>75</sup> After the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland the term *Gall*, in the course of time, came to describe the new invaders, rather than the Hiberno-Scandinavians as had formerly been the case. Thus, by 1174 one would have imagined that a reference to the activities of '*Gaill Átha Cliath* (the foreigners

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<sup>68</sup> Collections of Dublin deeds refer to Manx people, or individuals of Manx origin, such as Trig de Man, Mauricius le Maniske, Walter Man, Alicia Manske (*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 346-53, 477, 480, 497), Reginaldus de Mannia (*Register of the Hospital of S. John the Baptist without the New Gate, Dublin*, ed. Eric St John Brooks (I.M.C., Dublin, 1936), no.186), Adam Mananach (*Alen's register*, 109).

<sup>69</sup> The Manx Chronicle (fol.40r.) dates the event to 1172 though it is placed after de Courcy's invasion in 1177.

<sup>70</sup> *Registrum prioratus Omnium Sanctorum iuxta Dublin*, ed. Richard Butler (IAS, Dublin, 1845), 50-51.

<sup>71</sup> 'Calendar of Christ Church deeds', *22nd P.R.I. rep. DK*, no. 1; other lands of Hamund are mentioned in *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 129.

<sup>72</sup> *Alen's register*, 9.

<sup>73</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 227. Even as late as 1305 the Justiciary Rolls contain mention of a Fyngole wife of Walter Mc Torkill of Dublin (*Cal. just. rolls*, II, 285).

<sup>74</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1171.

<sup>75</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 136-7; for the Cork Ostmen, see H.A. Jefferies, 'The history and topography of Viking Cork', *Journal of the Cork Hist. & Arch. Soc.*, 90 (1985), 14-25.

of Dublin)' had the new settlers there in mind, but not so, or at least not exclusively so: when the petty ruler of Cairbre was killed by *Gaill Átha Cliath* in this year, the latter were led by a 'Mac Turnin', almost certainly an Ostman.<sup>76</sup> In the same year, the new Anglo-Norman constable of Waterford was assassinated by 'the foreigners of the fort (*Gallaib in dúin*)', again apparently Ostmen, since one Irish chronicler was of the view that the action was inspired by elation at the defeat of Strongbow at Thurles by Domnall Mór Ó Briain.<sup>77</sup> The Four Masters tell us that before the latter battle Strongbow and his men 'solicited to their assistance the *Gaill Átha Cliath*', and again these appear to be Ostmen, because the Cottonian annals refer to this as a clash *cum Anglicis et Dubliniensibus*.<sup>78</sup>

It seems, therefore, that some Ostman families managed to salvage part of their former autonomy even after the annexation of their city-states. And the possibility that something of the earlier pattern of relations between Dublin and Man managed to outlast the city's capture is suggested by the poem [*Baile suthach síth Emhna*], written by a poet based in Ireland for King Ragnall mac Gofraid (1187-1229). The poet claims to have been to Man where he received generous gifts from Ragnall; he seeks further patronage when Ragnall brings spoils from raiding Dundalk (*Tráigh mBaile*) and, more importantly, when the Manx king establishes a footing in Dublin:

Airgfe Áth Cliath in chomlaid  
's do sciath ar scáth do glanbhuinn;  
áit toighi ar thocht cu Duibhlin  
cuinghim ort roime, A Raghnaill.

Thou wilt plunder Áth Cliath of the contest  
and thy shield protecting thy fair body;  
a site for a house on coming to Dublin  
I ask of thee in advance, O Ragnall.<sup>79</sup>

This stray piece of verse is a remarkable insight into the cultural milieu of the Manx royal house at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But frankly, apart from this and his charter of protection to the monks of St Mary's abbey in the city, we have no other evidence of activity by Ragnall in connexion with Dublin.

We do, however, get the occasional glimpse of involvements elsewhere that may have impinged on Dublin. We have seen that the family of Owain Gwynedd held lands in the city, some or all of which remained in their possession after 1170. In the internecine wars that followed Owain's death, his sons were wont to seek refuge in Dublin in time of crisis. About 1190, Rhodri ab Owain was expelled from Anglesey by the sons of his brother Cynan. He may have taken ship to join another brother, Rhirid, who was lord of Cloghran in north County Dublin (and was himself perhaps, as I suggest above, lord of Balrothery). In any case, three

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<sup>76</sup> *AFM*; *ATig* s.a. 1174.

<sup>77</sup> *Misc. Irish Annals* s.a. 1175.

<sup>78</sup> 'Annals in Cotton MS Titus A. XXV', ed. A.M. Freeman, in *Revue Celtique*, 41-4 (1924-7); at vol. 42 (1925), p. 290.

<sup>79</sup> Brian Ó Cuív, 'A poem in praise of Ragnall, King of Man', *Éigse*, 8 (1956-7), 283-301; qq. 19, 44.



years later Rhodri turned up in Wales, initiating what the Welsh chronicler calls 'the summer of the Irish (*haf y gwydyl*)'.<sup>80</sup> In the meantime, he had married, not an Irish woman, but a young daughter of Ragnall mac Gofraid,<sup>81</sup> and the Welsh *Brut* texts have him subduing Anglesey with Ragnall's help. Now, unless we accept like Lloyd that *haf y gwydyl* is to be translated 'the Gaelic summer' and refers to the influx of Rhodri's *Manx* allies, which seems quite unlikely, then the army with which Rhodri ab Owain sought to reinstate himself was substantially Irish in composition. Did Ragnall mac Gofraid, therefore, have access to Irish arms? One other piece of evidence, if accurate, tends to confirm that he did. Within three or four years of his apparent deployment of Irish troops in Wales, Ragnall was in action again, this time in the north of Scotland. There, Earl Harald of Orkney and Caithness had run up against the opposition of the Scots king, William the Lion, who deposed him, and then granted the earldom to Ragnall. We know this from Roger Howden's chronicle.<sup>82</sup> But the *Flateyjarbók*, a fourteenth-century collection of Icelandic literature, adds the crucial detail that Ragnall mac Gofraid, 'then the greatest warrior in the western lands', subdued Caithness with an army drawn from the Hebrides, Kintyre, and Ireland.<sup>83</sup> This looks every inch the host that had descended on Wales five years earlier.

If Ragnall had access to Irish arms these perhaps came from within the sphere of influence of his brother-in-law, John de Courcy, whose alliance with the *Manx* appears to have remained steadfast throughout his twenty-seven years as ruler of Ulster.<sup>84</sup> John finally lost hold of his patrimony in 1204, ironically himself the victim of an invasion, led from Meath by his former allies, Hugh and Walter de Lacy. The Irish annals are quite laconic about de Courcy's fall, but by comparison, the *Manx* Chronicle offers our most detailed account, a testimony to *Manx* preoccupation with the outcome.<sup>85</sup> We are told that after fleeing Ulster de Courcy went to Ragnall 'and was honourably received by him, because he was his brother-in-law (*gener*)'. In the following year John re-assembled his forces, including, we are told, a massive fleet of one hundred ships led by King Ragnall, and returned to Ulster. There, he made a rather ambitious attempt to besiege Dundrum castle.<sup>86</sup> Walter de Lacy arrived upon

<sup>80</sup> *The text of the Bruts from the Red Book of Hergest*, ed. John Rhys and J.G. Evans (Oxford, 1890), 405; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 588, n. 71.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 70 and p. 617.

<sup>82</sup> *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. William Stubbs (RS, London 1871), IV, 12, where Ragnall, though called 'king of Man', is mistakenly described as a son of Somerled (see Barrow, *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, 16, and 25 n. 74). For the background to these events, see Barbara Crawford, 'The earldom of Caithness and the kingdom of Scotland, 1150-1266', in Keith Stringer (ed.), *Essays on the nobility of medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1985), 25-43 (at p. 31).

<sup>83</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 350, n. 2; for a brief discussion of the *Flateyjarbók*, see *ibid.*, I, lvi.

<sup>84</sup> We may assume that warm relations still pertained in the mid-1180s when de Courcy brought Jocelin of Furness to Inch abbey, where he composed his biography of Patrick, as the latter was shortly appointed abbot of Rushen, and witnessed one of Ragnall's charters in 1188 (J.R. Oliver, *Monumenta de Insula Manniae*, 3 vols (Manx Society, Douglas, 1860-62), II, 18).

<sup>85</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 41r.

<sup>86</sup> *obsederunt castellum de Rath*: for the identification with Dundrum, see G.H. Orpen, 'Dundrum castle County Down, identified with the "castrum de Rath"', *JRSAL*, 39 (1909), 23-9.

the scene, however, and put them to flight. At this point, according to the Annals of Loch Cé, de Courcy 'made his contract and alliance (*a choraid ocus a mhuinnterus*) with Ó Néill and with Cenél nEógain'. This was patently in a last-ditch attempt to have himself reinstated with Uí Néill support, but it yielded little fruit. In the initial stages Ó Néill was certainly hostile to de Lacy, who led an invasion of Telach Óc in 1207,<sup>87</sup> but he did not actively assist in de Lacy's overthrow by King John three years later (and annoyed the king by his refusal to hand over hostages).<sup>88</sup>

The fall of de Courcy did not immediately hurt Ragnall. In February 1205 the Manx king was given letters of protection by King John.<sup>89</sup> He was in England later that year and was granted lands in Lancashire 'for his homage and service' and various monetary gifts.<sup>90</sup> It looks as though John went to considerable lengths to buy Ragnall's compliance, but he was to be disappointed. We have seen that at one point in his career Ragnall was being urged by a Gaelic poet to take Dublin. The next we hear is his attempt (which by 1205 had failed) to cement an alliance with Llywelyn ab Iorwerth of Gwynedd by giving the latter his daughter in marriage.<sup>91</sup> Almost immediately thereafter, however, Ragnall seems to have been busy courting the friendship of the Scots king William the Lion. In 1208 he handed over to William his own half-brother and long-standing enemy, Amlaíb Dub, who was then held in custody for several years.<sup>92</sup> Ragnall offered another indication of his independence when he allowed the de Braose and de Lacy families (who fled before John from Carrickfergus in 1210) to pass safely through the Isle of Man, some of them eventually making it to safety in William's realm.<sup>93</sup> King John responded by sending a fleet to the island to ravage it, the savagery of which assault is commented on in more than one source.<sup>94</sup> Though the Manx king was not actually on the island to witness the assault, it was enough to bring him to heel. For the rest of John's Irish expedition, Man provided a source of supply for his army.<sup>95</sup> Two years later, their status relative to each other was clarified when Ragnall formally became John's liegeman and was granted land in Ireland to hold of the king: one knight's fee, located on the sea at Carlingford, and one hundred seams of wheat payable annually at Drogheda.<sup>96</sup> Carlingford was originally a Viking foundation, where the Manx may have had a residual interest, but one

<sup>87</sup> *AU* s.a. 1207.

<sup>88</sup> See Katharine Simms, 'The O Hanlons, the O Neills, and the Anglo-Normans in thirteenth-century Armagh', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, 9 (1978-9), 70-94 (at pp. 75-6).

<sup>89</sup> Oliver, *Monumenta*, II, 25.

<sup>90</sup> *Rotuli litterarum clausarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy, I (London, 1833), 68; Oliver, *Monumenta*, II, 27; *CDS*, I, 380, 383.

<sup>91</sup> See George Broderick, 'Irish and Welsh strands in the genealogy of Godred Crovan', *Journal of the Manx Museum*, 8, no. 89 (1980), 32-8 (at p. 36).

<sup>92</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 41v-42r.

<sup>93</sup> According to the 'Histoire des Ducs de Normandie', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 387.

<sup>94</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 41v.; *ALCé* s.a. 1210.

<sup>95</sup> *CDI*, I, 407.

<sup>96</sup> *Rotuli chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy, I, i (London, 1837), 191; *CDI*, I, 428.

wonders whether royal doubts over Ragnall's loyalty account for the location of his grant within arm's length of the new and imposing royal fortress overlooking Carlingford Lough.

The real benefit to the Manx came in a separate mandate issued on the same day. Ragnall's half-brother Amlaíb Dub, who held Lewis under him, had made a push for a bigger slice of the cake in 1208, a case strengthened by his legitimacy as against Ragnall's bastardy. In addition, Ragnall had to contend with a Norse expedition to the Isles in 1209-10,<sup>97</sup> which, if it presaged a revival of such crippling raids, threatened to undermine him further. On 16 May 1212, therefore, John ordered his officials in Ireland that if any *Wikini* (vikings) or others should commit any offences in the land of Ragnall, king of Man (*in terra Reginaldi regis de Mannie*), they were to assist in destroying them, Ragnall having undertaken by oath to do the same against those who might offend in the king's lands.<sup>98</sup> There is no implication here that their efforts in aiding the Manx king were to be limited to his newly acquired stake in Ireland: instead the Dublin government was specifically charged with responsibility for keeping the peace in the kingdom of the Isles when called on to do so. This is the first evidence we have of such involvement, but it was not to be the last.<sup>99</sup> It represents an attempt by Ragnall, at small cost to his own precarious position, to enlist Anglo-Norman aid against his aggressors both internal and external, and it gave King John the opportunity to spread his influence over the kingdom of Man and the Isles at the invitation of its ruler and at the expense of the Scots king.

The projected role of the Dublin government in the operation to bolster up Ragnall's position is an important reminder of the continuing ties binding Ireland and the Isles in the aftermath of the Anglo-Norman invasion. It may be going too far to say that it represents a perpetuation of the Dublin-Man axis, but it does point to an awareness of the earlier intimacy of Manx-Irish links, and a recognition of the place of the Isles in Dublin's maritime hinterland. We have seen that for the first half-century after the invasion of Ireland there is next to nothing that can be pointed to as an illustration of the continuance of these links (with the solitary glaring exception of the exhortative poem to Ragnall), but from this point onwards the clouds begin to break up, and in the next chapter we shall have cause to look at the matter in greater detail.

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<sup>97</sup> For the record of the event in the saga literature, see Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 378-82.

<sup>98</sup> Oliver, *Monumenta*, II, 24; *CDI*, I, 429.

<sup>99</sup> See Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 62-3.

## *Ireland and Scotland after 1169*

It seems that in the aftermath of the invasion of Ireland some semblance of the traditional pattern of Manx-Irish relations managed to assert itself, despite the loss of the Hiberno-Scandinavian foothold there. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to say the same for Irish relations with Scotland. For the first fifty years or so after the Anglo-Norman invasion we have negligible evidence of contact between the two countries, though this is a fact not altogether surprising: we have seen in the previous chapter that, on the one hand, Scotland is not well served historiographically in this age and, on the other, contemporary Irish writers are reticent about referring to events beyond the North Channel. However one interprets it, it is surely a remarkable fact that for the entire half-century (1165-1214) during which William the Lion ruled, Irish annalists make not a single reference to events connected with his sometimes turbulent reign, apart from his obit. Clearly they knew who he was, presumably they knew a great deal about developments in his kingdom, but apparently did not regard it as part of their function to record them. Even though King William's death in 1214 gets the barest mention in Irish annals, the annalist in doing so supplies a unique epithet for him (*Uilliam Garm*),<sup>1</sup> indicating that the writer was quite familiar with him, and, had he wished, could no doubt have supplied us with further information. That he did not requires an explanation.

One is tempted to conclude that William and his dynasty were less than popular in Ireland, at least, that is, less than popular among the annal-writers who are our main source of information. One possible explanation may lie in Scottish royal intervention at Iona. It has been plausibly suggested that annal-entries for the period 1189-1223 found in the main corpus of Irish annals represented by the Annals of Ulster and the Annals of Loch Cé were put together at Derry.<sup>2</sup> We have seen above that in the 1160s Somerled of Argyll had sought to revive Iona's headship over Derry but King William had been among those who responded negatively to the proposal, and in or before 1174 he helped to weaken considerably the wealth and status of Iona by depriving it of its proprietary churches in Galloway.<sup>3</sup> This act was the first in a series that were radically to change the structure of Iona, something the conservative leaders at Derry must have resented. By 1204, when a reformed Benedictine monastery had been newly erected on the Scottish island, an extraordinary invasion of clergy from the north of Ireland arrived to pull it to the ground.<sup>4</sup> It is curious that in 1164 Somerled had sought to appoint the abbot of Derry to Iona and this had been opposed in Ireland presumably because,

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<sup>1</sup> *AU* s.a. 1214 (*ALCé* s.a. 1213).

<sup>2</sup> Aubrey Gwynn, 'Cathal Mac Maghnusa and the Annals of Ulster', *Clogher Record*, 2 (1958-9), 230-43, 370-84 (at pp. 376-7).

<sup>3</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, no. 141.

<sup>4</sup> *AU* s.a. 1204 (*AFM* s.a. 1203).

the proposal emanating from Somerled, would have established the superiority of Iona over Derry. Now, in 1204, the invading Irish clerics themselves appointed the abbot of Derry to the abbacy of Iona: thus, they themselves brought about a state of affairs which, forty years earlier, they had not been prepared to contemplate. Their willingness to do so may reflect a weakening of their position in the interval, a desire to turn back the clock. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the link between Derry and Iona was being forcibly broken of late, and that the events of 1204 were an attempt to revive it. The venture failed. It is surely a matter of no little significance that the 1204 incident is the last mention of the illustrious monastery of Iona in the Irish annals.

One of those most responsible for the changes at Iona was Somerled's son Ragnall. It was he who reconstituted Iona as a Benedictine monastery, building 'by far the largest and most elaborate ecclesiastical monument in the West Highland area', and he, likewise, founded a nunnery for Augustinian canonesses on the site, the only medieval house for female religious in Western Scotland.<sup>5</sup> We get no clue during Ragnall's lifetime that he bore any resentment to Derry but, as we shall see, after his death his sons joined with Thomas of Galloway in launching devastating raids on the city in 1212 and 1214:<sup>6</sup> the ferocity of the raids bespeaks an intense family animosity to Derry, and perhaps reflects a desire for revenge for the actions of the Irish clerics in 1204. A Derry-based annalist writing in these years would, it goes without saying, have had little affection for Somerled's family. Since we know that King William was party to at least the early stages of the restructuring taking place at Iona, it is possible that the Irish annalist's total silence about his affairs and coolness in noting his death indicates a certain hostility to the man. We may speculate, too, that the resentment was not confined to the churchmen at Derry. In 1202 the papal legate, John of Salerno, secured the appointment of Ralph, abbot of Melrose, to the vacant bishopric of Down.<sup>7</sup> This house basked in Scottish royal favour, having been founded by William's grandfather, King David. Ralph's elevation is hardly likely to have occurred without William's consent and we may reasonably see his hand in these events. Again, conservative elements in the Irish church are unlikely to have looked kindly on the process by which Scottish clerics sought preferment in Ireland.

This resentment may go part of the way towards explaining the phlegmatic manner in which Irish annalists handle events across the North Channel. It is possible too that the terseness of Irish sources reflects the recent divergence in interest between Scotland and Ireland as, under the direction of the family of Máel Coluim Cennmór, Scotland increasingly looked south for its affiliations and turned away from Ireland and the west. However, as a

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<sup>5</sup> *Argyll. An inventory of the monuments. Volume 4. Iona*, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1982), 21; I.B. Cowan and D.E. Easson, *Medieval religious houses, Scotland*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh, 1976), 143-56.

<sup>6</sup> *AU s.aa.* 1212, 1214 (*AFM*; *ALCé s.aa.* 1211, 1213).

<sup>7</sup> The 'Chronicle of Melrose', translated in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 357.

distinct indifference to events in Scotland preceded these developments, it seems more likely that Irish annalists simply drew the line (with rare exceptions) at noting events on the Scottish mainland - critically, even when they involved Irishmen. By contrast, when Scotsmen made news on Irish soil their activities are noted, with not the least suggestion that the individuals concerned were aliens. The attempt to reconstruct the story of Hiberno-Scottish relations in the period must, therefore, involve, on the one hand, reading between what few lines we have and, on the other, resisting the all too easy conclusion that the relative silence of our sources is testimony to a lack of contact.

We may perhaps begin that task with an observation by the Scottish historian, John of Fordun, on the decline in Ireland's fortunes following the reign of Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair:

The kingdom of Ireland...came to an end with the lustful King Roderic (begotten, forsooth, of the stock of our own race), who would have six wives at once, not like a Christian king, and would not send them away, in spite of the loss of his kingdom - though he had often been warned by the whole church, both archbishops and bishops, and chidden with fearful threats, by all the inhabitants, both chiefs and private persons. He was therefore despised by them all; and they would never more deign to obey him - neither deign they to obey any king to this day. Besides, as thou seest, that kingdom, so renowned formerly, in our forefathers' time, is now miserably split up into thirty kingdoms or more.<sup>8</sup>

In this way Fordun justifies the English domination of Ireland: God's vengeance on a licentious king. It is a revealing account in many ways. John writes over two centuries after the event and may have obtained his information from an Irish source.<sup>9</sup> But he has only the dimmest understanding of the historical context of his allegations, and puts the account of Ruaidrí (d.1198) into the mouth of King Máel Coluim Cennmór (d.1093)! His moralizing tale seems to reflect a view by then current that sought to explain away the Anglo-Norman invasion by virtue of Ruaidrí's unfitness to rule.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, John calls his contemporaries' attention to the decline in Ireland's fortunes in recent times. It is a kingdom that was once renowned, but is now torn apart by the rivalries of petty kings, none of whom receives the obedience of the entire nation. Whether he dates this decline to the days of Máel Coluim or Ruaidrí is unclear, but at any event the message is plain: Scotland has prospered as Ireland slumped.

John, apparently, feels no great sympathy for the Irish in their adversity, a reaction not confined to him alone. Scottish involvement in the early stages of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland is hard to gauge and, no doubt, limited. However, unlike the Welsh chronicles which, as we shall see, are terse and disinterested, the entry referring to the invasion in the

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<sup>8</sup>John of Fordun, 'Chronica gentis Scotorum', ed. W.F.Skene, in *Historians of Scotland*, vols I and IV (Edinburgh, 1871-2); I, 198-9; IV, 186.

<sup>9</sup>See *AC* s.a. 1233: 'Here ends the rule of the children of Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, King of Ireland. For the Pope offered him the title to Ireland for himself and his seed for ever, and likewise six wives, if he would renounce the sin of adultery henceforth; and since he would not accept these terms God took the rule and sovereignty from his seed for ever, in punishment for his sin.' See also, Geoffrey Keating, *Tri bior-ghaoithe an bháis. The three shafts of death*, ed. Osborn Bergin (Dublin, 1931), 5462-76.

<sup>10</sup> It is in sharp contrast with the statement of the Gaelic annalist that within a decade of the death of Ruaidrí, the last high-king, his remains were disinterred and placed for veneration in a stone shrine: *AFM* s.a. 1207.

principal early Scottish monastic history, the 'Chronicle of Melrose' (which its editor regards as having been penned virtually contemporaneously), is very supportive of the enterprise. We are told that Strongbow, the leader of the invading force, was accompanied by 'a great force of knights and true men', that 'he valiantly attacked certain cities', and 'obtained them at length, by God's providence'.<sup>11</sup> Like a number of later sources which may simply paraphrase it, it stresses Strongbow's relationship to the Scottish royal house: he was first-cousin to Kings Máel Coluim IV (d.1165) and William the Lion (d.1214).<sup>12</sup> The implication is that the venture was a worthy one and likely to obtain the sanction of Scottish royal policy (at least, that is, so long as Strongbow was spearheading it and not the English crown).

Fordun's description of Ireland's decline vis-à-vis Scotland reminds one that in the very year of the first Anglo-Norman infiltration into Ireland, Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair had endowed a perpetual scholarship for the education at Armagh of students from Ireland and Scotland.<sup>13</sup> Armagh's recent receipt of the pall and confirmation by the papacy of its primatial status compared favourably with contemporary difficulties facing St Andrews in maintaining its episcopal independence. Ó Conchobair's action, therefore, was a confident declaration of Ireland's cultural supremacy and, though that was not its intention, a reminder of Scotland's dependence on the Irish mainspring.<sup>14</sup> For that matter, there was anything but a hollow ring to the titles bestowed on two members of the Ó Dálaigh family when they died in the 1180s: *ollam Érenn* ⁊ *Alpan*.<sup>15</sup> One clearly succeeded the other as 'master of learning throughout Ireland and Scotland'. Gerald of Wales called attention to the same dependence in one of the most influential books of the age: 'The northern part of Britain is also [i.e., as well as Ireland] called Scotia, because it is known to be inhabited by a people which was originally propagated by Gaidelus and Scota. The affinity in language and culture, as well as in weapons and customs, to this day bears out this fact'.<sup>16</sup> But the balance was gradually shifting, and the very use of the name 'Scotia' epitomised this shift. Originally the favoured Latin name for Ireland, it had been brought to Scotland by the Dalriadic colonists, and by the twelfth century was well and truly appropriated by the Scots for their own kingdom, the Irish (perhaps rather reluctantly) settling for 'Hibernia'. When the Irish made a diplomatic overture to the pope in 1317 to explain their support for a Scottish invasion, we may notice a certain resentment of this

<sup>11</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 269; *The Chronicle of Melrose. A facsimile edition from Cotton MS. Faustina B ix*, ed. A.O. and M.O. Anderson (London, 1936), s.a. 1170.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, James Grace, *Annales Hiberniae*, ed. Richard Butler (Dublin, 1842), 12-13; 'The Book of Howth', in *Calendar of the Carew manuscripts, preserved in the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth*, ed. J.S. Brewer and William Bullen [V] (P.R.O., London, 1871), 121; Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 155, 269.

<sup>13</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1169.

<sup>14</sup> For some forthright remarks in defence of Scotland's cultural independence, see Donald Meek, 'The Gaelic ballads of medieval Scotland', *Trans. Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 55 (1986-8), 47-72 (at p. 68).

<sup>15</sup> *ALCé* s.aa. 1181, 1185; see James E. Doan, 'The Ó Dálaigh family of bardic poets, 1139-1691', *Éire-Ireland* (Summer, 1985), 19-31.

<sup>16</sup> *The history and topography of Ireland*, trans. O'Meara, 99.

appropriation of their name, as they were careful to point out the proper order of things: Ireland, they told him, was *nostra Majore Scotia*, Scotland merely *Minor Scotia*.<sup>17</sup> Successfully denying Ireland its very name, the Scots were beginning to obtain a cultural ascendancy. Gerald of Wales tells us that 'both Scotland and Wales, the former because of her affinity and intercourse, the latter as it were by grafting, try to imitate Ireland in music...In the opinion, however, of many, Scotland has by now not only caught up on Ireland, her instructor, but far outdistances and excels her in musical skill. Therefore people now look to that country as to the fountain of the art.'<sup>18</sup>

William the Lion's reign coincided with the first half-century of Anglo-Norman intrusion into Ireland. That intrusion has been regarded by some modern historians as bringing Ireland into the European mainstream. But the disruption it caused in the developments which had been taking shape there, and the neglect of its affairs which its new masters soon displayed, meant that (to quote Fordun again) 'that kingdom, so renowned formerly, in our forefathers' time' became a backwater. A deliberate denigration of Ireland's contribution, both lay and clerical, to European culture and of the current state of learning in the country, contributed to the malaise, as when the Anglo-Norman archbishop of Dublin claimed in 1206/7 that 'learning flourishes in every part of the Latin world save Ireland', and that he was converting St Patrick's, Dublin, into a prebendary church, 'desiring to provide aid for the unlearned simplicity of the Irish nation'.<sup>19</sup> Under King William - 'unquestionably the most effective 'normaniser' of any of the Scottish kings'<sup>20</sup> - Scotland spurned its Gaelic affiliations in all but the most formal ceremonial trappings, and soon overtook it in eminence, as perceived abroad. By the end of William's reign, an English chronicler could explain the king's opposition to one of his rivals 'of the ancient line of Scottish kings', by the fact that 'the more recent kings of Scotland profess themselves to be rather Frenchmen, both in race and in manners, language and culture; and after reducing the Scots to utter servitude, they admit only Frenchmen to their friendship and service'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower in *Latin and English*, general editor D.E.R. Watt, vol 6, Books XI and XII, ed. N.F. Shead, W.B. Stevenson and D.E.R Watt (Aberdeen, 1991), 402-3. By the seventeenth century Geoffrey Keating was propounding the theory that the fifth-century eponym of the Uí Néill, Niall Noígiallach, 'was the first to give the name Scotia to Alba, being requested to do so by the Dal Riada and the Scotie race, on the condition that she should be called Scotia Minor or Lessor Scotia, while Ireland should be termed Scotia Major or Greater Scotia' (*Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, ed. P.S. Dinneen, 4 vols (I.T.S., London, 1902-14), II, 372-3).

<sup>18</sup> *History and topography of Ireland*, trans. O'Meara, 104.

<sup>19</sup> *Alen's register*, 18; *The 'Dignitas Decani' of St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin*, ed. N.B. White (I.M.S., Dublin, 1957), no. 1.

<sup>20</sup> G.W.S. Barrow in *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, 21.

<sup>21</sup> *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. William Stubbs (RS, London, 1873), II, 206; translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 330, n. 6. The contemporary verse chronicle by Jordan Fantosme says that King William 'was too much given to taking new advice. Foreigners he cherished, loved, and held dear; his own proper people he never would love, who ought to advise him and his kingdom' (ed. Richard Howlett, in *Chron. Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, III (RS, London, 1874), 258).



The most visible expression of that 'normanisation' involved the creation of a new landed aristocracy in Scotland during William's reign. Some native families of noble rank lost out, others adapted to the new regime and survived. One such held the title of *mormaer*, later earl, of Lennox. The Lennox is an area with Loch Lomond at its centre, roughly approximate with Dumbartonshire. The first documentary evidence for its existence as an earldom comes in William's reign, when its native holders appear to have been dispossessed for a time, and the earldom bestowed on the king's brother David.<sup>22</sup> But they later recovered it, the Scots king retaining Dumbarton as a royal stronghold,<sup>23</sup> its native lords showing signs of foreign influence in apparently building a motte at Balloch.<sup>24</sup> The Lennox is not an area of Scotland that would strike one as likely to be particularly enmeshed in Irish affairs. Professor Barrow has divided the political geography of twelfth-century Scotland into two zones, an outer one stretching from Galloway all the way through the western highlands to Sutherland and beyond, and an inner zone where royal influence was at work, stretching from the English border to the southern shore of the Moray Firth: he placed Lennox on the 'western fringe' of this inner zone.<sup>25</sup> Yet the earliest surviving pieces of bardic verse addressed by an Irish poet to a Scottish lord were composed for an early thirteenth-century earl of Lennox; and the only Gáedel from the Scottish mainland (excluding Galloway) to turn up in Ireland in the first half-century after the Anglo-Norman invasion was a member of the same family. Both points are worth looking at in a little more detail, if only as a glimpse at the iceberg that may be lurking beneath the tip.

According to a legend stitched into the Annals of the Four Masters, the Irish poet Muireadach Ó Dálaigh was banished from Ireland in 1213 for a crime against Domnall Mór Ó Domnaill, king of Tír Conaill. He fled to Scotland, hence his soubriquet *Albanach*, where he spent a lengthy period in exile and apparently founded the Scottish bardic family of MacMhuirich. He obviously found refuge in the Lennox: a quatrain ascribed to Muireadach still survives which refers to his sojourn at Loch Long (where the Lennox meets the sea), while one of the witnesses to an inquisition held at Dumbarton in 1259 was a Kathil Macmurchy 'of the Lennox' who has been tentatively identified as his son.<sup>26</sup> The poet's forename, Muireadach, was one already found in the family of the earls of Lennox, which may suggest an earlier Ó Dálaigh family association with the rulers of the area. His protector in 1213 was the then earl of Lennox, Ailín (or Alún or Alwyn) mac Muireadaigh (d. *circa* 1217), in whose honour he composed the poem *Saor do leannáin, a Leamhain*.<sup>27</sup> Another poem ascribed to Muireadach, beginning *Mairg thréigeas inn, a Amhlaoibh*, since it also refers to the mormaer of

<sup>22</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, I, no. 205; Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 164, 177, 199.

<sup>23</sup> Barrow, *Kingship and unity*, 149.

<sup>24</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 437.

<sup>25</sup> Barrow, *Kingship and unity*, 49-50.

<sup>26</sup> Derick S. Thomson, 'The MacMhuirich bardic family', *Trans. Gaelic Society of Inverness*, 43 (1960-63), 276-304 (at pp. 280-81).

<sup>27</sup> Lambert McKenna, *Athdioghluim dána. A miscellany of Irish bardic poetry*, 2 vols (London, 1939-40), no. 42.

Lennox, may have been written for another member of the same family, Amlaíb mac Ailín.<sup>28</sup> In the latter piece, the poet complains of his new host's ungenerous patronage, and threatens to return to Ireland. In the former poem he personifies the river Leven (which flows from Loch Lomond into the Clyde) and seems to refer disparagingly to the seeping settlement of the area by Anglo-Norman newcomers: *Dob annamh céim catha Gall/ Fat imlibh uaine, a abhann* ('Unknown then was the tramp of the troops of the Gaill around thy banks').

Perhaps the pressure of this encroachment caused the family to seek compensation in Ireland. In 1216, the chief of Cenél Fergusa, a small territory in the north-west of the Inishowen peninsula, was killed (we are not told where), along with his brothers and many others, by Muireadach, a son of the earl of Lennox.<sup>29</sup> The annalist offers not a hint of explanation as to why the son of a Scottish earl should do battle with an Inishowen dynast, so there is room for speculation. Inishowen was then the subject of dispute between the kings of Cenél Conaill and Cenél nEógain. Muireadach Albanach's links with both Tír Conaill and the Lennox suggest the possibility that the lords of the latter were involved with Cenél Conaill in their effort to subdue Inishowen to their sway. Muireadach specifically refers to Cenél Conaill connexions with Scotland in another of his poems, addressed to their king, Domnall Mór Ó Domnaill (in which he begs that he be allowed to return to Ireland on the first ship that Domnall sends to Scotland): in the same poem he also flatters Cenél Conaill pretensions over the Inishowen area by calling Ó Domnaill 'rí Dhoire (king of Derry)'.<sup>30</sup> The earl's son may also have been in Inishowen as part of a broader alliance, the attempt then taking place by the rulers of Galloway to extend their control, with Cenél Conaill support, over north-east Ulster. Let us look in a little more detail at this Gallovidian expansion into Ulster.

More so than any others, the rulers of greater Galloway dominated Scottish contacts with Ireland at this point. It goes virtually without saying that the native rulers of the Galloway region would have had relations of long standing with Ulster. We know that in the 1140s St Malachy set up a monastery at Soulset in Galloway in collaboration with its ruler Fergus, who later converted it into a house of Premonstratensian canons.<sup>31</sup> And we have some slight evidence of a Gallovidian link with the earliest stages of the Ulster conquest. One of those Cumbrian landholders who was with de Courcy in Ulster from the start was Richard son of Trouce:<sup>32</sup> he had earlier (about 1170) become a tenant of Fergus's son Uhtred for New Abbey in Kirkcudbrightshire.<sup>33</sup> Of de Courcy's alliances the only one we can be certain of is that with

<sup>28</sup> RIA MS 743 (A iv 3), p. 863; see Brian Ó Cuív, 'Eachtra Mhuireadhaigh í Dhálaigh', *Studia Hibernica*, no. 1 (1961), 56-69 (at p. 67).

<sup>29</sup> *AU* s.a. 1216 (*AFM*; *ALCé* s.a. 1215).

<sup>30</sup> Printed in Ó Cuív, 'Eachtra Mhuireadhaigh í Dhálaigh', 61.

<sup>31</sup> *St Bernard of Clairveaux's Life of St Malachy of Armagh*, ed. H.J. Lawlor (London, 1920), 34, 120; see also, J. Balfour Paul, *The Scots peerage*, 9 vols (Edinburgh, 1904-14), III, 136.

<sup>32</sup> He witnessed de Courcy's charter for Nendrum in 1179, in *Register of St Bees*, 520-21.

<sup>33</sup> F.W. Ragg, 'Five Strathclyde and Galloway charters', *Cumberland & Westmorland Antiq. & Arch. Soc. Trans.*, 17 (1916-17), 198-234, no. 2.

the Manx king, Gofraid (having married his daughter Affreca). Gofraid's mother was a daughter of Fergus.<sup>34</sup> De Courcy's wife, Affreca, was therefore a first cousin once removed of Fergus's grandson Duncan, ruler of Carrick and Wigtownshire, who later emerges as one of de Courcy's allies. Our earliest evidence for Duncan and de Courcy acting together comes in 1197. In this year, de Courcy launched a major expedition to expand the frontiers of his lordship west of the Bann, building the motte castle at Mount Sandal on the Bann near Coleraine, devastating the territory of Ciannachta to the west, and penetrating as far as the ecclesiastical city of Derry, though their efforts were largely thwarted by the energetic king of Cenél Conaill, Flaithbertach Ó Máeldoraid. In the same year, however, the latter died and within a fortnight de Courcy returned, raiding as far as Ardstraw, then spending five nights in Derry, before finally making off from Inishowen with a massive cattle-prey.<sup>35</sup> The Irish annals make no mention of Duncan in describing in substantial detail these traumatic events, but according to the reliable testimony of Roger Howden, Duncan had come to de Courcy's aid, *cum gente non modica*, did indeed take part in the campaigns of this year, and was rewarded with a grant of a large part of the newly overrun territory.<sup>36</sup> His loyalty to de Courcy thereafter was never in doubt. After John was deposed by Hugh de Lacy, Duncan assisted in the overthrow of the latter in 1210, captured some of his allies, and handed them over to de Courcy for delivery to King John.<sup>37</sup>

In 1197, the very year of Duncan's intervention in Ulster, King William the Lion built a fortress at Ayr in Carrick.<sup>38</sup> Professor Duncan has rightly seen this as 'a dramatic affirmation of the king's authority in a province which seems to have been left upon its own previously'.<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere, he views it as a protection against the power of the Manx king and the sons of Somerled.<sup>40</sup> But it is surely no coincidence that the building of the royal castle took place in the same year that Duncan became a tenant of de Courcy in Ulster. Either Duncan looked to Ulster to compensate himself for the royal encroachment at Ayr,<sup>41</sup> or, more likely, Ayr represented the royal riposte to this worrying new Gallovidian expansion into Ulster. Relations seem to have been poor between Duncan and the king, who favoured instead Duncan's cousin Roland, lord of the Kirkcudbrightshire area of Galloway, whose father Uhtred had been murdered in 1174 by Duncan's father Gilbert, his own brother.<sup>42</sup> In 1185, Roland had led a

<sup>34</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 35v.

<sup>35</sup> *AU* s.a. 1197.

<sup>36</sup> Roger Howden, *Chronica*, IV, 25.

<sup>37</sup> *CDS*, I, 480; for de Courcy's fall and subsequent shadowy career, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 134-44.

<sup>38</sup> And we soon hear of a royal burgh and sheriff there: 'Chronicle of Melrose', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 348.

<sup>39</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 187.

<sup>40</sup> Duncan & Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the earlier Middle Ages', 199.

<sup>41</sup> Professor Barrow has noted that Galloway 'was being held within the Scottish kingdom only by means of incoming feudal settlement': *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, 8.

<sup>42</sup> 'It was Scottish royal policy to build up Roland as a strong power in the south-west': Barrow, *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, 14.

savage invasion of western Galloway.<sup>43</sup> Two years later when a revolt in Moray was put down by a royal army the severed head of the ringleader, Domnall mac William, was presented to the king by a triumphant Roland.<sup>44</sup> It is not clear why Roland took such a prominent role in the Moray business, but his opposition to mac William would make sense if the latter had Duncan of Carrick's support. This is where Duncan's friendship with de Courcy may come into the picture.

The apparently stable rule which William the Lion's successors achieved should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the dynasty continued to find itself under grave threat of being overthrown by the rival house of Moray. We have seen in the previous chapter that Áengus, the head of the house of Moray, was killed in battle by King David's army in 1130, but the claim to the earldom (and ipso facto to the throne of Scotland) seems to have passed to David's nephew, William fitz Duncan, possibly by a marriage to Áengus's daughter.<sup>45</sup> By another marriage, William fitz Duncan was quite closely related to John de Courcy and the holder of extensive lands in the same area of north-west England from which de Courcy drew much of his support. William had a son, Domnall mac William (perhaps by marriage to the Moray heiress), and it is likely that the latter sought to enforce a claim to the inheritance since Cumbria was one of the targets of the Scots' invasion in 1173. William fitz Duncan's claim to Moray (and, therefore, to Scotland) also descended upon this son Domnall, possibly John de Courcy's first-cousin. Two years after de Courcy's invasion of Ulster, the Scots king led a large army north to the Moray Firth to deal with some unspecified opposition there. Then in 1181 the remarkably well-informed account preserved in the *Gesta Henrici* has it:

Meanwhile, while the king of Scotland tarried with his lord the king of England in Normandy, the son of William fitz Duncan, Donald, who had very often claimed the kingdom of Scotland, and had many a time made insidious incursions into that kingdom, by a mandate of certain powerful men of the kingdom of Scotland landed (*applicuit*) in Scotland with a numerous armed host, wasting and burning as much of the land as he reached; and he put the folk to flight, and slew all whom he could take.<sup>46</sup>

Domnall's invading forces clearly came from outside Scotland, but is it only coincidental that this trouble in Moray had followed closely on the establishment by John de Courcy of a base in Ulster, with a following substantially drawn from Cumbria, an area over which Domnall exercised a claim? And is it also a coincidence that Domnall mac William met his end in 1187 at the hands of Roland of Galloway, dire enemy of de Courcy's ally Duncan of Carrick? We may hazard a guess that King William resented Duncan's expansion into Ulster not merely for its aggrandizing tendencies but because it perpetuated an alliance of forces - including de Courcy and the meic William - intent upon the destabilization of his rule.

<sup>43</sup> The main source for the invasion is the *Gesta Henrici*, an earlier draft of Roger Howden's important chronicle, formerly ascribed to Benedict of Peterborough: *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (RS, London, 1867), 339-40, 348-9; translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 288-90.

<sup>44</sup> Roger Howden, *Gesta Henrici*, II, 7-9; translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 294-5.

<sup>45</sup> For this and what follows, see Appendix 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ed. Stubbs, I, 277-8; I have used the translation in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 278.

It may be worth remarking that when Roland of Galloway died in 1200, the Irish annals report the fact;<sup>47</sup> he is the first Galloway lord to have his death recorded in Irish sources in nearly two hundred years,<sup>48</sup> which may indicate an awakening Irish interest in the inhabitants of the area. He was succeeded by his son Alan and relations may have been somewhat warmer between the latter and Duncan than they were in Roland's day. At any rate, both families found themselves being courted by King John, who exploited their separatist tendencies to undermine Scottish royal power in the south-west. He was happy, likewise, to make use of their renowned skills in warfare. In particular, Alan's brother, Thomas, made a profitable career for himself as a mercenary commander in John's pay, even fought in Poitou in the attempt to recover the lost Continental lands, and, perhaps more importantly, supplied the English king with much needed galleys (with the right to claim half their plunder).<sup>49</sup> Duncan, we have mentioned, came to John's assistance in 1210 when the king led an expedition to Ireland in pursuit of William de Braose and Hugh and Walter de Lacy. De Braose's wife and sons fled 'towards Scotland by sea' in Hugh de Lacy's company,<sup>50</sup> landed in the Isle of Man, where they spent four days, before passing on to Galloway. This was a mistake: there Matilda de Braose and her sons were apprehended by Duncan of Carrick.<sup>51</sup>

Duncan quickly received his reward. His role in de Lacy's downfall and, therefore, his inclination to want to keep things that way, were perhaps the deciding factors in John's decision to set him up anew in Ulster. He was granted the towns of Larne and Glenarm and fifty carucates of land in between, roughly co-terminous with the modern barony of Upper Glenarm.<sup>52</sup> The grant was significant, if (in view of Duncan's services to John while in Ireland) not overly generous. All the more remarkable, then, that his Galloway cousins should shortly be at the receiving end of much more extensive land-grants in Ulster by King John. These may have been an attempt to play one family off against the other, though undoubtedly the Galloway family, like Duncan, had played a part in the toppling of de Lacy: Alan was in Ireland in 1210 with the king.<sup>53</sup> Other issues were also involved. Alan, now constable of Scotland, and his brother Thomas, recently created earl of Atholl, were figures of some stature

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<sup>47</sup> *AU* s.a. 1200 (*ALCé* s.a. 1199). Incidentally, Scottish historians have accepted that 'Roland' was a Latinization of his Gaelic name, Lachlan (see, for example, G.W.S. Barrow, *The Anglo-Norman era in Scottish history* (Oxford, 1980), 17, n. 67), but it is curious that at least one Latin charter calls him 'Lochlan' (*Liber cartarum Sancte Crucis*, ed. [Cosmo Innes] (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1840), no. 24) while conversely the Irish annals call him 'Rollant'!

<sup>48</sup> See *AU* s.a. 1034.

<sup>49</sup> *CDS*, I, 357-60, 382, 405, 409, 426, 442, 497.

<sup>50</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, I, 107-8; *CDS*, I, 480.

<sup>51</sup> 'Histoire des Ducs de Normandie', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 387.

<sup>52</sup> *CDI*, I, 907; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 267. An inspeximus of the charter made some years later mentions a further grant to one John fitz Alexander of five carucates in 'Maghaline' (Magh line, the barony of Upper Antrim): *CDI*, I, 907; *CDS*, I, 739. Duncan had a younger son named Alexander; this may have been a son of his: *Scots peerage*, II, 425. But we also hear later of lands in Ulster having been granted to an unnamed nephew of Duncan who may fit the bill: *CDI*, I, 461; *CDS*, I, 578.

<sup>53</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 290.

whose goodwill was worth attracting. Edmund Curtis saw the earldom of Ulster as a wedge driven between Gaelic Ireland and Scotland.<sup>54</sup> But King John, with Gallovidian help, had destroyed that earldom, and probably saw a strong Gallovidian lordship straddling the North Channel as a useful brake on the southward stirrings of Scottish royal policy.

Alan was granted 140 knights' fees that encompassed all of north Antrim and north Derry, including Rathlin island, with the exception of an area surrounding the motte at Mount Sandal, amounting to twenty fees, ten on either side of the Bann, which John retained in his own hands for the custody of the castle; soon afterwards Alan was granted the forests in his new lands, along with the fairs and markets of the same.<sup>55</sup> When the grant was confirmed in 1215, additional lands between Glenarm and 'the bounds of Dalriada' were included, with the exception of two carucates and eight acres there already given to Duncan; it was all to be held by the service of ten knights.<sup>56</sup> Six of the fees on either side of the Bann that had been excluded from Alan's grant were made over to his brother Thomas in July 1213. It appears a small acquisition but the Bann was a busy navigable river and had a lot to offer a man as well equipped in seafaring vessels as Thomas of Galloway.<sup>57</sup> It followed by only a few days a rather more speculative grant to the same man of 'that part of the vill of Derekoneull which belonged to Onel in Kenlion', except the cantred of 'Talachot', which was retained in the King's hands, and the lands already given to Alan.<sup>58</sup> This was a grant of the town of Derry, excluding presumably its important ecclesiastical possessions, and excluding also the kingdom to which it belonged, that of Cenél nEógain of Tulach Óc, which John theoretically held in his own hands.<sup>59</sup> Thomas's position was consolidated two years later by a grant of Mount Sandal and also the new castle recently built nearby at Coleraine, plus for the first time all twenty fees straddling the Bann exempted from his brother's grant, and other territories near the mouth of

<sup>54</sup> '[The collapse of the earldom of Ulster with the murder of the Red Earl in 1333] knitted again the old Gaelic world of Erin and Alba, severed for a time by the Anglo-Norman wedge driven in it by De Courcy and his successors in eastern Ulster.' (*A history of medieval Ireland from 1086 to 1513*, 2nd edn. (London, 1938), 211).

<sup>55</sup> *CDI*, I, 427, 463; *CDS*, I, 573, 583; there is a good account of the various grants in Ronald Greeves, 'The Galloway lands in Ulster', *Dumfriesshire and Galloway Nat. Hist. & Arch. Soc. Trans.*, 3rd ser., 36 (1957-8), 115-22.

<sup>56</sup> *CDI*, I, 564; *CDS*, I, 625.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Gerald of Wales's account: 'There is a lake in Ulster of a remarkable size...From it a very beautiful river called the Bann flows into the northern ocean. Here the fishermen complain not of a scarcity of fish, but of too great catches and the breaking of their nets.' (*History and topography of Ireland*, trans. O'Meara, 64).

<sup>58</sup> *CDI*, I, 474, 468; *CDS*, I, 586, 585.

<sup>59</sup> Greeves ('Galloway lands in Ulster', 119, n. 21) has interpreted 'Talachot' as 'Tullyhoe', a townland in the barony of Keenaght, Co. Derry. He may be right, but the full extent of this barony had been previously granted to Thomas's brother Alan, so that none of it should have been in the king's hands. Aed Méith Ó Néill of Cenél nEógain, on the other hand, may have been regarded as forfeit for his refusal to hand over hostages to John in 1210 (for which, see *AI* s.a. 1210).

the Bann.<sup>60</sup>

In total the Galloway and Carrick families received grants comprising well over half of Counties Derry and Antrim, a broad coastal belt stretching uninterrupted from the town of Derry to Larne. With the exception of the former, they were all areas over which de Courcy and de Lacy exercised authority, to varying degrees. They were all, therefore, worth the obtaining. Their new lords were not fobbed off by King John with speculative grants not worth the parchment on which they were written. There is no reason to doubt the anxiety of the Scots lords to both lay hands on and exploit their new acquisitions: the evidence suggests that the initial impulse was theirs and that they actively pursued the lands in question. That much is clear from Thomas's career. The year *prior* to his grant of Derry, Thomas appeared on record in Ireland for the first time. He did so at the head of a motley invasion fleet made up of seventy-six ships under his own command and that of two famous grandsons of Somerled, Ruaidrí mac Ragnaill (a quo the Meic Ruaidrí) and his brother, probably Domnall (a quo the Meic Domnaill).<sup>61</sup> Their target in 1212 was the ecclesiastical centre at Derry, where they wreaked great havoc. Derry, as we have seen, was a Cenél nEógain possession then vulnerable to the aggrandizement of neighbours, so it is not surprising that when they left it to continue their depredations in Inishowen, they were joined by the Cenél Conaill.<sup>62</sup> Thomas, therefore, had his sights on the area before its formal grant to him in 1213. The latter was evidently something he solicited at court. He then sought to make it a reality. In 1214, again apparently from a base across the North Channel (he had Ruaidrí mac Ragnaill again in tow), he launched a crippling assault on Derry and seized from the church there its valuable collection of ornaments and jewels.<sup>63</sup> If in his previous assault on the city he had the backing of the Cenél Conaill, this time Thomas seems to have been able to call on the support of the Uí Chatháin of Fir na Craoibe, who launched an all but simultaneous attack on the city. The annalist is particularly well informed on events in the area at this point, and reveals that in the same year Thomas began to exploit his six carucates near the Bann by building the castle of Coleraine with the assistance of the '*Gallaib Ulad* (the foreigners of Ulster)', for whom he was providing some much needed leadership: to obtain materials they knocked down every building or structure in the town with the exception of the church.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *CDI*, I, 565; *CDS*, I, 626; one of these previously unidentified lands, 'Twerth', Greeves equates with Tuagh (now Dooley), the triangular area between the Bann and the coast west of Portstewart ('Galloway lands in Ulster', 119, n. 23). It is possible, though, that Uí Tuirtre, the kingdom of the Uí Fhloinn is intended (corresponding to the baronies of Upper and Lower Toome): this is suggested by the fact that three days later Thomas was granted custody of the castle of Antrim, which is far removed from his base around Coleraine but is located at the eastern tip of Upper Toome (*CDI*, I, 567; *CDS*, I, 627); in 1219, Muirchertach Ó Floinn, king of Uí Tuirtre, was killed by colonists (*AU* s.a. 1219; *AFM* s.a. 1218) which may indicate a move to infeudate the area.

<sup>61</sup> It was perhaps this alliance with the Galloway lords that caused Ruaidrí to name one of his sons Alan, well known for his role as an early galloglass commander in Ireland (See *AC* s.a. 1259).

<sup>62</sup> *AU* s.a. 1212 (*ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1211).

<sup>63</sup> *AU* s.a. 1214 (*ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1213).

<sup>64</sup> *AU* s.a. 1214.

It may be worth looking at the background landscape to these descents upon Derry and Inishowen. They occur at a time when the elderly and ailing king of Scots, William the Lion, was battling to hold on to his kingdom in the face of an invasion of Scotland by his traditional rivals, the Meic William. Fordun has it that the date on which the invading army landed in Scotland was January 6, apparently in 1211, and he adds that the invasion had collapsed by the following year with the seizure and execution of its leader, Gofraid mac Domnaill mic William.<sup>65</sup> The Melrose chronicler lists it in his account of the events of 1211.<sup>66</sup> As to the motivation for the rebellion, Fordun adds that it was initiated 'by counsel of the thanes of Ross'. According to an English chronicle, the 'Annals of St Edmunds', it was done 'by the assent of certain magnates of Scotland'.<sup>67</sup> But another English annalist adds the important detail that Gofraid Mac William 'was of the ancient line of Scottish kings; and, supported by the aid of Scots and Irish, had practised long hostility against the modern kings, now in secret, now openly, as had also his father Domnall'.<sup>68</sup> One might be disinclined to accept the word of an English-based chronicler as to the involvement of Irishmen in the episode; but, crucially, Fordun also specifically states that Gofraid entered Scotland from Ireland. If we accept the latter's dating, therefore, we are dealing with an invasion force that left Ireland only months after the collapse of the earldom of Ulster following Hugh de Lacy's expulsion in the previous summer. If there is a connexion, it may be that the leaders of the attempted coup were at liberty to do as they pleased now that de Lacy was out of the way.

The rebellion was quashed through the assistance of King John of England who supplied a force of Brabantine mercenaries for the task,<sup>69</sup> but Thomas of Galloway had earlier been one of the leaders of an army sent north to oppose the rebels in the summer of 1211.<sup>70</sup> That he led his first irruption into Inishowen in 1212, about the time that the coup collapsed, looks distinctly like an attempt to punish Mac William's Irish allies. We know that Thomas called on the aid of the family of Somerled: since they were anxious to hold not just the Western Isles but Somerled's former mainland possessions in Argyll, they perhaps joined Thomas in opposition to the 'thanes' of Ross-shire who backed Mac William. It may also be worth pointing out that the Galloway and Argyll assault on Ulster from the rear coincided with a direct northward push into Ulster by the justiciar, John de Grey, bishop of Norwich.<sup>71</sup> The former was directed against Derry, a Cenél nEógain possession, the latter against the rising

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<sup>65</sup> Fordun, 'Gesta annalia', ed. Skene, I, 278-9; II, 274.

<sup>66</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 389.

<sup>67</sup> Printed in translation in Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 330.

<sup>68</sup> 'Erat de Scottorum regum antiqua prosapia, qui Scottorum et Hibernensium fretus auxilio, longas contra modernos reges, sicut et pater suus Duvenaldus, nunc clam, nunc palam, exercuit inimicitias.': *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (RS, London, 1872-3), II, 206; translated in Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 330, n. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 330.

<sup>70</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 198.

<sup>71</sup> For which, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 287-94.



star of the Cenél nEógain, their king, Áed Méith Ó Néill. Was Ó Néill one of the Irish sponsors of the Mac William revolt? One curious piece of evidence may help to link them. We have just seen that the 'Annals of St Edmunds', a remarkably well-informed English chronicle, has an important account of the Mac William revolt. It is unusual for such writers to concern themselves with events outside England, so it is rather remarkable to find that in its account of this year there is a unique report of the campaign by the Irish justiciar against Ó Néill in Cenél nEógain:<sup>72</sup> the author's interest in both events may point to a connexion.

The 1212 revolt was not the end of the matter. King William died in 1214 and was succeeded by his sixteen year old son, Alexander II. By the following year the Meic William had sufficiently recouped their energies in Ireland to attempt another putsch. While the young Scots king was preoccupied with exploiting King John's baronial strife (and attempting to regain control over the northern counties of England), the Meic William landed in Moray. At their head was Domnall Bán Mac William, but according to the Melrose chronicler one of the leaders was 'the son of a certain king of Ireland'.<sup>73</sup> It may never prove possible to identify the latter, who was shortly to be captured and beheaded, all the more so since the Irish annals for this year are quite meagre. But perhaps the death (as we have already seen) in 1216 of an Inishowen chieftain, in battle with a son of the earl of Lennox, should discourage us from looking further afield. Either the rulers of Lennox were part of the force employed to mop up the remnants of the invading army left in Scotland, or the destruction of the Meic William was motivation enough for the Lennox lords to take the offensive in Inishowen.

The subject remains clouded in mystery. However, despite the scantiness of our sources, we can state with some measure of confidence that these years witnessed an attempt by an Irish-based and Irish-backed Scottish dynasty, with a long-standing claim to the throne of Scotland, to use the collapse of the earldom of Ulster, and the preoccupation of the Scots king with southern affairs, to invade and conquer his kingdom. Concomitant with these events, possibly in an effort to profit from their discomfiture, the lords of Galloway, Carrick, Lennox, Atholl, and Argyll - and there are most probably others about whose activities nothing is known - embarked on a scheme to invade and conquer virtually the entire extent of north Ulster, from Lough Swilly in the west to Larne harbour in the east. The progress of this attempt in subsequent years will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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<sup>72</sup> 'Johannes Norwicensis episcopus justiciarius, collecto exercitu, terram regis de Kenelium [Cenél nEógain] in manu forti ingressus, castrum ibi firmavit. Quod dictus rex moleste ferens, collecto exercitu suo, dictum episcopum fugavit, multosque de exercitu suo interfecit. Castrum tamen debellere non potuit': 'Annales S. Edmundi A.D. 1-1212', ed. Felix Liebermann, in *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen* (Strasbourg, 1879), 153.

<sup>73</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 404.

## *Ireland and Wales after 1169*

To the extent that the English irruption into Ireland was relatively unplanned and haphazard, reaction to it was confused. Welshmen participated in it, in response to the offer broadcast in Wales on Diarmait Mac Murchada's behalf that 'Whoever shall wish for soil or sod/ Richly shall I enfeoff them',<sup>1</sup> and large numbers of native Welshmen settled in the newly conquered lands.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, an Irish charter of 1282 describes the invasion as 'the arrival of the English and Welsh in Ireland'.<sup>3</sup> This is reminiscent of a poem composed in honour of Cathal Crobderg Ó Conchobair (d. 1224), the composition of which its editor tentatively places in 1191, and which refers to the invaders in the following terms: 'The ugly coarse shoal who are assailing the bright salmon [i.e., the Irish] are the British with abundance of weapons [*Bretnaig*, i.e., the Welsh] and the English and French from over the fair sea'.<sup>4</sup> The Lord Rhys of Deheubarth seems to have supported the venture. Gerald of Wales tells us that when Mac Murchada was in Wales in 1167 Rhys 'took pity on the exile's misfortune'; he facilitated Robert fitz Stephen's contribution to the ensuing invasion by releasing him from imprisonment on the express condition that he take part.<sup>5</sup> According to a widely ignored entry in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in the first encounter Diarmait faced when he returned to Ireland with his new foreign allies, those killed on his side included 'the son of the king of Wales (*mac rígh Bretan*), who was the battle-prop of the island of Britain, who had come across the sea in the army of Mac Murchada'.<sup>6</sup> This may have been one of Rhys's own sons.

Those of mixed Norman-Welsh blood were, of course, to the forefront, principal among them being the brood of Rhys's aunt Nest. In Ireland, the latter exhibit an extraordinary degree of reverence for St David, invoking his aid whenever danger threatens,<sup>7</sup> thus seeking the Welsh patron's sanction for their conquests. Nest's son, Robert fitz Stephen, claimed that Mac Murchada had adopted a deliberate policy of settling the Norman-Welsh in his kingdom: 'This man loves our race; he is encouraging our race to come here, and has decided to settle them in this island and give them permanent roots there. Perhaps the outcome of this present action will be that...the sovereignty over the whole kingdom will devolve upon our race for the future'.<sup>8</sup> This is reported to us by Robert's nephew, Gerald of Wales, who uses the Welsh

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<sup>1</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 435-6.

<sup>2</sup> Charters of Irish lands are addressed in a significant minority of cases to 'Francis et Anglis, Wallensibus et Hybernensibus' (see, for instance, *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, nos. 248, 252; *The Red Book of Ormond*, ed. Newport B. White (I.M.C., Dublin, 1932), nos. 2, 31); Eric St J. Brooks, 'An unpublished charter of Raymond le Gros', *JRSAL*, 69 (1939), 167-9; indexes to editions of the surviving Irish monastic registers and chartularies throw forth a whole host of native Welsh names, and individuals with a cognomen such as *Walensis* or *Breatmach*.

<sup>3</sup> 'Calendar of Christ Church deeds', *22nd P.R.I. rep DK*, no. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Ó Cuív, 'A poem composed for Cathal Croibhdhearg Ó Conchubhair', *Ériu*, 34 (1983), 157-74, qt. 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 28-31.

<sup>6</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1167.

<sup>7</sup> See, for instance, *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 987, 1938, 3442-55.

<sup>8</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 48-9.

prophecies of Merlin Silvester to justify Norman-Welsh participation in the subjugation of Ireland: 'A knight [i.e. fitz Stephen], sprung of two different races, will be the first to break through the defences of Ireland by force of arms'.<sup>9</sup> By inference, the Welsh can have little sympathy for the Irish, since it is their own prophecy that is coming true. South Welsh and the Norman-Welsh collaborated, therefore, in an enterprise that had something to offer both. It is less certain if the North Welsh were as well disposed. As we have seen, the seisin in Ireland of the family of the Venedotian princes antedated the invasion. The intimacy of his family's connexion with the Dublin Ostmen perhaps affected Owain Gwynedd's response to the Dubliners' rebellion against Mac Murchada in 1166, and it seems unlikely that he would have looked with favour on the imminent collapse of the Ostman kingdom.

It would be wrong to see the invasion as marking a thorough break in the traditional pattern of contact between Wales and Ireland. Because the eastern seaboard of Ireland was the area most densely colonized, it formed a wedge securely driven between native Wales and Ireland; but some level of contact was maintained. When Maelgwn ab Owain Gwynedd was banished from Anglesey in 1173 by his brother Dafydd, he found refuge in Ireland, though he was back in Wales within a year.<sup>10</sup> As Maelgwn's Irish holding was in Dublin, we may assume that the recent changeover in power there had not yet altered its long-standing receptiveness to Welsh refugees. This fits in with the impression gained from other sources (and examined above) that the Ostmen of Dublin maintained some independence of action during the 1170s at least. But if the army of Irishmen apparently brought to Anglesey by Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd in the early 1190s is anything to go by, the English invasion of Ireland did not check the flow of native Irishmen to military service in Wales. It was not confined to the family of the prince of Gwynedd. Maelgwn, son of the Lord Rhys of Deheubarth, was a bitter opponent of his brother Gruffudd (d.1201) and of the latter's sons, who were the product of a marriage to a daughter of William de Braose, lord of Brecknock, Builth, Radnor, Upper Gwent, and, since 1201, of the honour of Limerick. Maelgwn suffered also at the hands of another leading baron with strong Irish interests: in 1204 William Marshal, earl of Pembroke and lord of Leinster, stormed the castle of Cilgerran in pursuance of his claim to the lordship of Emlyn, one of the reasons for the *Brut* chronicler's conclusion that Maelgwn had lost 'the bolts and stays of all his territory and all else he had to his name'.<sup>11</sup> It is of some interest, therefore, to note that in 1205 Maelgwn employed the services of 'a certain Irishman (*neb vn Wydel*)', and his battle-axe, to have some of his enemies assassinated.<sup>12</sup> That is as much as we are told, and it may be wrong to ascribe any significance to the fact that there was a native Irish presence in Maelgwn's army at a point when his opponents were allied by marriage to the Anglo-Norman

<sup>9</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 30-31.

<sup>10</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, s.aa. 1173, 1174.

<sup>11</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1204.

<sup>12</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, s.a. 1205.

lord of Limerick. But it hardly seems reasonable to doubt that the casual mention of the incident by the chronicler is a clue both to the continuing military contribution of Ireland to Welsh warfare, so much a feature of the careers of Maelgwn's great-grandfather, Rhys ap Tewdwr, and grandfather, Gruffudd ap Rhys (who, after all, lived most of his life in Munster), and a clue too to a more widespread Irish presence in Welsh society than is usually allowed.

It was not a presence exclusive to the fighting classes as Gerald of Wales confirms, in passing, when he tells us a story about 'a poor Irish mendicant' who appeared in Wales bearing a relic of St Brendan.<sup>13</sup> If earlier forms of religious contact faded away with the invasion (such as the practice of Welsh ecclesiastics looking to Ireland for their training, even their consecration), other avenues opened up as the marcher invaders of Ireland endowed Welsh houses with Irish lands and planted daughter-houses in their new transmarine possessions.<sup>14</sup> Ireland even got itself a little colony of Welsh-speaking monks, who inhabited the Cistercian house at Tracton, Co. Cork, a daughter of Whitland.<sup>15</sup> Gerald, whose proposed appointment to the see of St David was turned down 'because the king would not have any Welshman, especially one who was near in blood to the princes of Wales' was, by his own account, offered four different dioceses in Ireland;<sup>16</sup> when he returned from his visit to Rome in 1200 to lobby for the St Davids appointment, he had letters in his favour addressed by Innocent III to, among others, the archbishop of Canterbury and the Welsh princes, but curiously too one for Meiler fitz Henry, the justiciar of Ireland, and others there, as if the Norman-Welsh colony in Ireland was felt to be part of the controversy then raging over the Welsh see.<sup>17</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the invasion the stock of the Lord Rhys and of his principality, Deheubarth, was rising. Within Wales, the rival native kingdoms of Gwynedd and Powys were in disarray through succession disputes. In Scotland, King William had recently been humiliated by his capture at Alnwick and the subsequent assertion of Angevin overlordship. In Ireland, Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair had by any standards been worsted in his dealings with the newcomers. It was in these circumstances that the Lord Rhys held two contests for poets and musicians at Cardigan Castle at Christmas 1176 and had them announced a year in advance throughout Britain and Ireland,<sup>18</sup> a clear attempt to parade the pre-eminence of Rhys's court,<sup>19</sup> and not, we may presume, merely over the rest of Wales but over Ireland, under whose cultural shadow Wales had sometimes remained hidden. This was all part of the art of maintaining a psychological advantage over one's rivals for prestige and

<sup>13</sup> *History and topography of Ireland*, trans. O'Meara, 118.

<sup>14</sup> See Huw Price, 'Church and society in Wales, 1150-1250: an Irish perspective', in R.R. Davies, *The British Isles 1100-1500. Comparisons, contrasts and connections* (Edinburgh, 1988), 27-47 (esp. pp.28-9).

<sup>15</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland* 143; see also, D.H. Williams, *The Welsh Cistercians*, 2 vols (Tenby, 1984), I, 192-5.

<sup>16</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, *Opera*, ed. J.S. Brewer, I (RS, London, 1861), 139.

<sup>17</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, 'De Invectionibus', ed. W.S. Davies, in *Y Cymmrodor*, 30 (1920), 150.

<sup>18</sup> *Brut; Brut (RBH); Brenhinedd y Saesson*, s.a. 1176.

<sup>19</sup> See the remarks of Professor Davies in *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 221.

honour. Arguably, few Welsh princes of the recent past could hope to compete on equal terms at that game with the greatest of the kings of Ireland. The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Wales had been a further setback to such hopes: one recalls the famous comment of the *Brut* chronicler on the death at their hands of Rhys ap Tewdwr that 'with him fell the kingdom of the Britons'. But under the latter's grandson, the Lord Rhys, Welsh prospects were mending; from the death of Owain Gwynedd in 1170 until his own death in 1197, he was 'the unconquered head of all Wales'.<sup>20</sup> It was ironic that his rise should coincide exactly with what even one native Irish lord of the time admitted was the *conquiscio Hibernie ab Anglicis*,<sup>21</sup> and that Rhys's contemporary across the Irish Sea, Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, who in other circumstances would perhaps have been expected to outshine him, should turn out to be, in Gerald's rather callous words, the man *qui ultimus de hac gente monarcha fuit*.<sup>22</sup> The question arises, therefore, as to whether, in the circumstances, Welsh and Irish can be assumed to have shared any measure of affinity or empathy and, if so, whether it influenced their actions.

No Irish chronicler bothers to record Rhys's death, though the *Song of Dermot* in its account of earlier events calls him 'a very brave and courteous king'.<sup>23</sup> Neither do the Irish sources bother much about events in Wales: the infamous Abergavenny massacre of many local Welsh chieftains in 1175, for instance, goes totally unnoticed in Irish accounts though, for what it is worth, the Annals of Clonmacnoise appear to be unique in recording the revenge wreaked by the men of Gwent in 1182.<sup>24</sup> Welsh chronicles for their part report in journalistic fashion the early stages of the invasion of Ireland, expressing neither approval nor censure. Whether, therefore, the latter tumultuous event strengthened or weakened the bonds between Welsh and Irish is a moot point. There seems little reason to call into question the commonly held view that, in providing a new target for the aggression of Anglo-Norman marcher barons, the invasion of Ireland relieved the pressure felt by the native Welsh.<sup>25</sup> Add to that the co-operation of the Lord Rhys in the early stages of the operation, and the settlement in Ireland as a result of large numbers of Welshmen, and one would be foolish indeed to speculate on Welsh sympathy for the Irish in their plight.

Yet, clearly no Welshman however short-sighted could be blind to the similarities in their situation. It was a truism of the age. The Anglo-Norman chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall concludes his obit of Henry II by saying that he 'conquered the Welsh, always rebels of the kings of England, and at last subjugated the unwilling, but not without great loss of his leading

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<sup>20</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1197.

<sup>21</sup> In a charter of Mac Gilla Mo Cholmóc, lord of Cuala in south Dublin, dated pre-1190, in *The 'Dignitas Decani' of St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin*, ed. Newport B. White (I.M.S., Dublin, 1957), 112.

<sup>22</sup> In his *Topographia Hibernica*, ed. J.S. Dimock, V (RS, London, 1867), 188.

<sup>23</sup> *Song of Dermot and the earl*, 374.

<sup>24</sup> *AClon* s.a. 1181 (p.214): 'There was a great slaughter of Englishmen by the Welshmen this yeare, there were 28 of their chieftest slaine. It is not knowen how many of the inferiour sort because the slaughter was soe great that they could not be numbred.'

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 271.

men and expenditure of his army. Moreover, a large part of Ireland was subdued both by him and his barons'.<sup>26</sup> Gerald of Wales's views are, of course, often contradictory and always jaundiced. But he makes no bones about warning those likely to find themselves being sucked up into Welsh or Irish affairs that 'there is a great difference between warfare in France on the one hand, and in Ireland and Wales on the other'.<sup>27</sup> He is referring, of course, to such simple matters as difficulties in the terrain, and similarities in Irish and Welsh politics and forms of warfare. But it ran much deeper. Gerald was convinced that vital errors had been made in the handling of both the Welsh and the Irish problem by Anglo-Norman kings and policy-makers. Central to it was a basic failure of understanding, an inability to comprehend the motivation of the native peoples in resisting attempted domination: 'The English are striving for power, the Welsh for freedom; the English are fighting for material gain, the Welsh to avoid a disaster; the English soldiers are hired mercenaries, the Welsh are defending their homeland'.<sup>28</sup> Welsh belief in a glory-filled past was what motivated them, he believed:

...They boast and confidently predict that they will soon reoccupy the whole island of Britain. It is remarkable how everyone in Wales entertains this illusion...The memory which they will never lose of their former greatness may well kindle a spark of hatred in the Welsh and encourage them to rebel from time to time; for they cannot forget their Trojan blood and the majesty of their kings who once ruled over Britain...<sup>29</sup>

As for the Irish, even in Gerald's eyes they had been shabbily treated. His account of the famous 'beard-pulling' incident, when those Irish nobles who met Prince John at Waterford in 1185 were treated with mockery and personal abuse, is well known. This, in Gerald's view, produced a reaction, among even those Irish who had initially co-operated with the invaders, which was of long-term consequence:

...they deduced that these small injustices would be followed by greater ones, and debated among themselves how the English must intend to act against the overweening and rebellious, when men of goodwill, who had kept the peace, received this treatment. So with one accord they plotted to resist, and to guard the privileges of their ancient freedom even at the risk of their own lives...they made pacts with each other throughout the country, and those who had previously been enemies now became friends for the first time.<sup>30</sup>

According to Gerald's rather paranoid state of mind, the tide was turning. In Wales, because of the preoccupation of the Anglo-Normans with continental affairs, the Welsh 'have been able to raise their heads a little higher, recover their lands, and cease to bear the yoke which once weighed so heavily upon them'.<sup>31</sup> In Ireland, as a result, as he sees it, of broken promises, of betrayed loyalties, and of bestowing upon new arrivals land held by Irish who had all along proved co-operative, what few friends the Anglo-Normans had 'immediately went over to our enemies, and changing their role, spied on us and guided the enemy to us'.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (RS, London, 1875), 25-6.

<sup>27</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 244-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Journey through Wales and description of Wales*, trans. Thorpe, 274.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 265, 274; in 1199, Archbishop Hubert of Canterbury made the same point: '...the Welsh, being sprung by unbroken succession from the original stock of the Britons, boast of all Britain as theirs of right.' (*Episcopal acts and cognate documents relating to Welsh dioceses 1066-1272*, ed. J. Conway Davies, 2 vols (Cardiff, 1948-53), I, 308.

<sup>30</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 236-9.

<sup>31</sup> *Journey through Wales and description of Wales*, trans. Thorpe, 267.

<sup>32</sup> *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 238-9.

If Gerald was aware of these similar and simultaneous responses to Anglo-Norman domination in Ireland and Wales, it would be extraordinary if the indigenous inhabitants themselves were not. People who share the same enemies can, of course, be allies almost without knowing it. They can find themselves taking advantage of a common enemy's moment of weakness without any measure of co-ordination in their actions. This is what frequently happens in the Celtic world. Irish, Welsh, and Scots rarely collude in their efforts to counter the thrust of Anglo-Norman royal policy in their areas. They respond, however, to the same set of stimuli. Rebels rise when the defences of their would-be master are down. For the Celtic countries that often meant timing their insurgency to co-incide with a moment when the Anglo-Normans were distracted elsewhere, or taking advantage of the disturbed conditions of a troubled reign or the incapacity of a weak or unpopular king, or, (more importantly from our point of view, though again without necessarily any overt or covert collusion), taking the outbreak of hostilities in another Celtic country as the cue to rise. The final years of John's reign are a case in point.

### *King John and the Celtic lands*

Whatever his other deficiencies, few of John's predecessors devoted as much time and resources to dealing with the Celtic countries, or had as keen an awareness of their potential for good or ill. As lord of Ireland since 1177 and of Glamorgan since 1189, he had first-hand experience of dealing with them and was not slow to put it to effect: in 1193 he had sought to exploit the captivity of his brother Richard by recruiting Welsh and Scottish armies, 'so that he might occupy England here and there'.<sup>33</sup> He is the last person, therefore, who, having ascended the throne himself, would have been surprised to find the same armies turned against him. Nevertheless, a decade of his reign had passed before such an alignment of forces threatened his position. After 1204, John's main aim was the recovery of his French lands. He could never hope to be in a position to do so while dissension existed in England and without having effected a rigorous imposition of his authority over Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. Just why became clear for the first time in 1208.

The as yet unsatisfactorily explained fall from favour of one of the greatest marcher families, the de Braoses, set off a train of events that reinforces the 'Irish Sea' dimension, because William de Braose, in fleeing John's wrath, took ship to Ireland like many an exile

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<sup>33</sup> *The historical works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (RS, London, 1879-80), I, 515. According to the contemporaneous account by Richard of Devizes, King Richard had earlier 'accepted a pledge from the petty kings of the Welsh and the Scots that whilst he was on pilgrimage they would not cross their borders to do harm to England': *Cronicon Richardi Divisensis de tempore Regis Richardi Primi*, ed. J.T. Appleby (Medieval Texts, London, 1963), 7.

from Wales before him. De Braose's departure for Ireland has been placed in the winter of 1208-9,<sup>34</sup> but possibly happened in the previous winter. This would explain King John's command to the mariners of the Welsh coast, on 2 February 1208, not to cross over to Ireland for anyone; instead, he ordered them to enter his own service and carry his forces to Ireland about mid-Lent, 'otherwise the King will hang them and the owners of their ships'.<sup>35</sup> With the unpopular de Braoses out of the way, those Welsh who had suffered at their hands began scavenging the corpse: Gwenwynwyn, prince of Powys, ravaged their lands until John sent the marchers into the field to oppose him and forced him to sue for peace in October 1208; then it was the turn of the prince of Gwynedd, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, who invaded as far as Ystwyth in his effort to gain power over South Wales.<sup>36</sup> On 21 February 1209 we hear that a campaign was being organized by the earl of Chester 'super inimicos nostros de Wallia pro excessibus Lewelini'; Lloyd has described this as 'a mere measure of precaution' but two days later the sheriff of Cork and Waterford, Thomas Bloet, was given licence to convey wheat to Ireland on condition that none of it end up in Wales.<sup>37</sup> One cannot help being reminded of Gerald of Wales's warning that

Any prince who is really determined to conquer the Welsh...must make every effort to stop the Welsh buying the stocks of cloth, salt and corn which they usually import from England. Ships manned with picked troops must patrol the coast, to make sure that these goods are not brought by water across the Irish Sea or the Severn Sea, to ward off enemy attacks and to secure his own supply-lines.<sup>38</sup>

As far as Gerald was concerned, the rebellious Welsh had cause to anticipate aid of some kind from Ireland. He was not, of course, speaking of these particular events, merely of the customary state of affairs; but it would be ironic indeed if, while de Braose (who had earlier, in Davies's words, 'breathed a new and terrible life into the Anglo-Norman penetration of central Wales')<sup>39</sup> was in Ireland finding shelter with the earl of Pembroke and other marchers, the Welsh who benefited from his fall were doing so thanks to the supply of men or victuals from opponents of the marchers in Ireland.

King John had clearly in mind to follow de Braose to Ireland and bring him and his abettors to heel, but he first of all needed to secure his home base. News from Scotland was bad. A contemporary chronicler reports the rumour that the king of Scotland 'was said to have entered a treaty with King John's enemies';<sup>40</sup> this sort of talk was, of course, perennial, but it has been shown that this time it was almost certainly true and that the proposed alliance was a marriage between King William's daughter and the younger son of John's fiercest foe, Philip

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<sup>34</sup> Orpen discusses the point in *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 239, n. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *CDI*, I, 374.

<sup>36</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 621-2.

<sup>37</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 622, n. 51; *CDI*, I, 392; Bloet's daughter was married to Diarmait Mac Carthaig, king of Desmond (see above, 57, n. 52).

<sup>38</sup> *Journey through Wales and description of Wales*, trans. Thorpe, 267.

<sup>39</sup> Davies, *Domination and conquest*, 31.

<sup>40</sup> 'Annals of Margam', ed. H.R. Luard, in *Annales Monastici*, I (RS, London, 1864), 29.



of France.<sup>41</sup> Hence John's march north in the summer of 1209 to confront the Scots king. There at Norham he accused William of receiving in Scotland his fugitives and public enemies, and giving them aid and support. Thereupon, 'contrary to the wishes of the Scots',<sup>42</sup> William made his peace with John and abandoned his French alliance. When it was safe for John to tackle the Anglo-Irish barons in the summer following, it is noticeable how the enterprise was given William's public backing through the participation of his nephew, Henry son of Earl David of Huntingdon.<sup>43</sup>

Llywelyn ab Iorwerth displayed the friendliness of his relations with John at this point - and, needless to say, his indifference to William's predicament - by taking part in the hosting to Norham, the only time a prince of Gwynedd ever joined the king of England on an expedition outside Wales.<sup>44</sup> With everything thus calm at home John proceeded to Ireland: having two Celtic fronts quiescent, the third was next on the agenda. How infuriating for John, therefore, to discover that his arrival in Ireland was the cue for a Welsh rising. Not alone that, but the instigators of the trouble appear to have been the very people he went to Ireland to dislodge, William de Braose and Hugh de Lacy: Walter of Coventry speaks of 'Walensium nonnulli Willelmo de Brause et Hugoni de Laci confederati', but the fact that the same summer witnessed an expedition by the earl of Chester and others into Gwynedd, Llywelyn's principality, suggests that the latter was one of those who responded to their urgings.<sup>45</sup> It was a major insurrection of Welsh princes and marcher lords and it is no coincidence that it broke out at the precise point when John was out of the way in Ireland. The return of King John through Wales gave hope to Llywelyn's rivals: Rhys Gryg of Deheubarth used royal troops to undermine him in September 1210.<sup>46</sup> In the following summer, John undertook two major campaigns to deal with the Welsh problem: one set of Irish annals reports the event, interpreting it as 'a great war between the king of England and the king of Wales', and stating that in connexion with it the justiciar and leading Anglo-Irish barons left Ireland to come to John's aid (a fact confirmed by the biography of William Marshal).<sup>47</sup> Just at the point, therefore, when the Dublin government was attempting to build upon the extraordinary

<sup>41</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 243-4.

<sup>42</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 376.

<sup>43</sup> See *CDS*, I, 475-9, for prests at Meath and Carrickfergus made to Henry and, among others, Eustace de Balliol, David de Hastings, Eustace de Vesci (an English baron with Scottish landholdings who adhered to the king of Scots in 1215-16), and William le Chen (or Cheyne).

<sup>44</sup> See A.D. Carr, 'Anglo-Welsh relations, 1066-1282', in Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale (edd), *England and her Neighbours 1066-1453. Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London, 1989), 121-38 (at p. 127).

<sup>45</sup> *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (RS, London, 1872-3), II, 202; Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 631-2.

<sup>46</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 633.

<sup>47</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1210=1211; see also, Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 283, n. 1. We also know that the Irish justiciar was in England in 1211 delivering Irish revenues to the king (*CDI*, I, 421, 424), and the unique Irish pipe for the period accounts for amounts spent on provisions for soldiers and horses sent from Ireland to Wales for the 1211 campaign ('The Irish pipe roll of 14 John, 1211-1212', ed. Oliver Davies and D.B. Quinn, in *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 4 (Supplement, July 1941), 14, 32, 34).

success of the royal expedition of the previous year (in particular, by their encastellation programmes on the Shannon and Erne frontiers), their resources were diverted elsewhere to tackle the restlessness of another Celtic people. It was, of course, to be many years before this problem became very acute, but it grew to be (especially under John's grandson, Edward I) a cause of near-fatal debilitation to the colony.

It was perhaps only through the intercession of his wife, John's illegitimate daughter, that Llywelyn managed to hold on to the core of his principality in 1211; in a gesture of reconciliation he even spent the following Easter with the English king. With the Welsh prince's sword back in its scabbard, John turned his back. The Barnwell annalist says of this year that 'there was now no one in Ireland, Scotland or Wales, who did not bow to his nod, a situation which, as is well known, none of his predecessors had achieved'.<sup>48</sup> However, an extraordinary series of events was about to unfold. We have seen that within months of John's outwardly successful Irish expedition an invasion of Scotland took place from Ireland. It was led by Gofraid, son of Domnall mac William, a claimant to the kingdom, acting in collusion with certain powerful Scottish interests, and with backing too from some quarters in Ireland. King William - 'old and unable to pacify the interior districts of his kingdom'<sup>49</sup> - turned to King John for assistance. The English king came north and met William on the borders at the end of June, 1212, and together they were eventually successful in repressing the rising. All seemed fine. John had quelled Wales and Ireland and helped put down an Irish-backed invasion of Scotland. However, at the precise moment when John was in the north with the Scots king, the Welsh rebelled:

King John set out for Durham to have conference with the king of Scotland. While there, the Welsh, who had conspired and bound themselves with mutual oaths and obligations, all rose suddenly and unexpectedly in insurrection against the king of England, under Llywelyn (who had been with the king at Easter), devastating without opposition the castles the king of England made in Wales.<sup>50</sup>

There is no need to speculate on any collusion between the organizers of this Welsh revolt and that of the Meic William in Scotland. It was if anything, however, more broadly based. It received the backing of Innocent III, who, to heighten the pressure on John, released the lands of the Welsh rebels from the interdict that had closed all the churches of England and Wales since 1208, giving the rising something of the flavour of a holy war.<sup>51</sup> John had been planning an expedition to France and the Welsh outbreak was, therefore, music to the ears of Philip Augustus: the English king was forced to abandon plans for a Continental offensive in order to confront Llywelyn. Just as Philip had aligned himself with the Scots in 1209, he now approached the Welsh. In the late summer of 1212, a treaty of perpetual alliance was drawn up

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<sup>48</sup> *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. Stubbs, II, 203; I have used the translation by W.L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1961), 198-9.

<sup>49</sup> *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. Stubbs, II, 206; Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 330, n. 6.

<sup>50</sup> 'Annals of St Edmunds', translated in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 391.

<sup>51</sup> *Brut* s.a. 1212.

between the kingdom of France and the principality of North Wales. The remarkable letter sent by Llywelyn to Philip in ratification of the agreement still survives in the French national archives. In it, the prince of Gwynedd claims to have summoned a council of his own great men to consider the alliance and has obtained 'the common consent of all the princes of Wales (*communi cunctorum Vallie principum assensu*)'. As a result, he has

made neither truce nor peace, nor even parley, with the English, but that, by God's grace, I and all the princes of Wales unanimously leagued together have manfully resisted our - and your - enemies, and by God's grace we have recovered by force of arms from the yoke of their tyranny a large part of the land and the strongly defended castles which they, by fraud and deceit, had occupied, and having recovered them, we hold them strongly in the might of the Lord.<sup>52</sup>

Even with due allowance for the hyperbole to be expected in such diplomatic exchanges, Llywelyn was not exaggerating. He had put together a formidable alliance of almost all the Welsh princes, many his former enemies, provoked into unprecedented unity - it has been called 'perhaps the nearest approach yet to a national rising in Welsh history'<sup>53</sup> - by John's very success against them. And, if he could help it, John was not likely to let them away with their defiance.

For the late summer of 1212 King John planned a massive campaign against Wales. Those who had benefited from his would-be settlement of the Irish situation, and those whose wavering allegiance had been checked there, were to be to the forefront in the enterprise. Alan of Galloway had, to some extent, stepped into Hugh de Lacy's shoes in Ulster. John now called on him to demonstrate his fealty, and repay the opportunity he had given him of extending his patrimony into Ulster at the expense of the Irish, by taking to the field against the Welsh: he was asked to provide a thousand hand-picked Gallovidian troops (and preferably pay their expenses out of his own pocket) who would assemble at Chester on August 19.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, John was determined to make full use of forces from Ireland in the coming campaign. Of course this was partly a straightforward exercise in maximizing his numerical strength and military muscle; but there is hardly much room for doubt that the cold light of recent events had dawned upon the king. A contemporary French writer remarked of England's relationship with one of the Celtic countries that 'Scotland was always subject to England in such a manner that [the English] had no sooner obtained power over it, than [the Scots] forgot the agreement'.<sup>55</sup> King John surely recognised this, that each time he seemed to have quietened one Celtic front another went on the offensive. It was vital, therefore, to press home to them the point that, far from them being able to exploit his preoccupation with one region to force his grip elsewhere to slacken, he would bring each in turn to heel using the forces of the other.

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<sup>52</sup> The translation is that of R.F. Treharne, who provides also an excellent discussion of the background to these events in 'The Franco-Welsh treaty of alliance in 1212', *BBCS*, 18 (1958), 60-75 (at p.63).

<sup>53</sup> Treharne, 'The Franco-Welsh alliance', 64.

<sup>54</sup> *CDS*, I, 529.

<sup>55</sup> Benoit de Sainte-Marie, *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie*, ed. F. Michel (Paris 1836-44), III, 251; Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 21.

Hence, having cajoled the Welsh into a state of submissiveness in 1209, he paraded his mastery over them by making Llywelyn participate in his march against Scotland (a 'unique event in Anglo-Welsh relations');<sup>56</sup> thereupon, several of the nobles of Scotland took part in the expedition to Ireland in 1210 and a tamed king of Scotland could but look on as his Galloway vassals, having done John's bidding, reaped a harvest in Ulster; and now in 1212 the circle was about to turn fully as the English king sought Irish collaboration to confound the Welsh. He wrote to the lord of Leinster, William Marshal, and to 'our other loyal subjects of Ireland (*et aliis fidelibus nostris de Hibernia*)' - who clearly included the Gaelic lords, among his most committed adherents during his brief sojourn there - and commanded them to supply 200 knights and a force of foot and horse, with supplies,<sup>57</sup> to muster at Chester on the prescribed day. They were to come in sufficient numbers 'as may prove to the King that they desire his advancement and the confusion of his enemies'.<sup>58</sup> But the expedition never got off the ground: John abandoned it when he heard rumours of a baronial conspiracy against him. On 16 August 1212 he wrote to the nobles who had assembled at Chester, thanking them for doing so, but sending them home. On the next day, however, he wrote to the commanders of his fleet, ordering them to put out from Chester, sail around the coast of North Wales, and, doing as much damage as possible, destroy what Welsh ships they came across.<sup>59</sup> Clearly, even if the campaign had to be called off, all would not have been lost if the Welsh were left without their shipping. This was perhaps in an effort to interrupt their contacts with the French; but it is interesting to note that John's recent letter seeking aid from Ireland had concluded by ordering that a fleet of galleys and the royal navy were to keep open a line of communication with the king,<sup>60</sup> which may suggest royal worries about control over the Irish Sea route passing into enemy hands.

From this point onwards King John was beset by internal opposition. In this new circumstance all thoughts of subduing Llywelyn were shelved. Indeed, by the winter of 1214-15 John was busy offering inducements to the Welsh princes in hopes of obtaining their assistance.<sup>61</sup> By now, though, the lines of battle had been clearly drawn: by and large the marcher barons proved loyal to John and almost inevitably, therefore, the native Welsh under Llywelyn lined up with the reform party. When the elderly and ailing King William died in 1214 and was succeeded by his son Alexander, Scotland too joined the ranks of the rebels. A worried Barnwell annalist reported in 1215 that 'it was said that both the hand of Alexander, king of Scotland, and that of Llywelyn, prince of North Wales, were with [the barons]'.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Carr, 'Anglo-Welsh relations', 127.

<sup>57</sup> *Rotuli litterarum clausarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. Duffus Hardy, 2 vols (London, 1835), I, 131b.

<sup>58</sup> *CDI*, I, 435.

<sup>59</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 639; Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 392.

<sup>60</sup> *CDI*, I, 435.

<sup>61</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 642.

<sup>62</sup> *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. Stubbs, II, 220; Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, 332.

Alexander pursued a more vigorous policy than his father had of late in the attempt to reassert Scottish control over the northern counties of England, and before long had succeeded in obtaining the homage of the barons of Northumbria.<sup>63</sup> John's pursuit of him, and his arrogant taunt of the red-haired Scots king that he 'would make the fox-cub enter his lair',<sup>64</sup> were in vain. One of the clauses of the Great Charter provides for the interests of Alexander, a further three for those of the Welsh princes.<sup>65</sup> In the summer of 1216 when Prince Louis of France had arrived in England making common cause with the rebels and claiming the throne, Alexander came south to Dover, did homage to him for his English lands, and 'Louis himself, as well as the other barons of England, swore...that they would never enter into a compact of peace or agreement with the king of England, without the king of Scots.'<sup>66</sup> John died on 19 October 1216. Just how much the Welsh and Scots had prospered as John's fortunes sank can be gauged from the reaction to the king's death: an invitation was sent to Alexander and Llywelyn to participate in the choice of a new king.<sup>67</sup>

John had ended his life a beaten king at the height of a civil war. A poet, commenting on his beleaguering, tells us that 'A four-fold rage had crept upon the English nation...The first rage was conceived by its own pride; the second drew hither the warlike legions of the French; the third conducted the black legions of the Scots; the fourth bent the inconstant Welsh under their light garment'.<sup>68</sup> There is no mention here of the Irish, and it is certainly true that there appears to have been no concerted Irish campaign to take advantage of John's plight (in spite the enforced absence from Ireland for considerable periods at this time of some leading loyalist Anglo-Irish barons).<sup>69</sup> The fact remains that the extent to which King John was diverted from his efforts and forced to dissipate his time and resources attending to the frontier areas of Wales, Scotland and Ireland, contributed greatly to the determination of his fate.

<sup>63</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose' in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 404.

<sup>64</sup> 'Histoire des Ducs de Normandie', in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 408.

<sup>65</sup> For a discussion of the subject, see J. Beverley Smith, 'Magna Carta and the charters of the Welsh princes', *EHR*, 99 (1984), 344-62.

<sup>66</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early Sources*, II, 411.

<sup>67</sup> A fact noted by Professor Duncan in *Making of the kingdom*, 523. It came to naught, of course, following the coronation by loyalists within days of John's nine-year-old son as Henry III.

<sup>68</sup> *The political songs of England from the reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. Thomas Wright, Camden Society (London, 1839), 19-20.

<sup>69</sup> The lack of evidence that the Irish took much advantage of King John's problems may be in part a consequence of the meagreness of Irish annals for these years: a letter of Innocent III to Henry, archbishop of Dublin, apparently dating from *circa* February 1216, directs him to put down conspiracies against the king throughout the kingdom of Ireland, though the full text does not survive (P.J. Dunning, 'The letters of Innocent III to Ireland', *Traditio*, 18 (1962), 246-7; *Vetera monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum historiam illustrantia*, ed. Augustinus Theiner (Rome, 1864), p. 1); cf. *ibid.*, p. 4 and *Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304*, 44 (a mandate to the archbishop 'to take measures to preserve to King Henry the fealty of his subjects in Ireland, and to recall those who have opposed him' and *ibid.*, 47 (another 'to fulfil his office faithfully and prudently in bringing about a peace between the Irish and the king').

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE IRISH SEA REGION UNDER HENRY III, 1217-1272

This chapter covers Ireland's relations with its Celtic neighbours during the long reign of Henry III. As before, it is proposed to treat of each story separately, dealing first with Scotland, then the Isles, and finally Wales. However, as always with the lands in question, there are particular points in time when the fortunes of all or most of them seem to collide. Sometimes this is as a result of affairs in England. It will be argued here that particular events of Henry's reign caused concomitant reactions in the Celtic realms (which is perhaps some justification for examining their affairs within the framework of the reign of an English king). During the same period there were undoubtedly also instances when developments in one Celtic country triggered responses elsewhere. Both phenomena are particularly in evidence during the latter years of the period under review, and it is, therefore, proposed to examine that episode in isolation at the conclusion of the discussion.

### *Irish relations with Scotland*

Even in the thirteenth century the church remained arguably the single greatest source of contact between Ireland and Scotland. Venerable ancient links may have been losing some of their vigour, but the new age brought its own fusion of interests. The jurisdiction of papal legates appointed for Ireland habitually extended throughout Scotland and the Isles.<sup>1</sup> The same jurisdictional zone was the subject of a dispute in 1238 in the Franciscan province of Scotland, whose members refused to admit the order's visitor, on the grounds that the right to visit the Scottish houses had been entrusted by the general chapter to the minister of Ireland.<sup>2</sup> A year later the vacant ministry of the Irish province was filled when the general chapter promoted the head of the order in Scotland, John Ketton, to assume the role; there, 'he was so zealous in consoling brethren, that many who were unhappy in other provinces fled to him and under him seemed to prosper'.<sup>3</sup> In 1241, the papacy authorized the bishops of Raphoe and Ráith Lúraigh (later Derry), and the archdeacon of Raphoe, to enquire into a disputed election to the bishopric of Whithorn, one of the candidates to which was a monk of the much-favoured Scottish royal foundation at Melrose.<sup>4</sup> No explanation is given for the selection of these northern Irish churchmen for this delicate task of intercession in the affairs of the church of Galloway, but it is a fair indication of the closeness of contact between the two regions.

In a sense too the church was a major contributor to the commercial contact between Ireland and Scotland and a healthy trade existed in the importation by churchmen into Scotland of corn, flour, and other necessities produced in Ireland. If the evidence of surviving record is anything to go by, Galloway was the main beneficiary of the trade. The bishop of Galloway obtained a licence to do so in 1246,<sup>5</sup> the abbot of Glenluce in 1220, 1226, 1227 and 1252,<sup>6</sup> the abbot of Kilwinning in 1227 and 1252,<sup>7</sup> and in 1223 the abbot of Dundrennan was granted a three-year protection to travel to and from Ireland.<sup>8</sup> The merchants of Galloway feature prominently too on the guild merchant roll of Dublin, now thankfully available in a printed edition. It has a comprehensive list of some 8,400 members of the guild in the period from the 1190s to 1265. In a preliminary investigation I have noted a total of nearly 200 members of probable Scottish origin (many more no doubt lie hidden behind names which give no clue as to place of origin), with the following locations (in descending order of

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<sup>1</sup> Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Hiberno-papal relations in the late twelfth century', *Archivium Hibernicum*, 34 (1976), 55-70; Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 60-62.

<sup>2</sup> E.B. Fitzmaurice and E.G. Little, *Materials for the history of the Franciscan province of Ireland AD 1230-1450* (Manchester, 1920), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304*, 198.

<sup>5</sup> *CDI*, I, 2830.

<sup>6</sup> *CDI*, I, 943, 1370, 1532; II, 100; see also, III, 32 (1 April 1285).

<sup>7</sup> *CDS*, I, 982, 1889; *CDI*, II, 61.

<sup>8</sup> *CDS*, I, 850; the monastery held lands in Meath (*ibid.*, III, 967, 969, 1157).

frequency) being noted: Ayr (by far the most numerous at 58), Galloway (19), Greenock (12), Dumfries (9), Irvine (9), Renfrew (7), Glasgow (4), Kircudbright (4), two each from Argyll, Carrick, Dumbarton, Musselburgh, Perth, and Rutherglen, and one member each from Annan, Cathcart, Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Lochmaben, and Moray.<sup>9</sup>

Even allowing for this evidence of clerical and commercial contacts, the story of Ireland's relations with Scotland in the thirteenth century is, to say the least, difficult to piece together. It is, in any case, misleading to think in terms of 'Hiberno-Scottish' relations in this period. 'Ireland', as a unit, did not have relations with Scotland. The latter, a national monarchy, was increasingly dominated by the Scots king, who had broad consent to conduct the nation's affairs; the 'lordship' of Ireland, on the other hand, was now vested in the English crown. The story of the interconnections between both countries in the age is, therefore, that of the contacts which individuals within Ireland had with individuals in Scotland or with the Scottish royal court, and vice versa. As before, the men of Galloway figure prominently in that story. We have seen that they had a toehold in Ulster from the late twelfth century, which King John did his level best to foster. From the start, however, the Galloway lords had difficulty in making their acquisitions yield dividends. The Dublin government seldom lifted a finger to help them and, indeed, seems to have taken advantage of every opportunity to hinder their progress. Alan of Galloway had problems gaining entry to his lands: in 1215 Archbishop Henry of Dublin, in his capacity as justiciar, had to be ordered to allow Alan's men come and go between Kircudbright and Ulster, and not to interfere with them in transporting his merchandise by ship.<sup>10</sup> Thomas of Galloway met with similar reticence: in 1219 the king pointedly ordered the new justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco, to allow him 'to hold in peace' the lands earlier granted to him in Ulster.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, Duncan of Carrick and John son of Alexander (probably his nephew) claimed to have been disseised by the justiciar of their Ulster lands, allegedly 'believing that they went against King John in the war': as this was untrue, de Marisco was commanded to restore anything he had taken from them.<sup>12</sup>

There may have been a conscious effort by earlier arrivals to dislodge some of those recently set up by King John in Ulster. In 1219 the family of one John fitz John of Hanwood, who had been granted the vill of Duncru (near Carrickfergus) during the king's 1210 expedition, complained of having been wrongly ejected by the justiciar; he was then ordered to allow them to hold the vill in peace, pending a proper explanation for the disseisin.<sup>13</sup> The Galloway lords evidently suffered the same fate. In April 1220, Alan was prompted to send a delegation to Henry III, with letters pointing out that both he and his brother Thomas as yet

<sup>9</sup> *The Dublin guild merchant roll c.1196-1265*, ed. Philomena Connolly and Geoffrey Martin (Dublin, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> *CDI*, I, 545; *CDS*, I, 617 (dated 2 April 1215).

<sup>11</sup> *CDI*, I, 879; *CDS*, I, 722 (dated 19 June 1219).

<sup>12</sup> *CDI*, I, 907; *CDS*, I, 739 (dated 19 October 1219).

<sup>13</sup> *CDI*, I, 871 (dated 12 April 1219).



'had little use of the lands granted to them in Ireland'. Henry thereupon ordered that Alan's lands were to be restored to him and gave the Galloway lord's clerk a letter to that effect for delivery to the justiciar of Ireland.<sup>14</sup> Alan may then have effected some practical exploitation of his Ulster holdings as later on that year and again in 1221 and 1223 three distinct monastic congregations in Alan's Galloway lordship were granted licences and letters of protection to enable the abbot and monks travel to Ireland to purchase victuals.<sup>15</sup>

But Gallovidian prospects rapidly worsened when Hugh de Lacy secured restoration to the earldom of Ulster, on the carcass of which they had been scavaging. In March 1224 Duncan of Carrick tried to anticipate developments by securing an instruction to the justiciar to hand over to him at last 'the portion which remains to be delivered of the land given to him in Ireland by King John'.<sup>16</sup> It was of little avail. Soon afterwards he complained that the mandate had been ignored and 'prays that the justiciar may be commanded in stronger terms to restore the land'.<sup>17</sup> By this stage, however, de Lacy had arrived in Ulster, and though we know little of his activities there, apart from the formation of an alliance with Áed Méith Ó Néill, it is clear that the Galloway lords were his primary targets.<sup>18</sup> He demolished Thomas of Galloway's castle at Coleraine,<sup>19</sup> and ejected Duncan of Carrick from at least a portion of his lands: in early August the justiciar was ordered to make enquiry into Duncan's complaint that de Lacy had disseised him of the land of 'Ballygeithelauch' and had given it to another.<sup>20</sup> A month or more later Alan wrote to the king, explaining that he had been ready to cross to Ireland with his ships to oppose de Lacy at the very point when peace terms were agreed between the latter and the justiciar, William Marshal. Now that de Lacy looked set to be restored to favour, Alan had cause for concern. He asked the king, in view of his readiness to serve him, to confirm both his and his brother Thomas's lands in Ireland: Thomas himself, in a separate letter, did likewise.<sup>21</sup> We hear of no immediate response to the requests. Only in April 1225 did the king mandate the justiciar to permit Alan of Galloway 'to fortify and fence' his Ulster land and 'to put men thereon without hindrance to inhabit it'.<sup>22</sup>

Whether this had any effect is open to doubt. Thomas certainly seems to have lost his Ulster holdings after Hugh de Lacy's reinstatement. In December 1225 he was granted 100

<sup>14</sup> *CDS*, I, 754-5 (the latter dated 18 April 1220); *CDI*, I, 936-7. The injunction to the justiciar was repeated on June 16.

<sup>15</sup> *CDI*, I, 943; *CDS*, I, 765 (dated 16 June 1220, the same day on which the justiciar was ordered to restore seisin to Alan of his Ulster lands); *CDI*, I, 982; *CDS*, I, 795 (dated 15 February 1221); *CDS*, I, 850 (dated 29 March 1223).

<sup>16</sup> *CDI*, I, 1161; *CDS*, I, 874.

<sup>17</sup> *CDI*, I, 1201; *CDS*, I, 878 (dated 4 August 1224).

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of de Lacy's rebellion, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 37-48; A.J. Otway-Ruthven, *A history of medieval Ireland* (London, 1968), 90-93; Robin Frame, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 142-59 (at 147-50).

<sup>19</sup> *AU* s.a. 1222 (recte 1224).

<sup>20</sup> *CDI*, I, 1200; *CDS*, I, 879.

<sup>21</sup> *CDI*, I, 1218; *CDS*, I, 890 (dated some time shortly after 8 September 1224); *CDI*, I, 1219; *CDS*, I, 891.

<sup>22</sup> *CDI*, I, 1247-8; *CDS*, I, 905.

marks annually payable at the Irish exchequer until an escheat of equal value could be provided for him.<sup>23</sup> Even that proved unobtainable. Not much more than a year later Thomas had come to the king, claiming that 'he had spent much money in maintaining the king's war in Ireland, and that he was greatly impoverished thereby', and pointing out that the 100 marks had gone as yet unpaid; the justiciar was again ordered to come to some arrangement with him.<sup>24</sup> It is true that when de Lacy was finally given a charter for his restored earldom in 1227 the Galloway lands were specifically excluded;<sup>25</sup> he, therefore, had no legal authority by which to dispossess any of them, but clearly this mattered little. In 1228 Irish annals note that Thomas's castle at Coleraine, which de Lacy had razed four years earlier, was re-built.<sup>26</sup> The probability must be that it was the earl of Ulster himself who did so. We hear nothing further of Thomas of Galloway's Irish career. He died in 1231,<sup>27</sup> and his son possibly obtained his earldom of Atholl when he came of age.<sup>28</sup> All prospect of making headway in Ulster may not have been abandoned but we hear nothing of any attempt to do so.

Alan may have persevered. He was astute enough to reach a *modus vivendi* with de Lacy by marrying his daughter, about 1229, not long after Earl Hugh's return to favour; the north of England Lanercost chronicler is our only source for the development, and tells how Alan set out for Ireland 'with an immense retinue' but that on his return voyage he himself was almost drowned and many of his men perished.<sup>29</sup> De Lacy left no legitimate male issue, so Alan, through his wife, could reasonably expect to inherit a substantial portion of the earldom of Ulster should he outlive his new father-in-law.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, he was keeping up some kind of contact with the region and we find him obtaining a licence in 1232 to send his ship to Ireland to purchase provisions for his use.<sup>31</sup> But he died in February 1234. The Irish annals record his death, calling him '*Rí Gallgaidel* (king of the Gallovidians)', a title its rulers had themselves long abandoned.<sup>32</sup> Like Hugh de Lacy he himself had only three daughters and a bastard son, Thomas. The Scots king, therefore, set about dividing the inheritance between the daughters, all married to English barons; but Thomas and the Gallovidians had other plans, and rose in rebellion. For once, we are fortunate in having not one but two detailed accounts of the ensuing events,<sup>33</sup> and they make it plain just how strong Alan's Irish links were.

<sup>23</sup> *CDI*, I, 1334; *CDS*, I, 922.

<sup>24</sup> *CDI*, I, 1473 (dated 15 January 1227).

<sup>25</sup> *CDI*, I, 1498.

<sup>26</sup> *AU* s.a. 1228.

<sup>27</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 478.

<sup>28</sup> But cf. Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 544, n. 40.

<sup>29</sup> *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1839), 40; see also Keith J. Stringer, 'A new wife for Alan of Galloway', *Trans. Dumfries & Galloway Nat. Hist. & Antiq. Soc.*, 49 (1972), 49-55.

<sup>30</sup> If, that is, Hugh's earldom had not been restored to him for the duration of his life only, which seems a strong possibility in view of its return to the king's hands at his death.

<sup>31</sup> *CDI*, I, 1937; *CDS*, I, 1149.

<sup>32</sup> *AU* s.a. 1234.

<sup>33</sup> The 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 496-8; and Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard (RS, London, 1876), III, 364-6.

According to Matthew Paris, the conspiracy (which he places in 1236) involved 'many noble and bold men from the different regions of the western provinces, namely Galloway, and the island which is called Man, and the regions of Ireland'. This is precisely the axis which, as we shall see when we come to consider developments in the Isles at this time, Alan devoted much of his career to construct. The Melrose chronicler, in noting Alan's death makes a point of telling us that his illegitimate son was married to a daughter of the Manx king Ragnall (d. 1228), and it is evidently this alliance which accounts for the involvement of Manxmen in the Galloway rebellion. But Paris goes on to say that the rebellion was 'at the instance of' Hugh de Lacy, the purpose being to ensure the succession to all Galloway of Thomas, Alan's illegitimate son, or failing that, Patrick, son of Alan's brother, Thomas of Atholl. As part of their alliance the various leaders of the conspiracy entered into a contract of blood-brotherhood, which Paris describes in considerable detail, done 'according to a certain abominable custom of their ancient forefathers'. Our other main source, the Melrose chronicler, tells us that in 1235 the Scots king entered Galloway to subdue the rebels and gave battle to them. It is interesting that in this encounter the rebels were attacked from the rear by Ferchar Maccintsacairt, earl of Ross: he is the man who had finally managed to dispose of the threat the Meic William posed to the reigning Scottish dynasty. The Meic William, as we have earlier seen, conducted their campaigns from an Irish base, and Maccintsacairt's opposition to the Gallovidian revolt suggests the possibility that the Galloway rebels and the Meic William had the same Irish backers. Sure enough, when Thomas managed to make his escape from the battle he fled to Ireland 'with his supporter Gilroth'. Soon afterwards Gilroth returned 'with a fleet from Ireland, and had brought with him Irishmen, and the son of a certain sub-king', breaking up their ships when they landed so as to leave no possibility of a retreat. The invasion was, needless to say, but the latest in a long line of such ventures that went disastrously wrong: Gilroth and Thomas surrendered in the face of overwhelming odds, and the Irishmen, trying to make their way out of the country, were overtaken by the citizens of Glasgow, and many of them killed.

Who 'Gilroth' was is a mystery, and nowhere are we told that he himself was an Irishman. The Lanercost chronicle, in a version which is little short of a synopsis of the Melrose account, calls him 'Gilleroth'. His name may be *Gilla Ruad*, a common Gaelic forename, but there is a much rarer Gaelic name *Gilla Roid* which seems closer. These events belong to 1235-6. Interestingly, for the year 1236 the Irish annals, which at this point are dominated by the affairs of Connacht, report a comparatively rare Ulster event: the death of a certain *Gilla Pátraic Mac Gilla Roid toísec Cenél Óengusa*.<sup>34</sup> If this is the Cenél Óengusa traditionally home to the better-known Mac Cana family, it lies to the south of Lough Neagh in County Armagh. The death in 1236 of an Ulster lord called 'Mac Gilla Roid' at the same

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<sup>34</sup> AU; AFM s.a. 1236.

time that an Irish army was in Scotland, sent apparently at the instance of the earl of Ulster, led by a certain 'Gilroth/Gilleroth', may of course be pure coincidence: if not, it indicates the Gallovidian support-base in Ireland.

The collapse of the rebellion meant that Alan of Galloway's daughters did each succeed to their third share of his lordship.<sup>35</sup> We have no evidence that they obtained seisin of their father's Ulster lands but some effort may have been made to do so. The eldest of the coheiresses was married to Roger de Quincy, earl of Winchester, and on 5 April 1237, immediately upon the partition of the inheritance, de Quincy's tenants, Richard Ruffus and Erkin of Kircudbright, were given a safe conduct for three years to travel with their ships to trade in Ireland, to stay there, and to return.<sup>36</sup> On November 3 in the same year Erkin, this time described as a merchant of Kircudbright, had a licence 'to go to Ireland with his ship, to convey corn and other articles of food thence to the land of Roger de Quincy, earl of Winchester, of Kircudbright'.<sup>37</sup> Alan's best-known daughter, Derbforgaill, was married to John de Balliol, and over a decade later, on 4 May 1248, the Irish justiciar was mandated to allow the latter's men purchase in Ireland corn, wine, and other necessities for his use and to export it.<sup>38</sup> There is nothing in the procurement of these licences that forces the conclusion that the licensee held land in Ireland; but in practice they were rarely sought except by those for whom we can trace some sort of tenurial link with the country. In short, our inability to trace clearly the progress of Gallovidian seisin in Ulster should not preclude the possibility that the claims survived, to be resurrected by subsequent rulers of Galloway.

What happened to the claim to the lands of Alan's brother Thomas, earl of Atholl, is very difficult to say. As earlier stated, Thomas had the greatest of difficulty in pressing his claim in the face of Hugh de Lacy's opposition, all the more so since the latter made his comeback in Ulster by joining forces with Áed Méith Ó Néill of Cenél nEógain: Thomas's inroads into Derry were made in the teeth of Ó Néill's opposition - his grant specifically included 'that part of the vill of Derekoneull which belonged to ONelis in Kenlione'<sup>39</sup> - and were unlikely to come to anything while Ó Néill enjoyed de Lacy's favour. Thomas's death in 1231 (leaving sons still minors) was followed within three years by that of Alan, thereby paving the way for de Lacy's annexation of their lands in Antrim and Derry. More than likely he exploited the acquisitiveness of another Scottish family, the Bissets of Moray, in his bid to erase the Gallovidian imprint in north-east Ulster.<sup>40</sup> No sooner had Thomas's son Patrick reached maturity than he was murdered by the Bissets (in 1242), who turn up in Antrim soon

<sup>35</sup> For the partition of the inheritance, see *Wigtownshire charters*, ed. R.C. Reid, Scottish Record Society (Edinburgh, 1960), xxxix.

<sup>36</sup> *CDI*, I, 2386; *CDS*, I, 1318.

<sup>37</sup> *CDI*, I, 2424; *CDS*, I, 1372.

<sup>38</sup> *CDI*, I, 2931.

<sup>39</sup> *CDI*, I, 468; *CDS*, I, 585.

<sup>40</sup> The obscure background to the arrival of the Bissets in Ulster is dealt with in Appendix 4.

afterwards. Ironically, though, the Bissets never got their hands on Thomas's land. Instead, they took the place of Duncan of Carrick, and obtained part of the Ulster inheritance of Alan of Galloway. What seems to have happened is that since Alan left only daughters and a bastard son condemned to spend most of his remaining life in prison, the leadership of the family was assumed by Thomas's son Patrick, and the murder of him by the Bissets enabled them to seize some of Alan's lands. Thomas himself had an illegitimate son, Alan of Atholl, who then set about the pursuit of the family claim. In 1248 he came to Ireland and did battle with John Bisset, killing several of his men, though Bisset remained intact.<sup>41</sup> This was the last flicker of Gallovidian activity in Ulster in this generation; it was not enough to restore their fortunes.

The Carrick inheritance in Ulster is equally elusive. Unlike the Galloway lands we have what would at first sight appear to be clear evidence of what eventually transpired: a grant by Duncan of Carrick to Thomas de Mandeville of all his Ulster lands as contained in the original grant of King John (that is, the town of Larne, the whole land between it and Glenarm, and the town of Glenarm itself, some fifty carucates in all). The charter was enrolled along with other de Mandeville deeds on the Irish memoranda roll of 30 Henry VI, of which only transcripts survive; but the authenticity of some or all of the documents is open to serious doubt.<sup>42</sup> I intend to deal with the matter at greater length later in examining the role of the de Mandevilles in the Bruce wars of the early fourteenth century, but it appears to me that the alleged grant by Duncan of Carrick to Thomas de Mandeville is a bad forgery, an attempt by the latter, one of the Bruces' fiercest opponents in Ireland, to deny the claim of Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, to the lands in Ulster of his great-grandfather Duncan.

The rise and fall of Galloway and Carrick attempts at colonization in Ulster, and their rapid replacement with another Scottish family, the Bissets, one of Anglo-Norman rather than native stock, is a reminder of the potential for transculturation between Scotland and Ulster in the altered circumstances of the post-invasion era. The only surprise is that we do not have more evidence for it. When we do hear of transmarine activity, it is often only because of the fears it aroused. When William Marshal the younger was seeking a wife in 1224, Henry III gave him his own sister in marriage. He did so to prevent William marrying into the Scottish royal family, because 'no small peril' would have threatened King Henry as a result, 'the closeness of Scotland to Ireland and the land of the Marshal making the alliance the more dangerous'.<sup>43</sup> This is not the product of some chronicler's imagination; these are the words of a letter issued in Henry's own name. Genuine fears, therefore, abounded, which can only have had to do with potential, and unwelcome, Scottish involvement in Ireland.

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<sup>41</sup> *CDI*, II, 2; and see also Appendix 4 below.

<sup>42</sup> See K.W. Nicholls, 'Abstracts of Mandeville deeds', *Analecta Hibernica*, 32 (1985), 3-26.

<sup>43</sup> '...nobis non modicum periculum immineret eo quod quanto vicinior est Scotia Hibernie et terris dicti marescalli, tanto periculosior foret illa confederatio nobis': *Diplomatic documents preserved in the Public Records Office, vol I 1101-1272*, ed. Pierre Chaplais (London, 1964), 95-7; *Royal and other historical letters illustrative of the reign of Henry III*, ed. W.W. Shirley, 2 vols (RS, London, 1862-6), I, no. 211; *CDS*, V, part 2, no. 6, p. 135.

Coincidentally or otherwise, Henry was in receipt, at about this time, of a letter from another of his sisters, the Scots Queen Joan, assuring him that her husband, Alexander II, 'does not wish any of his horse or foot to go to Ireland from Scotland to injure the king's subjects'.<sup>44</sup> The letter, however, makes it plain that Henry's main cause for concern was Hugh de Lacy's attempt to take the law into his own hands in order to win back his earldom in Ulster; and the fear was that there were many in Scotland who would willingly assist in the venture. Who these individuals were we do not know, but in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may perhaps assume that the success the Bissets soon enjoyed in putting down roots in the Glens of Antrim was a reward for services rendered to Hugh at this point. Certainly, de Lacy was very conscious of Scotland's proximity. He had escaped temporarily to Scotland when ejected from Ireland by King John in 1210.<sup>45</sup> At some stage too he granted the church of Carlingford to St Andrews.<sup>46</sup> As we have seen, once fully ensconced in Ulster after his restoration, he wasted no time in mending fences with Alan of Galloway, and later tried to intervene to prevent the lawful division of the province between Alan's daughters, seeking instead the succession of an illegitimate son. The latter involvement by Earl Hugh implies that he had sorted out a working relationship with native Galloway, but had cause for anxiety should its partition lead to the emergence of heavyweight Anglo-Scottish rivals across the channel.

De Lacy's earldom being a maritime one, it was especially sensitive to developments in the Irish Sea. Hugh was, therefore, heavily involved when in 1237, members of the Anglo-Irish family of de Marisco took a galley-fleet to the Irish Sea and began to plunder passing shipping. They captured men and merchants from Bristol, Dublin and Drogheda on their way from Ireland to England, killing and wounding some, holding others to ransom. They did so, we are told, in the company of certain accomplices from Scotland.<sup>47</sup> As a result, Henry III, not then on friendly terms with the king of Scots, adopted a deliberately heavy-handed attitude, and excluded all Scottish shipping from Irish ports: Hugh de Lacy was among those who abided by the letter of Henry's edict by arresting any Scottish merchants and their merchandise found on his land.<sup>48</sup> Now, the de Mariscos were related to the increasingly more powerful Scottish family, the Comyns.<sup>49</sup> Two years earlier, Walter Comyn, earl of Menteith, had joined with

<sup>44</sup> *CDI*, I, 1179; *CDS*, I, 852.

<sup>45</sup> *CDS*, I, 480.

<sup>46</sup> For a confirmation of the grant, dated 1237, see *Cal. charter rolls, 1226-57*, 232 (a reference I owe to Dr Brendan Smith).

<sup>47</sup> *CDI*, I, 2397; *CDS*, I, 1335.

<sup>48</sup> *CDI*, I, 2407; *CDS*, I, 1364.

<sup>49</sup> Geoffrey de Marisco owed his rise to power in Ireland to the fact that he appears to have been a nephew of John Comyn, archbishop of Dublin; a Maurice and a Eustace Comyn were in league with the de Mariscos in the mid-1230s (See F.M. Powicke, 'The murder of Henry Clement and the pirates of Lundy Island', *History*, 25 (1940-41), 285-310). For an important discussion of the de Mariscos, see also idem, *Henry III and the Lord Edward* (Oxford, 1947), Appendix B; cf. Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 535.

Patrick, earl of Dunbar, in putting down the de Lacy-inspired rebellion in Galloway.<sup>50</sup> These two men were later singled out by Henry III as being the de Mariscos' Scottish accomplices. Their compurgation in the winter of 1244-5 involved an oath to the effect that 'they neither aided nor counselled when, on their part, people were sent to attack or lay waste the king's land in Ireland'; they also swore that they had never received any of Henry III's enemies into their lands, especially the de Mariscos.<sup>51</sup> It is all a tangled web, but it seems certain that the outbreak of de Marisco piracy was much more than that. The de Mariscos had Scottish royal backing: Geoffrey de Marisco, the disgraced former justiciar of Ireland, was given refuge by Alexander II when exiled soon afterwards.<sup>52</sup> Since it was two defenders of the Scots king's policy towards Galloway, the earls of Menteith and Dunbar, who joined the de Mariscos in their assaults on Ireland, we may speculate that King Alexander encouraged them in order to punish de Lacy for his attempt to intervene in Galloway in 1235. De Lacy was responding in kind when he seized all Scottish merchants who disembarked in his earldom. It is at this point that the Bissets enter the picture. When they murdered Patrick of Atholl in 1242 the two men calling most loudly for revenge were Menteith and Dunbar.<sup>53</sup> They laid waste the Bisset lands and had them hounded out of Scotland. Against this background, it was almost inevitable that the Bissets should end up with de Lacy in Ulster.

This episode is a reminder of the complexities of the Hiberno-Scottish relationship in this age, and of the dimness of our understanding of it. Some of the most powerful men in Scotland, including its king, seem to have conspired with the family of a former chief governor of Ireland to undermine the efforts of the earl of Ulster to extend his influence into Galloway. It appears as though the latter, for his part, collaborated in the murder of the heir to a Scottish earldom with a claim to lands in Ulster, and set the murderers up afresh with a considerable estate in the Glens of Antrim. The fuse lit on this occasion may have fizzled out before too great an explosion occurred, but it is clear that for a time a serious collision threatened between those at the highest level of society in Scotland and the north of Ireland. It was not the only occasion on which such frictions arose, but, as of yet, the divided allegiances of the new Anglo-Norman settlers in both regions were not the greatest threat to the peace: arguably, though, by the end of the century, that had come to pass. In the mid-thirteenth century, however, the thing most likely to cause a collision of forces within Ireland and Scotland was the vexed question of the future of the Western Isles.

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<sup>50</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 497; Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 542.

<sup>51</sup> *CDS*, I, 2671.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, IV, 202, 422.

<sup>53</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 545. The only appearance of Patrick of Atholl on record prior to his murder is as a witness to a charter of the earl of Dunbar, while Menteith witnessed a charter of Patrick's mother, whose mother in turn was herself a Comyn (*ibid*, 543 and n. 39, see also 544).

## *Irish relations with the Isles*

In 1265, Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, the last king of Man and the Isles, died. Not long earlier, he had done homage to the king of Scotland, Alexander III, and within a year of his death his kingdom was transferred (sold, effectively, by its Norwegian overlord) to the Scots. It all looks a long way removed from earlier days when the Scots king's writ barely ran in the highland zone, let alone the Isles, and the Manx-Hebridean fate seemed so intimately bound up with Ireland. There had indeed been changes. In 1217, the very year in which our discussion opens, Nicholas, the bishop of the Isles, died. Like Christian, his predecessor but one, he was a native of Argyll: but both were buried at Bangor in the diocese of Down.<sup>1</sup> Whether this reflects reverence for Bangor's early founder St Comgall or its recent luminary St Malachy, or whether indeed it implies acknowledgement of an Irish claim to superiority,<sup>2</sup> hardly matters: either way it bespeaks a close affinity between Ireland and those whose affairs dominated society in the west highlands and islands.

That relationship was under threat after the creation of a strong Anglo-Norman state with pretensions to rule throughout Britain and Ireland: this led to an attempt to dominate the affairs of the kingdom of Man and the Isles - hence the prolonged interest in securing the fealty of its kings - and to detach it from its natural hinterland. Hence too Gerald of Wales's insistent reiteration of the ancient notion that the Isle of Man, though 'equidistant from the north of Ireland and Britain', was judged to belong to the latter.<sup>3</sup> The emergence too, as Ireland weakened, of a stable and expansionist Scottish monarchy added to the perception that the Isles, geographically closer to the latter in any case, were rightly a Scottish possession. By the early thirteenth century, even an Irish poet (admittedly one with strong Scottish links) could refer to 'Scotland of the islands (...i nAlbain...n-oilénaigh)'.<sup>4</sup> A mid-thirteenth century poet writing in Ireland referred to Áengus mac Domnaill of Islay as being in *Alba*:<sup>5</sup> Islay and the other Isles were, it seems, Scottish.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 50v-51r; I take it (as does J. Dowden, *The bishops of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1912), 274, and the *Handbook of British chronology*, ed. F.M. Powicke and E.B. Fryde, 2nd edn. (London, 1961), 394) that there were two consecutive bishops of the Isles at this point called Nicholas.

<sup>2</sup> A papal letter of Honorius III, dated 9 November 1219, stated that the archbishop of Dublin was metropolitan of the bishopric of the Isles (*Cal. papal letters, 1198-1304*, 69): for a brief discussion, see Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 60-61.

<sup>3</sup> The reason? Unlike Ireland, poisonous reptiles could live there! (*History and topography of Ireland*, trans. O'Meara, 24, 67). Elsewhere, Gerald plagiarizes the Welsh triads (see Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (Cardiff, 1978), 229) in listing Britain's three primary offshore islands as Anglesey, the Isle of Wight, and Man (*Journey through Wales and description of Wales*, trans. Thorpe, 186-7).

<sup>4</sup> Muireadhach Albanach Ó Dálaigh in his poem beginning *Tomhais cia mise, a Mhurchaidh*, ed. Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry* (Dublin, 1970), no. 24, qt. 29. It should, however, be pointed out that some of the twenty or more surviving poems ascribed to Muireadhach may be by later writers, or by other less well-known members of the Ó Dálaigh bardic family.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 45, qtt. 16, 17.



What was happening was that Irish prospects of obtaining hegemony over the Isles (such as that wielded by the Leinster and Munster kings a hundred years or more earlier through their involvement with Dublin)<sup>6</sup> had receded; nothing else. Other forms of contact were maintained and may actually have increased: the fractious nature of power in later medieval Ireland meant that even the smaller fry could have access to, say, Hebridean mercenaries, an access which was perhaps denied them in the days when diplomatic channels were monopolized by the provincial kings. For instance, an annal-entry for 1213 preserved only by An Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh, records that the petty king of Tír nAmalgaid in County Mayo, Donnchad Ó Dubda, brought from the Isles a fleet of 56 ships, and so managed to wrest his lands free from the tribute imposed by Cathal Crobderg Ó Conchobair.<sup>7</sup> If true, it not alone demonstrates the effectiveness of the insular input into Irish warfare even at that stage, but confirms the impression one gets of Connacht-Ulster intimacy with northern Britain, as opposed to Munster-Leinster links with the southern half of the sister island.<sup>8</sup> Several years later, in 1221, Donnchad's successor, Máel Ruanaid Ó Dubda, was also in the Isles; indeed, he drowned there while in the company of King Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair's son Diarmait, who had gone there to assemble a fleet 'for the purpose of acquiring the sovereignty of Connacht'.<sup>9</sup> Diarmait too was killed by Thomas of Galloway while making his way back to Ireland. The Uí Dubda seem to have maintained their links with the Isles. In 1246, when their chief killed an Ó Conchobair he 'was banished overseas after that murder (*do indarba tar muir d'eis in marbta-sin*)'.<sup>10</sup>

Not that the south of Ireland was without contact of some sort with the region. According to the Annals of Loch Cé, in 1217 'all the herring-fishermen of Ireland from Waterford southwards, and from Wexford northwards to Derry, went to Man to fish. They committed violence in it, and were all slain in punishment for their violence in Man'.<sup>11</sup> This is one of those all too rare glimpses of non-political events which the politically-minded annalists bother to give us. The points of reference chosen seem to suggest that the two Viking-built towns of Waterford and Wexford were the centres of important fishing fleets,<sup>12</sup> which still habitually plied the seas to Man, a half-century after their formal link with that island had been broken. Their aggressive behaviour may have been the run-of-the-mill violence that often

<sup>6</sup> For which, see Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>7</sup> *The genealogies, tribes and customs of Hy-Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's Country*, ed. John O'Donovan (IAS, Dublin, 1844), 302: O'Donovan surmises that Mac Fhirbhisigh obtained the entry from the lost annals of Lecan.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the comments of Robin Frame, in 'Power and society in the lordship of Ireland 1272-1377', *Past and Present*, 76 (1977), 6.

<sup>9</sup> *ALCé* s.a. 1221 (*AFM* s.a. 1220).

<sup>10</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1246.

<sup>11</sup> 'Scatánaig Erenn ule o purt Lairce iness, ocus o loc Carman, co Doire Coluim Cille fothúaid, do dul co Manainn do iascairect. Ecen do denum doib inti, ocus a marbad uli a níc a neicin a Manuind.'

<sup>12</sup> It may be worth noting that the word *scatán*, 'a herring', is possibly of Old Norse derivation: see *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1913-76), s.v. *scatán*.

marred large gatherings in that age, but it does hint at animosity between these Irish (or Hiberno-Scandinavians) and the Manx, and this ill-feeling seems to have existed for some time: three years earlier King John had prohibited the mariners of Ireland from entering the lands of Ragnall, king of Man and the Isles.<sup>13</sup> Ragnall seems to have responded to the 1217 incursion, not alone by having the guilty parties put to death, but by launching his own retaliatory action in Ireland: on 1 May 1218 a safe-conduct was granted to him to come to the English court 'to amend the excesses of his men done both in England and Ireland on the king's subjects', and the Irish justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco, was commanded to ensure that no injury came to him in doing so.<sup>14</sup> After Ragnall did homage to the English king in the following year, the justiciar was ordered to give him seisin of his knight's fee at Carlingford and to restore the annual allowance of wheat and wine which King John had granted him out of the issues of Ireland;<sup>15</sup> this was something the latter was obviously unwilling to do.<sup>16</sup> More importantly, however, the justiciar, barons and lieges of Ireland were ordered to give effective assistance to the Manx king should his enemies rise against him.<sup>17</sup> For many years, Ragnall's leading opponent had been his half-brother Amlaíb Dub whose challenge for the kingship, or a share of it, strengthened as the years passed. By November 1220, though, Ragnall had informed Henry III of another menace: the king of Norway 'lays snares for him and threatens his land with evil' because he had rendered homage to the English king. Again rather revealingly, it was the justiciar of Ireland who was ordered to defend the kingdom of the Isles from the threatened Norwegian invasion.<sup>18</sup>

This is further evidence that the English government appreciated the significance of Ireland's maritime frontier and took seriously the threat the insular region posed to the security of their colony in Ireland. But their attention to the subject was focussed by immediate concerns. Ragnall's fears of a Norwegian invasion were shared in England, where they were combined with worries over Hugh de Lacy's attempt to recover his forfeited earldom of Ulster. The Gallovidian expansion into Ulster had been built on the wreckage of that earldom, and thus, as we have seen, the Galloway lords were equally intent upon keeping de Lacy out in the cold. A predictable alliance of forces began to take shape. De Lacy's bid for power began in the latter half of the year 1223. At the same time Amlaíb Dub's tussle with Ragnall reached boiling point; Ragnall, we know, enjoyed the support of the Galloway lords, Amlaíb had the

<sup>13</sup> *CDI*, I, 502 (dated 3 January 1214).

<sup>14</sup> *CDI*, I, 828; *CDS*, I, 696. This injunction to the justiciar was repeated on 10 October 1218 (*CDI*, I, 853).

<sup>15</sup> *CDI*; I, 898 (dated 22 September 1219, on the same day on which an instruction was issued to provide Ragnall's sister, Affreca, widow of John de Courcy, with dower out of her late husband's lands in Ireland (*CDI*, I, 901)).

<sup>16</sup> The mandate was repeated on 17 June 1220 (*CDI*, I, 944), on 4 November 1220 (*ibid*, 977), on 8 August 1222 (*ibid*, 1040), on 12 March 1225 (*ibid*, 1240), and on 3 October 1226 (*ibid*, 1447).

<sup>17</sup> *CDI*, I, 902 (dated 23 September 1219).

<sup>18</sup> *CDI*, I, 976.

backing of de Lacy.<sup>19</sup> The struggle between the brothers culminated in the division of the kingdom between them in the following year, with Ragnall retaining Man and some of the Isles, Amlaíb Dub taking control of the others.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the Scots queen informed her brother Henry III that, as King Ragnall had earlier warned, the king of Norway was rumoured to be planning an assault on Ireland in the summer of 1224 to help de Lacy (though, for whatever reason, the Norse expedition did not materialize). The Gallovidian determination to keep de Lacy out of Ulster becomes apparent from another important letter that survives for the same year. Alan of Galloway wrote to Henry III, saying that he had been in the Western Isles, going from island to island with his army in his galleys, ready to cross to Ireland, when, on the very eve of sailing, a messenger arrived with the news that terms of an agreement had been reached between the justiciar, William Marshal, and Hugh de Lacy. As a result, Alan did not cross to Ireland, but, in view of his preparedness to do so, sought confirmation of his and his brother's Ulster lands.<sup>21</sup>

One of the important points to note here is that Alan of Galloway implies that his perambulations about the Western Isles were indicative of his good faith, were, in other words, a sign of his opposition to de Lacy. This seems to mean that the latter was expected to make his return to power in Ulster using Hebridean manpower. That support was supplied by Amlaíb Dub, half-king of the Isles, as is clarified by the Manx chronicle. It preserves an account of a failed expedition which Alan of Galloway and Amlaíb Dub's brother Ragnall led to the Isles in 1224 or 1225 in an effort to wrest the entire kingdom free from Amlaíb. Afterwards they sealed their alliance when Ragnall went to Alan's court and gave his daughter to Alan's illegitimate son in marriage. This, we are told, angered the Manx who must have suspected Alan's acquisitive tendencies, and in 1226 they sent for Amlaíb Dub and made him their king. Some time afterwards,<sup>22</sup> Amlaíb tried to enlist the support of Henry III against Ragnall and Alan. In a letter now unfortunately badly damaged, he outlined the history of his struggle to obtain the kingship in the face of his illegitimate half-brother's aggression. He asked Henry to intervene with the king of Scotland that Alan of Galloway be prohibited from attacking him and his merchants and, most interestingly, Amlaíb Dub claimed to have come to an agreement with the justiciar of Ireland 'concerning piracy'; he sought Henry to instruct the justiciar to help him.<sup>23</sup>

This, then, was the latest in a long line of attempts to secure a role for the Dublin administration in bolstering up a faltering regime in the Isles. The question arises as to what

<sup>19</sup> We may perhaps be able to trace Ragnall's opposition to the de Lacys to an earlier date. Early in 1217, Hugh's half-brother and close ally, William Gorm de Lacy, was ordered to restore Carlingford castle, which he had seized, and to repay the damage which he had thereby caused (*CDI*, I, 755). Bearing in mind that in 1219 Ragnall sought restoration of his knight's fee in Carlingford (*ibid*, 898), this too may have been taken over by de Lacy.

<sup>20</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 42v.-43r.

<sup>21</sup> *CDI*, I, 1218; *CDS*, I, 890 (dated some time shortly after 8 September 1224).

<sup>22</sup> During the justiciarship of Geoffrey de Marisco, 25 June 1226-13 February 1228.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O., SC 1/3/183; calendared in *CDS*, V, 136.

kind of help the justiciar might have been able to provide. Presumably this would have involved an effort to prevent Ireland providing a base for forces hostile to the Manx ruler; in which case, we must envisage a situation where habitual incursions into the Isles were being made by Irish armies or piratical fleets. Quite possibly too what was anticipated was the commitment of forces from Ireland to the region, though no record of such expeditions survives. In either case, hidden somewhere below the surface in our records is an ongoing Irish involvement in the Irish Sea region: an awareness of the enduring nature of this interest is vital if we are to provide an explanation for those comparatively rare occasions when it bubbles up to the surface.

The alliance between Alan and Ragnall was still intact in 1228 when the two of them and Thomas of Galloway took advantage of Amlaíb Dub's temporary absence from Man to invade the island. Interestingly, when they departed it was Alan's bailiffs who were left behind to collect the *tributa patrie*. Clearly the elderly Ragnall was little more than a puppet of the Gallovidian lord (and took refuge in Galloway when ejected from Man soon afterwards). Clearly too Alan's pretensions now stretched to Man: had he had his way, the Cumbria-Man-Ulster axis that looked set to take root during the days of John de Courcy would be replaced by that of Galloway-Man-Ulster.<sup>24</sup> This was not to be, as Amlaíb Dub killed Ragnall in battle soon afterwards and secured the kingship: there were one or two early challenges to his new-found authority, but having overcome them Amlaíb reigned fairly comfortably until his death in 1237.

This was in part at least due to his enlistment of the goodwill of Henry III. When he visited the English king's court in 1235, letters of safe conduct and protection were directed to the royal officials and subjects of Ireland,<sup>25</sup> and we may suspect that Amlaíb Dub still had cause to worry about Irish meddlesomeness. As a result of his meeting with the king, Amlaíb entered into an extraordinary arrangement. He was employed 'in guarding at his cost the coast of the English sea towards Ireland and the Isle of Man, and the coast of the Irish sea towards England and that island'; when need arose, he would send fifty galleys to sail with Henry wherever he pleased, and would come himself to the king's service at sea whenever asked. For so long as 'he shall faithfully serve the king in guarding the coasts' Amlaíb Dub would receive an annual allowance of 40 marks, 100 crannocks of wheat, and five hogsheads of wine. Again, crucially, the Manx king's wages for protecting the maritime frontier were to be paid into his hands annually, at Easter, by the justiciar of Ireland.<sup>26</sup> When Amlaíb Dub went to Norway in 1236, Henry took his lands and men under his protection: letters patent were issued for the

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<sup>24</sup> As ever, ecclesiastical developments anticipated secular alignments. We get a very neat snapshot of a Cumbria-Galloway-Ulster triangle in action in 1223, when the abbot of Holmcultam in Cumbria resigned, was replaced by the abbot of Grey abbey in County Down, whose place in turn was taken by the cellarer of Glenluce in Galloway ('Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 454).

<sup>25</sup> *CDI*, I, 2257; *CDS*, I, 1236.

<sup>26</sup> *CDI*, I, 2269, 2271.

purpose and no doubt widely circulated, but the justiciar of Ireland was specifically ordered by letters close 'to maintain and defend' him.<sup>27</sup> The long-established pattern therefore repeated itself: the protection of the kingdom of the Isles and its ruler was a matter for the Dublin administration. Of course, this was partly an effort to foist the unwanted bother and expense involved onto the shoulders of some - any - pliable dupe, but that the Irish government was so consistently given the role is certainly due to considerations other than the possibility that it might prove a soft target. When the Anglo-Normans gained Dublin they inherited its relationship with the Isles and they made use of that relationship when occasion merited it.

When Amlaíb Dub died in 1237 he was succeeded by his son Aralt, and we may detect a hint of the shift that had gradually been taking place in Man's relationship with Ireland, and in Ireland's status vis-à-vis its neighbours, in the remark which the Manx chronicler makes about Aralt's reign: 'he began ruling', we are told, 'quietly and peacefully in Man, and held a very stable peace with the king of England and the king of Scotland, and was an ally of theirs in friendship (*confederatus est illis in amicitia*)'. No mention of Ireland at all, but compare it with the statement made many years earlier in the same chronicle, this time about Aralt's great-grandfather, Amlaíb, son of Godred Crovan, who died in 1152: 'He was a peaceable man and had all the kings of Ireland and Scotland as allies (*confederatos*) in such a way that no-one dared disturb the kingdom of the Isles during his lifetime'.<sup>28</sup> Patently, Ireland's lot having taken a tumble in the intervening century or so, there was no longer anything to be gained from describing in what esteem the Manx king was held there!

When Aralt mac Amlaíb Duib drowned in 1249 on his journey home from Norway the divisions in the Manx royal house inherited from the previous generation reached crisis-point. The succession was the subject of dispute between the remaining sons of Amlaíb Dub and the descendants of his half-brother Ragnall. This dispute allowed others, in particular the descendants of Somerled of Argyll, to grab a slice of the cake. Ireland played a significant role in these developments. The first of Somerled's brood to seize at least the title 'king of the Isles' at this point was Eógan Mac Dubgaill of Lorn: he did so, we are told, in 1249, possibly in league with Ragnall mac Amlaíb Duib whom the Manx chronicle has succeeded in the same year.<sup>29</sup> Within a matter of weeks this Ragnall mac Amlaíb Duib was killed by his first-cousin once removed, a grandson of the former King Ragnall. However, in 1250, another son of Amlaíb Dub, Magnus, arrived in the Isle of Man in the company of Eógan Mac Dubgaill. Eógan sent messengers to the Manx calling himself 'Iohannes Rex Insularum', but the inhabitants, indignant at the royal style being denied to Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, rejected their overtures and they withdrew.<sup>30</sup> The Manx chronicle makes no mention of Magnus until

<sup>27</sup> CDS, I, 1279 (24 May 1236); CDI, I, 2381 (8 April 1237).

<sup>28</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 46r., 35v.

<sup>29</sup> Assuming that Ragnall attempted to rule Man, let us say, and Eógan sought to impose his will over whatever he could of the Western Isles.

<sup>30</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 48r.

two years later in 1252 when it notes simply that he 'came a second time to Man and all the Manxmen received him gladly and made him their king'.<sup>31</sup> Where had he been in the interval? Presumably with Eógan Mac Dubgaill in Argyll or the Isles, but something had happened to improve his prospects in the meantime and that is revealed by an entry on the English close rolls: on 14 November 1251 Henry III informed John fitz Geoffrey, the justiciar of Ireland, that 'Magnus Mac Olave Duff proposed to raise a force in Ireland to invade the territory of the king of Norway in the Isle of Man', and ordered him to prevent any force leaving Ireland for that purpose.<sup>32</sup> One can only assume that the justiciar proved unable to do so, and that Magnus managed to set himself up in Man using Irish arms. The earldom of Ulster was in the king's hand at this point, being administered by his seneschal, and this relaxation in control there may have provided the opportunity for native armies to make themselves available for service in Man. In that context, it is interesting that in 1252 the justiciar himself came north, rebuilt the castle of Mag Cóba in Iveagh, County Down, and forced Brian Ó Néill, the king of Cenél nEógain, into submission.<sup>33</sup> This expedition, coming as it did within months of the royal instruction to prevent Magnus's invasion of Man, may have represented an attempt to preempt it, or may be a punishment attack on his Irish supporters.<sup>34</sup>

Once Magnus's accession became a *fait accompli*, the English court rapidly came to terms with him. He was given licence to visit the king of Norway, and on 4 April 1253 letters were issued to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, prince of Gwynedd, and his brother Owain, and to the kings of Norway and Scotland, to have them prevent their men from 'hostilely invading the land of M[agnus] heir of Man and the Isles, so long as he is in Norway by the King's licence'.<sup>35</sup> Obviously Magnus had cause to fear for his security during his absence, and that threat came from Gwynedd and from men in the Isles and the west of Scotland who owed fealty to the Norwegian or Scots kings. It is rather unusual for no similar instruction to have been issued to the Irish justiciar on the matter, which may reflect the fact that Magnus's support-base lay there in any case, and it would therefore be unlikely to represent such a threat. Basking in the favour of Henry III, who knighted him at Easter 1256, Magnus was able to flex his muscles a little bit. He pursued the murderers of his late brother Ragnall, and got Henry to issue letters naming the culprits, prohibiting his officials in Wales from receiving them, and requesting the king of Scots to do likewise.<sup>36</sup> And it was probably through Magnus's intercession that Henry took Eógan Mac Dubgaill under his protection in September 1255.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 49r.

<sup>32</sup> *CDI*, I, 3206.

<sup>33</sup> *AU*; G.H. Orpen, 'The earldom of Ulster', *JRSAI*, 43 (1913), 35.

<sup>34</sup> For Brian Ó Néill's career, see Simms, 'The O'Hanlons, O'Neills and Anglo-Normans', 78-82.

<sup>35</sup> *CDS*, I, 1917.

<sup>36</sup> *CDS*, I, 2046 (dated 21 April 1256).

<sup>37</sup> *CDS*, I, 2014, 2017-8.

Henry's protection was important for Magnus too in staving off the increasingly more aggressive overtures of the Scots king, Alexander III. In 1259, the latter tried to get Henry to turn a blind eye to his hectoring; Henry prevaricated.<sup>38</sup> The Scots opened negotiations with the Norse, sending an embassy to Bergen in 1261, in the hope of persuading them to cede the Isles peacefully; when this failed, they invaded Skye in the following year.<sup>39</sup> It was in response to these displays of Scottish intentions that Hákon IV made his expedition to the Western Isles in 1263, but its failure led to the loss of their western possessions by Norway, and the ending of the kingdom of the Isles.<sup>40</sup> From this point on, the Isles were much more intimately entwined in mainland Scottish affairs and the king of Scots found himself dealing on a much more regular basis with the inhabitants of the region. As a result, because of the latter's close association with Ireland, the Scots king indirectly found himself more concerned with affairs on the other side of the North Channel.

### *Irish relations with Wales*

Several elements combine to create the general picture of Welsh involvement in the Irish Sea region in this period. One of them is the fortuitous fact that the Welsh princely family who gained ascendancy in the thirteenth century, that of Gwynedd or North Wales, was the dynasty most intimately involved in Irish affairs. This was reflected in substantial landholdings in Ireland, the product of Gruffudd ap Cynan's Dublin upbringing. That the link with the city was established at a time when Dublin and the Isle of Man habitually shared rulers,<sup>41</sup> possibly accounts for the occasional but important outbreaks of Venedotian interest in the affairs of Man which pepper the course of the thirteenth century. The phenomenon may, however, be little more than the wraith-like apparition of an Anglesey-Dublin-Man axis long past its prime.<sup>42</sup> If this configuration was on the decline, partly at least as a result of the disruptive effect of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, another element of the story was, paradoxically, the product of that invasion. The participation of men of Anglo-Welsh

<sup>38</sup> CDS, I, 2157. See Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 576.

<sup>39</sup> According to the saga of Hákon Hákonarson, printed in translation in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 601-2, 605; see also, Duncan & Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the early Middle Ages', 212-3.

<sup>40</sup> For Hákon's expedition, see Edward J. Cowan, 'Norwegian sunset - Scottish dawn: Hakon IV and Alexander III', in *Scotland in the reign of Alexander III*, ed. Norman H. Reid (Edinburgh, 1990), 103-31.

<sup>41</sup> For which, see Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>42</sup> For the earlier history of Manx-Welsh contacts see, for example, Bedwyr L. Jones, 'Gwriad's heritage: links between Wales and the Isle of Man in the early Middle Ages', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion* (1990), 29-44.

background in the infeudation of Ireland greatly intensified certain cross-channel links. Many men ended up with landed interests on both sides of the Irish Sea. They used the profits of their estates on one side to finance campaigns of conquest and colonization on the other. When they found themselves in difficulty in their marcher lordships in Wales, they fled for refuge to Ireland, and vice versa. They brought Welsh armies to Ireland and Irish armies to Wales.

Native Welshmen also came to Ireland in considerable numbers in the aftermath of the invasion, though they were usually, as far as we can tell, men at the lower end of the propertied scale, often tenants of the marcher lords. In the *realpolitik* of thirteenth-century Ireland it is questionable whether any general sense of grievance was felt by the Irish at Welsh readiness to grasp opportunities in Ireland, in lands confiscated from the indigenous population. But it would not be unreasonable to speculate that on those occasions when the tables were turned, and the Welsh felt the brunt of inward pressure from Anglo-Norman adversaries, there was something less than widespread sympathy for their plight in Ireland. Hence the involvement in 1245 of one of the leading Irish provincial kings, Feidlim Ó Conchobair of Connacht, in an English royal campaign to subdue Wales, and, in 1266, the massacre and decapitation by his son's army of a community of Welshmen who had settled in West Connacht.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, as the thirteenth century wore on, there is clear evidence that the interests of certain native Irish and Welsh lords had merged. One cannot help but be struck by the similarities in their circumstances. There was a certain inevitability in the fate that awaited them if their situation did not improve, and a limited range of choices at their disposal. Whether they realized this themselves is another matter, though there are indications that some did. It is notable that in particular times of crisis, the same decision (as to how best to confront that crisis), was made, at the same time, by Irish kings and by Welsh princes. Whether one was spurred into activity by the other is a moot point, whether they acted in collusion is open to serious doubt, but it would be naïve to suggest that either acted in ignorance of the other.

Our period opens with an attempt by the prince of Gwynedd, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, to ensure that in the new dispensation that obtained after the death of King John, his family was not punished for its participation in the crisis of 1215-16 by losing cherished family lands in Ireland. He petitioned Henry III (or rather the small circle of courtiers who were the real power behind the throne during the king's minority) to pardon the fine payable by his first-cousin, Cynwrig, in order to have entry into the Irish lands of the latter's father, Rhirid ab Owain Gwynedd.<sup>44</sup> These lands were obviously quite sizable if the grant of lands by Cynwrig to St Mary's abbey Dublin is indicative of his disposable wealth in the Dublin area.<sup>45</sup> But in 1218

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<sup>43</sup> *AC s.aa.* 1245, 1266.

<sup>44</sup> *CDI*, I, 830; see also, Appendix 1.

<sup>45</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's Dublin*, I, 75 (the grant dates from the justiciarship of Geoffrey de Marisco, 6 July 1215 to 4 October 1221, 25 June 1226 to 13 February 1228).



Llywelyn himself sought to get hold of lands within Dublin city which had belonged to his uncle Maelgwn ab Owain, whose heir he claimed to be: Maelgwn had been dispossessed by a new Anglo-Norman resident of the city, Adam le Savonier.<sup>46</sup> If the Prince of North Wales and his immediate family were substantial landholders in what was rapidly becoming the most heavily colonized part of Ireland, the progress of that colonization was a matter of great concern to them. If they were in danger of losing their lands there to new arrivals, they can hardly have had much goodwill towards the conquistadors.

In practice, however, a Welsh dynast like Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, with his own wars to fight and his own flank to protect, could have little sympathy left over for others, however comparable their circumstances. A well-meaning alliance with an Irish king incapable of rendering real aid was of little use. In the early 1220s the greatest thorn in Llywelyn's side was the new earl of Pembroke and lord of Leinster, William Marshal II, who was anxious to win back Marshal lands then in the hands of Llywelyn and his allies, principally Cardigan, Carmarthen, Emlyn and Cilgerran, and to revenge Llywelyn's humiliating invasion of Pembroke itself in the summer of 1220.<sup>47</sup> To do so, Marshal brought an army from Ireland late in the latter year.<sup>48</sup> To withstand the inevitable assault from Ireland, Llywelyn had joined forces with the dispossessed earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy.<sup>49</sup> Hugh assisted Llywelyn in his war against the lord of Leinster,<sup>50</sup> and Llywelyn's daughter was married off, probably at this juncture, to Hugh's half-brother and supporter, William Gorm de Lacy, grandson of King Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, and a man with a tough reputation in Ireland.<sup>51</sup> When the Dunstable annalist for 1224 has Hugh de Lacy 'dismissing his lawful wife, taking to himself an adulteress, and heading for Ireland', we may suspect that he heard some inaccurate rumour of the marriage-alliance with Llywelyn.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *CDI*, I, 830.

<sup>47</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, chap. XVIII. For what follows see also J.F. Lydon, 'Ireland's participation in the military activities of English kings in the thirteenth and early fourteenth-century' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1955), 100-102. I am very grateful to Prof. Lydon for loaning me his own copy of this important study.

<sup>48</sup> 'Insuper multitudinem armatorum, in auxilium Marescalli de Hibernia venientium, idem regulus interfecit': 'Annals of Dunstable' in *Annales monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard (RS, London, 1866), III, 61.

<sup>49</sup> Hugh witnessed one of Llywelyn's charters in 1222, using his forfeited title (see Robin Frame, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles' in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 149 and n. 50). Professor Frame's paper contains an insightful analysis of the episode (at pp. 147-9).

<sup>50</sup> According to Matthew Paris, the Marshal's opponents were 'Loelinus princeps Norwalliae et quidam Anglici, scilicet Hugo de Lascy et ejus sequaces'.

<sup>51</sup> See J.E. Lloyd, 'Who was Gwenllian de Lacy?', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 5th ser, 19 (1919), 292-8; *AClon*, 228 (s.a. 1215), 234 (s.a. 1233: 'William Delacy, chiefest champion in these parts of Europe, and the hardiest and strongest hand of any Englishman from the Nicene seas to this place, or Irishman'); *CDI*, I, 755, 791.

<sup>52</sup> *Annales monastici*, III, 91-2.

William Marshal spent the winter of 1222-3 in Ireland gathering an army.<sup>53</sup> Llywelyn took advantage of his absence to seize his castles.<sup>54</sup> From Ireland, however, the Marshal launched an invasion of Wales, landing at St Davids about 16 April 1223.<sup>55</sup> He was spectacularly successful in winning back lands, and Llywelyn quickly lost the dominant position in South Wales which he had painstakingly built up in the preceding years. It is at this point that a return was sought from his investment in the de Lacys. In early June the Irish justiciar was warned that Hugh 'was plotting to invade Ireland in arms'.<sup>56</sup> The Dunstable annalist clearly links his departure for Ireland with developments in Wales, saying 'at the conclusion of the Welsh war, Hugh de Lacy secretly crossed over to Ireland'.<sup>57</sup> The Irish annals note that he did so in the company of Llywelyn's son-in-law, William Gorm.<sup>58</sup> Evidently, the Marshal's absence from Ireland with a large Irish army provided the de Lacys' opportunity. It is interesting that when news of their arrival broke, it was John Marshal, a cousin of the earl of Pembroke, who was given custody of Ulster and its castles,<sup>59</sup> and that as soon as he had achieved what he wanted to achieve in Wales, the Marshal himself came to take charge against de Lacy as justiciar. As is clear from his subsequent report of the event to Henry III, it was with particular relish that he captured William Gorm de Lacy's wife at Clogh Oughter castle - not so much because she was a de Lacy wife as a Welsh princess, daughter of his most bitter adversary.<sup>60</sup> For William Marshal, the campaign against the de Lacys in Ireland was as much a personal thing as a statement of loyalty by the leading Anglo-Irish magnate in the face of such contumacious rebellion against the crown. It was an extension of his war against Llywelyn in Wales: it was the same war, a Welsh war spilling over into Ireland.

The same is equally true, if not more so, in the case of the events of 1233-4. When the childless Earl Marshal died suddenly in April 1231, his brother Richard was heir to the family lands in the Welsh marches and Leinster. As a vassal of the king of France, there was, however, opposition at court to Richard's succession. It was perhaps in connexion with this opposition that one of Henry III's Poitevin favourites, Peter des Rivaux, was appointed to an assemblage of posts giving him virtual control of the Irish government and custody of the royal

<sup>53</sup> 'Marescallus vero, tot mala perpressus, cum se non posset ulcisci, profectus est in Hiberniam, et per totam hyemem exercitum congregavit': 'Annals of Dunstable', 82-3.

<sup>54</sup> 'Eodem anno, dum Willelmus Marescallus, comes Penbroc, fuit in Hibernia, Loelinus rex Walensium in manu forti cepit duo castella praedicti Willelmi': Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, III, 76.

<sup>55</sup> 'Marescallus in hebdomada Passionis de Hibernia veniens cum multis militibus populorum' ('Annals of Dunstable', 83). See also, D.A. Carpenter, *The minority of Henry III* (London, 1990), 307.

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion, see James Lydon, 'The expansion and consolidation of the colony, 1215-54', in *NHI*, II, 158-9.

<sup>57</sup> *Annales monastici*, III, 85.

<sup>58</sup> *AC* s.a. 1224: 'the sons of Hugh de Lacy [the elder] came to Ireland in spite of the king of England'; but cf. *CDI*, I, 1180.

<sup>59</sup> *CDI*, I, 1140.

<sup>60</sup> *Royal letters of the reign of Henry III*, ed. Shirley, II, 500-3; for the castle in question, see Conleth Manning, 'Clogh Uachter castle', *Breifne*, 8 (1989-90), 20-61.

castles there;<sup>61</sup> he also assumed control of several Welsh castles, including Cardigan and Carmarthen, having succeeded to nearly all of the fallen Hubert de Burgh's possessions in Wales.<sup>62</sup> Des Rivaux's assumption of this powerful position in Ireland and Wales at Richard Marshal's expense 'invited an alliance between Earl Richard and Llywelyn, and disturbance in Ireland'.<sup>63</sup> In 1233, Henry III began to make plans to visit Ireland himself, ordering shipping to convene at Milford Haven and the feudal host to assemble at Gloucester at the end of August.<sup>64</sup> What the king hoped to achieve by such an expensive operation, apart from the vague hope of emulating his father's triumph of two decades earlier, is unclear; it was surely connected with the troubled succession of Richard Marshal (who now led the opposition in the country to Peter des Rivaux and the other Poitevins). In any case, the expedition never took place, because by the end of August the quarrel between the king and the Earl Marshal had erupted into a state of war in South Wales and the march.

The earl joined forces with Llywelyn and together they razed the march, reaching as far as Shrewsbury itself in January 1234.<sup>65</sup> We know that the Marshal had Irish levies in his service;<sup>66</sup> but it was rumoured that a much more widespread alliance was about to take shape. Henry's councillors, it was said, 'alleged against the Marshal that he was allied with [the king's] chief enemies, namely the French, the Scots and the Welsh', to which the Marshal himself is reported to have replied:

"What has been said concerning the French is simply false. What has been said concerning the Scots and Welsh is likewise false, except the king of Scotland and Llywelyn, prince of North Wales, who were not [the king's] enemies but his vassals, until by injuries inflicted upon them by the king and his councillors they were estranged from fealty even as I, unwillingly and under compulsion. And because of this, I am allied with them, that we may better together than separately seek and defend our rights, of which we have been unjustly deprived and in great part despoiled."<sup>67</sup>

With such tittle-tattle in circulation, the Marshal was unlikely to escape the royal ire for long. In the early weeks of 1234, Richard decided to sail for Ireland,<sup>68</sup> and managed to arrive safely in spite of the naval patrol scouring the Irish Sea since the start of the new year with the object of preventing him.<sup>69</sup> But there, the war that he had waged against both king and royal officials continued to live out its course, until the earl was fatally wounded on the Curragh on April 1, in conflict with the feudal army led by the justiciar, Maurice fitz Gerald.<sup>70</sup> Ironically, the Marshal, though he had lost the battle and shortly also his life, had won the war. Des Rivaux's

<sup>61</sup> *CDI*, I, 1977; for des Rivaux's career, see M.T. Clanchy, *England and its rulers 1066-1272. Foreign lordship and national identity* (Glasgow, 1983), 183-5, 218-19.

<sup>62</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 677; for a discussion of de Burgh's Welsh connexions, see R.F. Walker, 'Hubert de Burgh and Wales, 1218-32', *EHR*, 87 (1972), 465-94.

<sup>63</sup> F.M. Powicke, *The thirteenth century, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1962), 53.

<sup>64</sup> *Close rolls, 1231-4*, 315-9.

<sup>65</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 679-80.

<sup>66</sup> *Close rolls, 1231-4*, 362.

<sup>67</sup> Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, III, 261; I have used the translation in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 340, n. 4.

<sup>68</sup> For a plausible explanation of his motive in doing so, see Robin Frame, *Colonial Ireland 1169-1369* (Dublin 1981), 61-2.

<sup>69</sup> *CDI*, I, 2080.

<sup>70</sup> For a full discussion, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 59-73.

party were overthrown at court and on April 9 King Henry (unaware as yet of the news from Ireland) sent envoys to Wales to negotiate a peace with Llywelyn; when the latter heard of the Marshal's death he refused terms until full reparation had been made to the earl's injured followers.<sup>71</sup> When this had been satisfactorily done a peace was concluded between Henry and Llywelyn, a peace described by Sir John Lloyd as 'the crowning achievement of the prince's long and victorious career'.<sup>72</sup> His war shoulder to shoulder with Earl Marshal had for him proved triumphal. It was a war fought with equal vigour on both sides of the Irish Sea. For understandable reasons, the Welsh front has been relegated to little more than a footnote in most Irish histories of the period, while the Irish front has fared no better in the hands of Welsh historians. But it serves as a good example of the limitations of such an approach.

We see something of the same sort of thing in reverse - tension over developments in Ireland having an implication for the security of Wales - some time earlier. In the summer of 1226, the newly reappointed justiciar of Ireland, Geoffrey de Marisco, wrote to the king stating that 'all the Irish are so banded together and so wheedled by William Crassus that they cannot be recalled from their conspiracy...[but] so long as God prolongs the justiciar's life, the king need not fear the wickedness or craft of his Irish enemies'.<sup>73</sup> William Crassus was a cousin of the then earl of Pembroke, William Marshal II, and his seneschal in Leinster.<sup>74</sup> In his letter, de Marisco goes on to complain that the earl's bailiffs refused to deliver to him custody of the royal castles in Ireland, which had been fortified against the king. This accusation may be untrue, but it reflects a dispute between the Marshal and de Marisco's associate, Richard de Burgh. The dispute was almost certainly over de Burgh's plans for the rapid exploitation of Connacht, and he was backed by his powerful uncle, Hubert de Burgh, justiciar of England. The Marshal's response was to announce his intention of going to Ireland, but Henry III wrote back to him saying that although he had no suspicions of the earl, if he wished to proceed to Ireland he must first of all surrender the castles of Carmarthen and Cardigan.<sup>75</sup> Forcing a man whose motives were suspect to hand over castles as security was customary procedure. In this case, the Earl Marshal would be kept from making mischief in Ireland - mischief which, if recent events were anything to go by, was likely to have repercussions in Wales - by being forced to relinquish crucial defences in the latter country. The king was ensuring that a potential outbreak of hostilities in Ireland did not threaten the fragile security of Wales.

That security was to be severely tested when, in 1231, Llywelyn went on the offensive. King Henry summoned the English feudal host and a major campaign was planned.<sup>76</sup> As part of the preparations, the justiciar of Ireland was issued with what soon became the customary

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<sup>71</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 681, n. 147.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 681.

<sup>73</sup> *CDI*, I, 1443.

<sup>74</sup> For these events, see Otway-Ruthven, *History of medieval Ireland*, 93-4.

<sup>75</sup> *CDI*, I, 1431.

<sup>76</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 675.

summons to organize the king's subjects there to undertake their fair share of the burden. But, rather remarkably, the justiciar was authorized 'to proclaim to all those in Ireland who wish to acquire land in Wales that they come thither in force to attack Llywelyn. The king confirms to them everything they can gain from him [Llywelyn] or the Welsh, whether in lands or otherwise.'<sup>77</sup> This important and revealing instruction came to nothing because Henry's planned massive campaign fizzled out. But we can only imagine the effect this injunction to his Irish-based subjects might have had, were it put into effect. We can take it that Henry would have welcomed participation from the native Irish since his summons was carefully addressed to 'omnibus illis de terra nostra Hibernie'. And it would be foolish to suppose that Irish kings, themselves in a vulnerable position at home and anxious to appease King Henry, would balk at the possibility of taking part in such campaigns if there was something in it for themselves: sympathy for their Welsh counterparts can hardly have entered into it. Though the 1231 campaign never really got off the ground, it was Henry's intention in the summer of the following year to mount an Irish invasion of Anglesey,<sup>78</sup> and, had this too not been abandoned, it is quite likely that the backing of one or more Irish kings for the venture would have been secured, and substantial contingents of their troops put at Henry's disposal for the task.

Another opportunity to prove the point was not provided until well into the next decade, during Henry's campaign in north Wales in the summer and autumn of 1245. Henry's headquarters were at Deganwy which he had won from the reigning prince of Gwynedd, Dafydd ap Llywelyn, in 1241. Interestingly, in 1241, Deganwy had been committed to the charge of the justiciar of Ireland.<sup>79</sup> It is very possible that the castle was then occupied by an Irish garrison. When, therefore, Henry decided in the winter of 1244-5 on another punitive expedition into Wales, one of his foremost considerations was the enlistment of support from Ireland. He wrote to the justiciar on 10 January 1245, ordering him to begin gathering provisions for the summer campaign, and to set about organizing an expeditionary force which would take part.<sup>80</sup> When the campaign got under way, Ireland did indeed provide the bulk of the seaborne provisions.<sup>81</sup> It also supplied manpower and, for the first time, the services of an Irish king, Feidlim Ó Conchobair of Connacht. Understandably, in view of their regional bias, the *Annals of Connacht* give for this expedition far and away the most detailed account of Welsh affairs to appear in an Irish chronicle for decades:

A great hosting by the king of the English against the Welsh, so that they camped at Deganwy castle, and sent legates with letters into Ireland to the foreigners of Ireland and to Feidlim son of Cathal Crobderg, telling them to

<sup>77</sup> *Patent rolls, 1225-32*, 438; *CDI*, I, 1894 (dated 25 June 1231).

<sup>78</sup> *Royal letters of the reign of Henry III*, ed. Shirley, I, no. 330; see also, Walker, 'Hubert de Burgh and Wales', 490.

<sup>79</sup> *Cal. patent rolls, 1232-47*, 265 (dated 29 October 1241).

<sup>80</sup> Rymer, *Foedera*, I, 258; *Close rolls, 1242-7*, 348. For Irish involvement in the 1245 campaign, see Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 126-38.

<sup>81</sup> *Cal. patent rolls, 1232-47*, 461; J.T. Gilbert, *Historic and municipal documents of Ireland, AD 1172-1320* (London, 1870), 103-4. For an interesting letter from an officer in the royal army describing the Welsh campaign and referring to victualling ships arriving from Ireland, see Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, IV, 481-4.

go to the king against the Welsh to conquer them. Then the justiciar and the foreigners of Ireland went to the king, and Feidlim Ó Conchobair went with a great army of Irish to help the king in Wales, and they destroyed the whole country, but exacted neither pledge nor hostage from the Welsh on that occasion. And Feidlim was held in honour by the king then and was well pleased when he returned from the east.<sup>82</sup>

Being 'held in honour' by the king of England mattered a lot to Feidlim (much the same phrase is used to describe the outcome of a visit to Henry's court in 1240,<sup>83</sup> possibly the first ever by an Irish king); as Professor Davies has it, in only a slightly different context, he 'found the fleshpots of the courts of the Anglo-Normans enticing',<sup>84</sup> but in the long run it did little to help secure his dwindling inheritance.<sup>85</sup> He, of course, served in Wales so that by scratching Henry's back a reciprocal action might follow: one account of the expedition says that Feidlim was 'offered lordship by the foreigners in return (*tigearnus o Gallaibh Ereann do Feidlimidh tara ceann sin*)'.<sup>86</sup> But this was not to be. In fact, by the looks of things, the raw deal which poor Feidlim had been receiving for years continued even while in Wales, where some of his men were slain by Anglo-Irishmen on whose side they were meant to be fighting.<sup>87</sup>

The irony of the situation was no doubt lost on Feidlim Ó Conchobair. In order to secure English recognition of his title to Connacht (indeed, to a mere remnant of the province), Feidlim was willing to assist Henry III in undermining the position of Dafydd ap Llywelyn in Gwynedd: he was, in effect, prepared to help Henry do to Dafydd what he had been doing to Feidlim himself for years. Not a shred of sympathy is wasted on the Welsh. And yet there are signs that such sympathy was beginning to grow elsewhere. The Scottish chronicle of Melrose, which had adopted a tone broadly sympathetic to the early Anglo-Norman adventurers in Ireland, was by 1241 feeling rather uneasy about the slump in Welsh fortunes under similar Anglo-Norman pressure:

The Welsh (who are also the relics of the Britons), who from the days of Brutus, who was their first prince, have had a prince of their own nation over them, under whom and through whom they decided their causes, are now compelled to hasten to London, and there to determine their causes by the arbitrament of the English. And hence it is known that, according to the prophecy of Merlin, the red dragon (that is, the Britons) languishes in the end of the pool (namely, the island), being oppressed by the white dragon (by which the English are designated).<sup>88</sup>

The chronicler takes a rather dim view of Henry III's dealings with his Celtic neighbours. Having described how he patched up relations with Alexander III in 1244, he continues: 'Wherefore the king of Scotland returned home; and the king of England directed his journey against Wales: because the Welsh were rebelling against him, being unable to endure the

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<sup>82</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AFM*; *AU*. Matthew Paris tells us of the involvement of the Irish in this campaign: 'Hybernienses enim in adventu suo totam Engleseiam [Anglesey], quae est Walensium nutrix et refugium, vastaverant, et in recessu, si quid residuum fuerat, in ore gladii trucidarunt et in favillam redegerunt, ita quod omnia quasi in incultam eremum redegerunt...': *Chronica majora*, IV, 486-8.

<sup>83</sup> *AC* s.a. 1240.

<sup>84</sup> Davies, *Domination and conquest*, 49.

<sup>85</sup> See J.F. Lydon, 'Lordship and crown: Llywelyn of Wales and O'Connor of Connacht', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 48-63.

<sup>86</sup> The annals in Rawlinson B.488, in *Misc. Irish annals*, s.a. 1246=1245.

<sup>87</sup> In 1248, Maurice fitz Gerald was asked to account for their deaths: *CDI*, I, 2952.

<sup>88</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 527-8.

English yoke'.<sup>89</sup> If a Scottish monastic chronicler could sense the rising tide of Welsh disaffection, the feeling within Wales itself must have been intense. The death in 1246 of Dafydd ap Llywelyn, with as yet no obvious national leader to replace him, followed as it was the next April by the 'painful humiliation' of the Peace of Woodstock,<sup>90</sup> meant that Welsh prospects were eclipsed for some years to come. Even the unsympathetic Matthew Paris captured (in his account of the year 1247) a sense of the country's despair: 'Wales was brought to naught at this time...The land was unwillingly under the laws of the English. The ancient proud nobility of the people and of the churchmen was depressed. The harp was tuned to mourning.'<sup>91</sup> He says of the election in that same year of Thomas le Waleys to the see of St Davids that 'he was called to office in his native country and to the leadership of his origin...that he might console his fellow countrymen, then in misery, by his presence, counsel, and aid'.<sup>92</sup>

Paris's account of the sorry, dispirited state of Welsh affairs after the Peace of Woodstock finds a striking echo in the comment of an Irish annalist for the following year:

The justiciar of Ireland made another hosting into Cenél nEógain against Ó Néill, and the Cenél nEógain decided, *since the foreigners had the upper hand of the Irish of Ireland*, to give hostages to the foreigners, and to make peace with them, for the sake of their lands and territory.<sup>93</sup>

Brian Ó Néill clearly felt that discretion was the better part of valour on this occasion, but there is something about the annalist's tone that sounds vaguely critical. A stoic resignation had been the hallmark of the actions of some Irish kings in the face of Anglo-Norman pressure, and it had not proved overly successful. Perhaps an altogether different response might produce a different result. That response, when it came, was in the form of a widespread revolt against the expansionism of the colonists in Ireland. This revolt had implications for developments in the highlands and islands of Scotland, where the attempts of the Scots king (aided by a coterie of earls and barons largely of Anglo-Norman origin) to extend his authority throughout the west produced its own reaction. And a mirror image of the Irish revolt was provided by Wales, where the native risorgimento under Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ab Iorwerth, beginning in the mid-1250s, had uncanny parallels with events in Ireland. Its whole course may be worth viewing in isolation.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

<sup>90</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 708.

<sup>91</sup> *Chronica majora*, IV, 647; I have used the translation in *Episcopal acts and cognate documents relating to Welsh dioceses 1066-1272*, ed. J.C. Davies (Cardiff, 1946-8), I, 375.

<sup>92</sup> *Chronica majora*, IV, 647; Davies, *Welsh episcopal acts*, I, 376.

<sup>93</sup> 'o do bi nert Gall for Gaidelaib Erenn': AC s.a 1248.

*Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Brian Ó Néill, and Áed Ó Conchobair*

It would be wrong to see the middle years of the thirteenth century as a turning point in Irish attitudes towards the colonists and as the commencement of an 'Irish rally', under a more hardened, less acquiescent breed of Gaelic lord. Even the more accommodating of the earlier generation of Irish kings had done their fair share of resistance. Cathal Crobderg Ó Conchobair, for instance, had won the praises of the Inisfallen chronicler as far back as 1195 for coming and demolishing the invaders' castles in Munster; the high hopes held out for him, although never realized, are clear from the annalist's curious remark that 'everyone expected that he would destroy all the foreigners on that expedition, and he arranged to come again, but he did not come'.<sup>1</sup> Domnall Mac Carthaig's major claim to fame when he died in 1206 was that 'during the twenty years in which he held the kingship, he never submitted to a foreigner'.<sup>2</sup> When the king of Cenél nEógain, Áed Méith Ó Néill, died in 1230 it was said of him (and was soon to become a cliché) that 'he was the man among the Gaídil who most killed and pillaged the foreigners and destroyed castles'.<sup>3</sup> Polite words said at the demise of the greater kings sometimes disguised a less than spectacular record in the field, but the conflict threw up other more unlikely heroes about whose defiant activities there can be little doubt. The first of these to obtain notoriety was a midlands lord, Cormac mac Airt Uí Maíl Sechlainn, who for many years led, virtually single-handedly, a campaign to forestall the infeudation of the Westmeath area; in the process, he did much to revive the reputation of his illustrious surname, and at his death was described as 'the Prince that most annoyed and hindered the English in his own time'.<sup>4</sup> Another thorn in the side of the settlers was Donn Óc Mac Airechtaig, a chieftain of Síol Muireadaig in Roscommon, who in 1225 personally organized a '*comergi mór* (great uprising)' by the sons of King Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair because he 'wished to avenge himself for the confiscation of his land and patrimony' and who, five years later, got his fellow insurgents to vow that 'they would never own a lord who should bring them to make submission to the foreigners'.<sup>5</sup> This is an important statement of the upsurge in hostility to the newcomers which was increasingly becoming apparent.

Opposition to colonial aggrandizement is, therefore, something which we can see in action from the earliest stages of the conquest. That is not to say that as the thirteenth century progressed it did not intensify. Contemporaries seem to have recognized as much. Ireland was becoming a less inviting place in which someone might make a career for himself, if we may

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1. *AI* s.a. 1195.

2. *Ibid.*, s.a. 1206.

3. *AU*; *AFM* s.a. 1230.

4. *AClon* s.a. 1239; his earlier career can be pieced together from *ibid* s.aa. 1211, 1212, 1213.

5. *AC* s.aa. 1225, 1230.



judge by the comment of an English royal official who in 1256 said that he would rather go to prison than return there!<sup>6</sup> The Connacht chronicler writing a full two decades earlier had observed that things seemed to have gone downhill considerably in recent years, in fact, since Hugh de Lacy's invasion in 1224: '...frequent assaults and routs on the churches by Irishmen and foreigners, and churches used as dormitories this year and for the space of twelve years ever since [de Lacy's and] Ó Néill's war; Irishmen and foreigners plundering by turns; no kingship or government, but Connacht lying open for foreigners to ruin whenever they come into it'.<sup>7</sup> Henry III, it seems, was aware of this volatility in the colony since at least 1230, when he informed the justiciar, Richard de Burgh, that some of the leading tenants in chief should stay in Ireland rather than attend his forthcoming expedition to Poitou, 'propter securitatem terre Hibernie quamdiu ipse justiciarius absens fuit'.<sup>8</sup>

By the late 1240s that situation had worsened considerably. Reaction against their fathers' ductile obeisance was led by a group to whom the annalists give the collective title 'the sons of the kings of Connacht'.<sup>9</sup> We are told that a '*cocad mór* (great war)' was waged in Connacht in 1247 led by King Feidlim's nephew Toirrdelbach; but it was of more wide-reaching appeal and was joined by an Osraige prince with a titanic reputation among the Irish, Donnchad mac Anmchada Uí Gilla Pátraic. One Anglo-Irish annalist, referring to Donnchad, sums up the events of this year in three words: 'Incepit guerra Mackanfy'.<sup>10</sup> Other princes then joined in the general uprising that ensued. It was a war on a slightly more destructive scale than usual: 'the foreigners of Connacht had not experienced for many a long year the like of the war these sons of kings waged against them in this year, for they did not forbear to ravage a single tract or territory of the foreigners of Connacht'.<sup>11</sup> Troubles continued in Connacht in the following year.<sup>12</sup> But by now disturbances had spread further afield. The Munster chronicle reports for 1248 that 'many of the kings' sons of Ireland were treacherously and shamefully slain this year'.<sup>13</sup> This served only to foment further unrest. By the summer of 1249 the war had indeed been brought to Munster, by Finín Mac Carthaig of Desmumu,<sup>14</sup> while further east 'the justiciar of Ireland led a great host into Leinster to attack the kings' sons who were spoiling and ruining the foreigners, but the Leinster princes paid no heed to him this time'.<sup>15</sup> Later on that year the colonists slew Donnchad mac Anmchada Uí Gilla Pátraic: 'this

<sup>6</sup> *Royal letters of the reign of Henry III*, ed. Shirley, II, 119.

<sup>7</sup> *AC* s.a. 1236.

<sup>8</sup> *Close rolls, 1227-31*, 389.

<sup>9</sup> For the technical use of the term *mac ríogh*, see Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'A propos du vocabulaire social Irlandais du bas moyen âge', *Études Celtiques* 12 (1968-71), 519-20; Simms, *From kings to warlords*, 57-8.

<sup>10</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, 8 (s.a. 1248=1247). For a brief account of Donnchad see now, John V. Kelleher, 'Mac Anmchaid, *lebróir*', *Ériu*, 42 (1991), 55-9.

<sup>11</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1247.

<sup>12</sup> *AC* s.a. 1248.

<sup>13</sup> *AI* s.a. 1248.

<sup>14</sup> *ALCé*; *AFM* s.a. 1249.

<sup>15</sup> *AC* s.a. 1249.

was a benefit to the foreigners, for many a one of them had he killed and raided and burned before that day; for he was one of the three Irishmen who [most signally] rose against the foreigners since their occupation of Ireland (*iar ngabail Erenn doib*).<sup>16</sup> This was something of which the latter were certainly aware. The Dublin-based Anglo-Irish annalist records the great news of Mac Anmchada's death in these terms: '..In Hibernia interfecitur Maccanevvey, filius Belial, sicut bene meruit, in Leys'.<sup>17</sup> Connacht too was in turmoil in this year with, for the first time, the lead being taken by Feidlim Ó Conchobair's son, Áed. It was his leadership which made these uprisings a real cause of disquiet to the colony's governors, especially when he made common cause with Brian Ó Néill of Cenél nEógain.

The entire course of Ó Néill's revolt, lacking as it does an on-the-spot reporter such as existed in Connacht, is unfortunately much less well documented than the contemporary uprisings in the midlands and west. But it was evidently taken just as seriously. Connacht was still very much a new frontier, in the subjugation of which such ebbs and flows were perhaps to be expected; Ulster had been an important limb of the colony for three-quarters of a century, a threat to the life of which (especially as it had only recently reverted to the crown) could not be tolerated. Brian Ó Néill was, at the early stages of his war, careful not to overreach himself, compromising, giving hostages, looking on as the justiciar built castles at strategic crossing-points on the Bann and Erne, and elsewhere, and as the latter tried to fill the void left by Hugh de Lacy's death by reorganizing the administration of the province.<sup>18</sup> Yet Brian was merely biding his time. No sooner had he submitted in 1248 than he brought a fleet from Lough Foyle to the Erne and demolished a castle on its banks.<sup>19</sup> The Cenél nEógain had, of course, their own fleet, but it would be almost surprising if Brian had not the use of Islesmen in this expedition - we know that in 1251 the would-be king of the Isles, Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, was in alliance with some unnamed forces in the north of Ireland.<sup>20</sup> Brian also compromised in the face of a major attack by the justiciar in 1252, which saw the rebuilding of castles at Céal Uisce on the Erne and at Mag Cóba in County Down.<sup>21</sup> But within a year Ó Néill's prospects had been reversed. He refused to submit when an expedition marched into Tír Eógain, and instead slaughtered the hapless troops.<sup>22</sup> This was the turning-point, the start of Brian's *cocad mór* when, in one season, he destroyed Mag Cóba castle and many other castles and settlements in the area, bringing desolation to the entire low-lying part of County Down.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *AC* s.a. 1249. The others were Conchobar Ó Máel Sechlainn and Conchobar na Caslén mac Cochláin.

<sup>17</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 315.

<sup>18</sup> Otway-Ruthven, *History of medieval Ireland*, 192 and n. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1248.

<sup>20</sup> *CDI*, I, 3206.

<sup>21</sup> Otway-Ruthven, *History of medieval Ireland*, 193, n. 6; 'Lord Chancellor Gerrard's notes of his report on Ireland', *Analecta Hibernica*, 2 (1931), 255; *AFM* s.a. 1252.

<sup>22</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1253.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*; *ALCé*; *AC*.

In the face of such a blitzkrieg, the government was determined to show that it meant business. When Ireland was granted to Henry III's eldest son Edward in 1254, the seneschal of Ulster was ordered 'to draw to Prince Edward's peace all the Irishmen of Ulster who will come thereto...the names of those persons who still remain at war and contemn the Prince's peace [are] to be proclaimed, so that they may be pursued and confounded by the faithful'.<sup>24</sup> The government was aware that there was an air of instability about in Ireland which was out of the ordinary. Earlier the same year King Henry himself wrote from Gascony to the justiciar, John fitz Geoffrey, about plans for a contingent from Ireland to join him there, saying that he had 'heard that the Irish are over-elated at the coming to the king in Gascony of the justiciar, and Maurice fitz Gerald, and the other magnates of Ireland, and that they threaten the peace of that country'.<sup>25</sup> Henry had earlier claimed that the danger posed to Gascony by the king of Castile had real implications for the Lordship because the latter was 'aspiring to invade England and Ireland'.<sup>26</sup> It is doubtful if that threat was taken seriously, but the absence from Ireland of some of Ó Néill's doughtiest opponents would be a real danger to stability. Maurice fitz Gerald was by far the most aggressive of the barons, and it is interesting that when he left Ireland in 1255 the Irish annals take the unusual step of recording the fact.<sup>27</sup> It was in this same year that a vital alliance was formed between Brian Ó Néill and Feidlim Ó Conchobair's son Áed, when the latter undertook a mission to Tír Eógain 'and made peace between his own father and the north of Ireland'.<sup>28</sup> Together they co-operated in an assertion of Connacht suzerainty over Bréifne.<sup>29</sup> It was part of Brian's aim to annex the former kingdom of Ulaid, now largely subsumed into the escheated earldom of Ulster, and he had the support of Áed Ó Conchobair in attempting to do so.

We are badly served for details of Ó Néill's other activities at this point but on 13 February 1256 the English king ordered his officials 'not to allow Áengus mac Domnaill or other Scottish malefactors, whose names the King of Scots will communicate, to be received in Ireland'.<sup>30</sup> The instruction was to remain valid for seven years, which was the length of time the fourteen-year-old king of Scots needed to reach maturity. Since it was the Scots king who was to supply the names of these trouble-makers, he - being a minor and in a very vulnerable position - was probably the one for whom they were making trouble; he, therefore, was the one who had something to fear should they find friends in Ireland. A virtual *coup d'état* had occurred in Scotland several months earlier, which resulted in the Comyn faction being ousted

<sup>24</sup> *CDI*, II, 412 (dated 21 November 1254).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 357 (dated c. 16 May 1254).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 305 (dated 27 December 1253).

<sup>27</sup> *AC*; when he died two years later he was described as 'destroyer of the Irish' (*AFM* s.a. 1257).

<sup>28</sup> *AC* s.a. 1255.

<sup>29</sup> *ALCé* s.a. 1255

<sup>30</sup> *CDS*, I, 2041; *CDI*, II, 490.

from government in favour of a new group of counsellors backed by the English king.<sup>31</sup> The document issued on the occasion to implement the constitutional shake-up prohibited the former office-holders from taking part in government 'unless Scotland were invaded by a foreign prince'.<sup>32</sup> It is quite likely that Hákon IV of Norway is intended here,<sup>33</sup> but in view of the concern over a possible rebel alliance forming in Ireland, perhaps we should see this clause as reflecting fears about Ó Néill's rise in Ulster.

However, a stronger possibility suggests itself (which may even account for the use of the term *princeps* in referring to Scotland's likely invader), and that is that Henry III and the party he favoured had got wind that the Comyn clique were in the process of aligning themselves with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Only a matter of weeks earlier Llywelyn had defeated his brother in battle and assumed control over all Gwynedd.<sup>34</sup> He was certainly a new force to be reckoned with, and may for some time now have been flexing his muscles in the Irish Sea region. In 1253, King Henry had obviously feared that Llywelyn or his men might invade the Isle of Man while its king, Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, was in Norway, since he sent him a warning to ensure that this was not the case.<sup>35</sup> Then in April 1256 he ordered his bailiffs and lieges in Wales to prevent certain named Manx fugitives from finding a refuge in Wales, where they might flee having killed King Magnus's brother.<sup>36</sup> It was in 1256 that 'the gentlefolk of Wales, despoiled of their liberty and rights, came to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, and revealed to him with tears their grievous bondage to the English, and made known to him that they preferred to be slain in war for their liberty than to suffer themselves to be unrighteously trampled upon by foreigners'.<sup>37</sup> The extraordinarily emotive tone of this statement is one rarely encountered in the *Brut* texts or in the Irish annals of the period, and surely captures something of the ferment of unrest then sweeping the region. Llywelyn as a result was inspired to raise war against the English in Wales and it is a matter of no small importance that the Munster chronicle breaks its long silence on events in the sister island to inform us in 1257 that the Welsh had made 'a great slaughter of the English'.<sup>38</sup>

With Llywelyn's star so clearly in the ascendant, it would be only natural that allies should emerge elsewhere, eager to take advantage of his successes. This was all the more so after Henry III's baronial troubles erupted in 1258. Not surprisingly, therefore, something akin to what had been feared in the 1255 Scottish document referred to above actually came to pass on 18 March 1258. The Comyns and their associates made 'a bond of mutual alliance and

<sup>31</sup> See Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 565-8; D.E.R. Watt, 'The minority of Alexander III of Scotland', *Trans. Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 21 (1971), 12-15.

<sup>32</sup> *Anglo-Scottish relations 1174-1328*, ed. and trans. E.L.G. Stones (Oxford, 1965), no. 10.

<sup>33</sup> As assumed by Duncan & Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the early Middle Ages', 211-12.

<sup>34</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 715.

<sup>35</sup> *CDS*, I, 1917 (dated 4 April 1253).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 2046.

<sup>37</sup> *Brut*, s.a 1256.

<sup>38</sup> *AI* s.a. 1257.

friendship' with Llywelyn and his Welsh allies. They agreed that without Llywelyn's consent the Scots signatories would not make peace with King Henry or any of his magnates or any of the magnates of Scotland who 'are adverse and rebels to the Welshmen'. They would allow no force of horse or foot to go from Scotland against Llywelyn, and they would try to induce their lord, the king of Scots, to enter into the same agreement. Welsh merchants would be allowed to come and trade in Scotland, and they would persuade Scottish merchants to go and trade in Wales.<sup>39</sup> This important, if short-lived, treaty stands, as Professor Barrow put it, 'in puzzling isolation',<sup>40</sup> and does indeed stick out like a sore thumb in the otherwise barren landscape of Cambro-Scottish relations in the thirteenth century. But to dismiss as an aberration one of our few revealing glimpses at the picture is to condemn us to total darkness on the subject. For the light it can throw on an almost unknown world (even for what it has to tell us about the subject of trade between the two countries) this document is deserving of careful study.

It certainly shows Llywelyn to be in a strong position, and, if he was busy rounding up support for his cause, it would be unreasonable to doubt that he should look to Ireland: there, the heavy commitment of resources and manpower to the task of damping down the country's rampant unrest lessened the possibility that either commodity might be released for use against Llywelyn in Wales, as had happened in the previous decade. This unrest was, therefore, music to the Welsh prince's ears. In August of the previous year, 1257, Henry III had led an expedition to Wales, as it transpired, his last and least effective. There *was* some Irish involvement in it. Three hundred *satellites*, a small number of crossbowmen, and 160 *fossatores*, were raised in the Waterford-Wexford area and sailed for Wales in early August;<sup>41</sup> but the campaign as a whole was a failure and had to be abandoned. Apparently this was largely because sufficient of the aid sought from Ireland did not materialize. Here is how the chronicle of Arnold Fitz-Thedmar, one of the most valuable of the regular London city chronicles for the thirteenth century, puts it:

[King Henry], coming with his army as far as a castle called Ghennok, delayed there until the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin [September 8], waiting for his men of Ireland, whom he had ordered; but they not coming, when the Lord King saw that he would not be able to suppress the Welsh, dispensing with a large number of foot-sergeants (*multitudine servientum pedisequorum*), he receded thence.<sup>42</sup>

Just how accurate the chronicler was can be seen from a letter of Henry's, dated September 4, complaining bitterly that since August 26 he and the Lord Edward had been left waiting for 'navigium et victualia nostra tam Anglie quam Hibernie'.<sup>43</sup> Llywelyn knew better than anybody

<sup>39</sup> CDS, I, 2155; *Littere Wallie*, ed J.G. Edwards (Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales History and Law Series, no. 5, Cardiff, 1940), 184-6.

<sup>40</sup> G.W.S. Barrow, 'Wales and Scotland in the middle ages', *WHR*, 10 (1981), 302-19 (at p.312); see also Watt, 'Minority of Alexander III', 17.

<sup>41</sup> N.L.I. Harris MSS, I, fol. 211v.; see Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 148.

<sup>42</sup> Arnold Fitz-Thedmar, *De antiquis legibus liber: cronica majorum et vicecomitum Londoniarum* [1188-1274], ed. Thomas Stapleton, Camden Society (London, 1846), 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Close rolls, 1256-9*, 90-91.

the threat Ireland posed to his most vulnerable flank (the coastal front to the west), and, if Matthew Paris is to be believed, he was forced to gather a fleet to protect the Welsh coast from a seaborne assault from Ireland which the Lord Edward had planned in 1256.<sup>44</sup> This is perhaps the fleet of over twenty ships, carrying nearly 600 cavalry horses, which left Waterford for Milford Haven 'in occursum Domini Edwardi' in the summer of 1256.<sup>45</sup> To negate Ireland's capacity, or willingness, to contribute to the war against him must have been a leading consideration in Llywelyn's policy.<sup>46</sup>

It is with this in mind, therefore, that we turn to consider events in Wales and Ireland in 1258. Henry III had been contemplating separate campaigns, first, against the Comyn faction in Scotland,<sup>47</sup> and, then, in summer, against Llywelyn.<sup>48</sup> Both were eventually cancelled because of the baronial reform movement that broke out at the Oxford parliament in June. Llywelyn and the Scottish barons were not to know this when they sealed their agreement in March. In this document Llywelyn for the first time used the title 'Prince of Wales'. The *Brutiau* tell us that his assumption of the title was the occasion of an assembly of nearly all the lesser Welsh princes, whereby they all 'made a pact together, and they gave an oath to maintain loyalty and agreement together, under pain of excommunication upon whomsoever of them broke it'.<sup>49</sup> We have no evidence that the Welsh were in contact with the leaders of the war in Ireland, but it is a remarkable fact that Irish sources report that in this same year: 'Áed mac Feidlim and Tadc Ó Briain held a great meeting with Brian Ó Néill at Cáel Uisce, where they all concluded a peace and gave the kingship of the Irish of Ireland to Brian Ó Néill (*rige do thabairt ar Gaidelaib Erenn do Brian h. Neill*)'.<sup>50</sup> Thus we have two almost identical movements taking place in Wales and Ireland at the same time. Erstwhile enemies agree to unite under the leadership of one of their number (in Wales, admittedly, a much more widespread and more successful movement, but probably only because Llywelyn, unlike Brian, lacked someone of similar stature to challenge his new pre-eminence). He then adopts a formal title to give expression to the pact: Llywelyn became *Princeps Wallie*, Ó Néill became *Rí Gáidil Érenn* or *Rex regum Hibernie*.<sup>51</sup> This is enough to suggest that one side was aware of developments in the other country, possibly that the inspiration for one came from the other (since Llywelyn's move was virtually a formalization of a situation that already obtained, we

<sup>44</sup> '...dictus Edwardus, quod Hibernienses eos quasi vas figuli, quos jam vocaverat, irrestaurabiliter confringere[n]t, habebant Walenses praemuniti galeias, piraticis armis et victualibus communitas, ut Hiberniensibus hostiliter et potenter in mare obviarent': *Chronica majora*, V, 633.

<sup>45</sup> N.L.I. Harris MSS, I, fols. 209-11; Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 147.

<sup>46</sup> For the Irish contribution to the war in Wales at this point, see J.F. Lydon, 'Three exchequer documents from the reign of Henry III', *Proc. R.I.A.*, 65 (1966-7), 1-27 (at pp. 14-18).

<sup>47</sup> *CDS*, I, 2103, 2116-18.

<sup>48</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 722, n. 37.

<sup>49</sup> *Brut*, s.a. 1258.

<sup>50</sup> *AC* s.a. 1258.

<sup>51</sup> *AC* s.aa. 1258, 1260; *CDI*, II, 661. For earlier use of the Welsh title, see Michael Richter, 'David ap Llywelyn, the first prince of Wales', *WHR*, 5 (1971), 205-19.

may suspect that Ó Néill and his allies were imitating the Welsh), perhaps even that their actions were co-ordinated.

There is no evidence that this was the case, but in view of the Irish involvement in recent Welsh wars, the prospect of an alliance with the Irish would surely have proved at least as enticing as the rather less practical one with the Scots. One of the main provisions of the Scottish treaty was that the Scots would not allow men from Scotland to fight against the Welsh. We have it on the word of at least one chronicler that it was the Welsh who took the initiative in seeking the alliance;<sup>52</sup> they were the ones, therefore, who were worried about foreign arms being brought to bear against them. But as Ireland's involvement in the suppression of Welsh revolt was far greater than anything that came out of Scotland, Llywelyn would have had far more to gain from the disruption of the Irish input. We know about the Scottish alliance because of the chance survival of the text of the treaty in the English archives; the text of an Irish treaty - even if we assume that so formal an agreement was entered into - is far less likely to have survived. One may note, however, that when Brian Ó Néill's war eventually ended with his death at the battle of Down on 16 May 1260, the hitherto highly unusual step was taken of despatching his severed head to London.<sup>53</sup> This act was greeted with outrage in Ireland: Gilla Brigde Mac Con Mide devotes a great part of his elegy for Brian to a condemnation of the deed.<sup>54</sup> But it seems to show that Brian's was no petty rebellion limited to the confines of Ulster alone and perhaps the intention was to display the trophy above the city gates as a warning to his foreign allies.

We know that Ó Néill almost certainly had Scottish allies. It was probably in the spring of 1260 that Alexander III took full personal control of the government of Scotland.<sup>55</sup> One of his first acts upon doing so was to ask his father-in-law, Henry III, for help in dealing with a pressing problem. Henry's response was to order the Irish justiciar not to permit 'persons from Scotland to be received in Ireland to the King of Scots' damage'; if he found any people 'seeking confederacies with the Irish or compassing other damages against said King [of Scots]', he was to arrest them and keep them in custody until he received orders from the king or the Lord Edward.<sup>56</sup> This letter is dated 29 April 1260, just over a fortnight before the battle of Down. The array of Irish kings and lords who lined up there on Ó Néill's side (from Ulster, Ó Catháin, Ó hAnluain, Mac Lochlainn, Mac Cana, Ó Gairmleadaig, Ó Cairre, Ó Duibdírna, Ó hIndergi; from Connacht, Ó Conchobair, Mac Diarmata, Ó Maíruanaid, Ó Gadra, Mac Donnchada, Ó Cuind, Ó Muiredaig) was such that the campaign, disastrous as it was, must have been weeks if not months in the planning. In all probability, therefore, Henry's letter

<sup>52</sup> John de Oxedenes, *Chronica*, ed. H. Ellis (RS, London, 1859), 211.

<sup>53</sup> *Misc. Irish annals* s.a 1261 = 1260.

<sup>54</sup> *The Poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe*, ed. N.J.A. Williams (Irish Texts Society, London, 1980), no. XIII.

<sup>55</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 576.

<sup>56</sup> *CDI*, II, 652; *CDS*, I, 2185.

refers to those plans, and to the involvement of men from Scotland in Brian Ó Néill's campaign to annex the former kingdom of Ulaid by taking its capital, Down, which would wipe out the earldom of Ulster.<sup>57</sup>

But for these developments to cause concern to King Alexander, it can only be that the achievement of Ó Néill's ambition would have had damaging repercussions for Scotland, and this because of the men from there who were seeking to confederate with the Irish rebels. One does not have to look too far to discover the identity of some of those about whom the Scots king was worried. In 1256, as we have seen, Alexander and his minders had been concerned to ensure that Áengus mac Domnaill of Islay 'and other Scottish malefactors' did not find a welcome in Ireland. If the evidence of a poem written for Áengus not long after his succession (in 1247?) is anything to go by, he was no stranger to Ireland. The poet, in fact, makes direct allusion to the subject: 'Thou hast come round Ireland; rare is the strand whence thou hast not taken cattle'. He continues:

To Lough Foyle, to Erris [Co Mayo], thy path is straight from the Hebrides:  
the haven of Erris, 'tis a true preparation, thou hast found the host of Islay there.

The host of Islay has been with thee beside Aran, to test their shooting as far as Loch Con [Co Mayo]:  
that fair host of Islay takes cattle from smooth Innse Modh [in Clew Bay].

Corcomroe [Co Clare] thy fleet has reached, Corca Bascinn beside it:  
from Bun Gaillmhe [Co Galway] to Cúil Chnámha [Co Sligo] thou art a salmon that searches every strand.

Elsewhere in the poem Áengus is called 'champion of the Bann', 'lion of Loch Cé', 'king of Tuaim', 'lord of Fál', and 'scion of Tara'.<sup>58</sup> Even allowing for exaggeration, Áengus mac Domnaill was obviously a man with a reputation in Ireland. The list of places along Ireland's west coast is perhaps not quite the usual *caithréim* (or list of the dedicatee's battle-triumphs), but it is nevertheless indicative of a career spent scouring the coast in pursuit of plunder. Judging from the targets, though, his raiding was not indiscriminate hit-and-miss: several of the locations were the scenes of Anglo-Norman attempts at settlement, and it seems most likely that Áengus attempted to challenge their colonization of these areas in partnership with some Irish comrade in arms.

Another Scottish family who may have been a worry to Alexander were the Meic Suibne of Knapdale in Argyll. In 1257 the Geraldine advance into the north-west was forestalled by the defeat of their forces at Credrán (near Drumcliff, Co Sligo) by Gofraid Ó Domnaill, king of Cenél Conaill.<sup>59</sup> In the following year Gofraid died of the wounds he

<sup>57</sup> According to a late genealogical tract on the Uí Mórda of Laois, Brian married Julia, daughter of John Campbell, earl of Lorne and prince of Argyll (D. O'Byrne, *History of Queen's County* (Dublin, 1854), 94); we can probably dismiss the Campbell connexion as they had yet to come to prominence, but the ruler of Lorne at this juncture was a John, that is, Eógan son of Donnchad mac Dubgaill, and perhaps the tract preserves a garbled recollection of a marriage between Brian Ó Néill and Mac Dubgaill's daughter (See M.K. Simms, 'Gaelic lordships in Ulster in the later Middle Ages' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Dublin, 1976), II, 663).

<sup>58</sup> Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry*, no. 45.

<sup>59</sup> *AC* s.a. 1257.



received in the battle,<sup>60</sup> and was replaced by his brother, Domnall Óc. The Four Masters have an elaborate and highly fictionalized account of the youth's arrival in Tír Conaill from Scotland, announcing in Scottish Gaelic (*san nGaoidilcc nAlbanaigh*) his intention of defending his people from the onslaughts of their enemies. The story is a legend incorporated into the text in order to glorify the deeds of the Uí Domnaill, but the kernel is probably true: that Domnall Óc was fostered in Scotland. Where, we do not know for certain, but a contemporary poem written by Gilla Brigde Mac Con Mide to commemorate his accession, while confirming that Domnall Óc did indeed return to Tír Conaill from overseas (*táinig don chuan a-muigh macámh*), adds that he was reared with the Meic Suibne: 'since the young ox of Bruidhean Dá Bhearg was reared in Suibhne's house in the east (*ó do tógbhadh i dtoigh Suibhnel toir ógdhamh Bruidhne Dá Bhearg*)'.<sup>61</sup> It may have been the coalition of these two families that the Scots king sought to undermine in 1260.

But there is another obvious target of King Alexander's wrath. In 1258, just the sort of piratical raid described in the poem to Áengus Mór took place along Connacht's coast. An unnamed 'Mac Somurli' came with a great fleet from the Hebrides (*longus mór do tocht a hInsib Gall*), sailing around the west coast as far as Connemara, where he robbed a merchant ship of her goods. The English settlers in the area were the real victims of the assault since it was the sheriff of Connacht, Jordan d'Exeter, who took to the seas to oppose him. The Islesmen, having put ashore on an island, were challenged to battle by d'Exeter, who was killed along with many of his men, and Mac Somurli 'went back to his land, joyful and laden with spoil'.<sup>62</sup> Annalists seldom place events in their context, but when the very next entry in the annals is a description of Áed Ó Conchobair's and Tadc Ó Briain's meeting with Brian Ó Néill at Cáel Uisce, we may suspect that the purpose of Mac Somurli's incursion was to do some of their dirty work for them. It is possible that Áengus mac Domnaill is the 'Mac Somurli' in question, but it seems that <sup>he</sup> backed Domnall Óc Ó Domnaill,<sup>63</sup> in which case he would have little sympathy for Brian Ó Néill, who was then trying to establish supremacy over Cenél Conaill. It is more likely to have been Áengus's first-cousin, Dubgall mac Ruaidrí of Garmoran. In the following year the latter disembarked at Derry, the chief port of Ó Néill's kingdom, with his daughter and a contingent of 160 warriors led by his brother Alan, and was there met by Áed Ó Conchobair: Áed married the daughter, and received the warriors as dowry.<sup>64</sup>

If Alexander III feared this development, his reasons for doing so are fairly transparent: they had to do with his attempts to extend royal authority over the western region. In May 1259 an ambassador of the Scots king had asked Henry III to abandon his support for the king

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, s.a 1258.

<sup>61</sup> *The poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe*, no. VII, qtt. 2, 22.

<sup>62</sup> AC s.a. 1258.

<sup>63</sup> Domnall Óc's second wife was a daughter of Áengus: see Paul Walsh, 'O'Donnell genealogies', *Analecta Hibernica*, 8 (1938), 377.

<sup>64</sup> ALCé; AC s.a. 1259.

of Man and the Isles, Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib,<sup>65</sup> who, as we have seen, had secured his kingdom using Irish support. Henry's support for Magnus was part of a long-standing English policy of putting a spoke in the wheels of Scottish westward expansion by backing rival powers in the region. But by 1260 the young and energetic Alexander sought nothing short of the annexation of Magnus's kingdom, and the latter's Irish allies presumably stood in the way. It seems that those allies included the loose coalition of forces put together by Brian Ó Néill, and, as was shortly to be demonstrated, Dubgall mac Ruaidrí of Garmoran and his brother Alan. The Scots, despairing of their attempts to negotiate a settlement with Norway over the future of the Isles, in the face of Norwegian prevarication,<sup>66</sup> began attacks on the Western Isles in 1262.<sup>67</sup> The Islesmen reported to Hákon IV of Norway what was most assuredly the case, 'that the Scottish king intended to lay under himself all the Hebrides',<sup>68</sup> and Hákon went west to prevent it. From an Irish perspective, one of the most remarkable things about Hákon's western expedition is this: we only know the identity of three Islesmen who supported him without reservation, and all three were heavily involved in Irish affairs - King Magnus of Man, Dubgall mac Ruaidrí, and the latter's brother, Alan. Of its very nature, their unequivocal support for Hákon is testimony to (indeed, a last-ditch attempt to prevent) Scottish expansion along the western seaboard. These are surely the men from Scotland whom Alexander III sought to prevent from reaching Ireland in the run-up to the battle of Down; and by inference, therefore, the Ó Néill-Ó Conchobair confederacy was conspiring with them to thwart Alexander's plans.

Ó Néill was, of course, killed at Down and in the aftermath of that disaster Áed Ó Conchobair found it very difficult to maintain the supremacy over Bréifne which, with Ó Néill's help, he had won,<sup>69</sup> and it became an uphill struggle to withstand renewed pressure from the colonists.<sup>70</sup> In 1263 Hákon of Norway came west to help Áed's father-in-law, Dubgall mac Ruaidrí, and while the Norse king was in the Hebrides 'messages reached him from Ireland, to the effect that the Irish offered to place themselves under his power, if he would rid them of the trouble to which English men had subjected them; because [the English] had then occupied all the best places by the sea'. Hákon then sent a Hebridean fleet to Ireland on a mission 'to discover on what grounds the Irish wished to call him thither'. When they returned, they 'told him that the Irish offered to maintain his whole army, until he freed them from the power of English men'. The Norse king was anxious to take up the offer, but was dissuaded from doing so by his army.<sup>71</sup> If this story is true, we can say with a good deal of confidence that

<sup>65</sup> *CDS*, I, 2157.

<sup>66</sup> Eirspennill's 'Saga of Hákon Hákonarson', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 601-2.

<sup>67</sup> Frisbök's 'Saga of Hákon Hákonarson', in *ibid*, II, 605.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>69</sup> *AC* s.a. 1261.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, s.a. 1262.

<sup>71</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 622, 634.

the invitation to Hákon came from Áed Ó Conchobair of Connacht, for two reasons: first, because of their mutual allies, the Meic Ruaidrí, and second, because we have confirmation that there were indeed plans afoot to bring Hákon to Ireland, and that confirmation comes from the main corpus of Irish annals,<sup>72</sup> which were at this period compiled in Connacht. If the Connacht writer thought that King Hákon died 'in the Orkneys on his way to Ireland (*a nInsiib Gall Orc ar sligid ag techt a nErinn*)', it is more than likely the case that the plot to bring him there was hatched locally.

The proposal to bring the king of Norway to Ireland is one of the most innovative moves to emerge from Gaelic Ireland in the thirteenth century. One may perhaps conclude that the scheme had little to recommend it in the first place, and was doomed to failure. But of greater significance than the practicality of the thing is its motivation. Hákon IV, in coming west in 1263, had shown himself willing to collaborate with the rulers of Argyll and the Isles to withstand the aggrandizement of the king of Scots. It was an extension of that policy to assist the Islesmen's Irish allies in seeking to slow up the expansion of the English colony in Ireland. The appeal to Hákon, on whomsoever's behalf it was made, does demonstrate a breadth of vision not always discernible in the seemingly petty squabbles that have tarnished the reputations of most Irish rulers in that era. One would be foolish to imagine that the project had very widespread appeal - those who had swallowed past differences in rallying to Brian Ó Néill's banner shortly beforehand were probably its only supporters - but it does indicate that there were individuals in Ireland sufficiently despairing of the country's plight to contemplate radical solutions, and it likewise shows that some individuals lifted their gaze from the ostensibly puny wranglings that clutter the pages of the annals, to set their sights on greater goals, goals that in effect included the overthrow of the English Lordship of Ireland. It is clearly this sort of ambitious scheming that Feidlim Ó Conchobair had in mind when he wrote to Henry III shortly after the battle of Down, protesting his innocence, and assuring him that 'for no promise made to us by the Irish had we receded, nor would we recede, from the king's service'.<sup>73</sup> The 'Irish' then - if we may follow Feidlim in lumping them all into one camp - were urging the provincial kings to abandon their fealty to the crown and making elaborate promises as to the benefits that might come their way as a result.

There must have been others worried about the planned Norwegian intervention. There had been strong rumours of a Norwegian invasion in 1262: in a round of diplomacy between Henry III and Hákon IV, the latter had complained to the English king of wrongdoings by the Scots, but assured him that he had no intention of actually launching an invasion of Scotland or starting a war in retaliation; Henry had offered to try to get Alexander III to make amends.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> AC; ALCé s.a. 1263.

<sup>73</sup> 'pro aliqua sollicitatione nobis ad Hiberniensibus facta recessimus, nec recedemus...': *Royal letters of the reign of Henry III*, ed. Shirley, II, 199-200.

<sup>74</sup> CDS, I, 2321.

Although Hákon did not depart Norway until 11 July 1263, he had sent men west to the Orkneys and Shetlands 'in spring' to obtain pilots for the voyage and to inform Dubgall mac Ruaidrí in the Hebrides that the royal fleet was to be expected 'in the summer'.<sup>75</sup> To deter the Scots from a planned raid in the Isles that summer Dubgall 'spread the rumour that forty ships were coming west from Norway'; an advance party of four ships was also sent ahead, 'some time before the king was ready'.<sup>76</sup> The crews of these ships plundered a Scottish castle, allegedly burned more than twenty towns, and rendezvoused in the Western Isles with Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, the king of Man, a protégé of Henry III.<sup>77</sup> We may take it, therefore, that news of Hákon's imminent arrival was leaking out all over the place long before he left Norway on July 11. Even after he arrived in the Isles it was far from clear just what his intentions were; it was certainly by no means certain that he intended confining himself to pursuing his quarrel with the Scots king. One report that reached the English government in the summer stated that the Norse king and his fleet were now 'in the outer islands of Scotland, but where they are bound is not yet known'.<sup>78</sup>

With this in mind we may consider the Lord Edward's grant of Ulster to Walter de Burgh on July 15. Robin Frame has recently put forward the persuasive case that the grant had less to do with considerations about the security of Ireland than a return of a favour by Edward to a trusted vassal, seeing de Burgh's loyal aid in mid-July to the prince, during military operations in the west country of England, as the more likely explanation for Walter's enrichment.<sup>79</sup> As the two are not, however, mutually exclusive, it is not unreasonable to suggest that there may have been a bit of both in Edward's actions. Professor Frame is clearly correct in querying whether 'long-term thinking [was] characteristic of Edward at this stage',<sup>80</sup> but the same could not be said of Walter de Burgh, who surely put the idea in Edward's mind. As lord of Connacht, few knew better than he the disturbed conditions that had prevailed in the province in recent years, and the danger to his inheritance there which Áed Ó Conchobair's revolt represented. In 1256 he himself had taken to the field against Ó Conchobair with an army 'which for might and multitude had never been surpassed in Ireland',<sup>81</sup> but certainly did not get the better of him. He tried the same exploit in the immediate aftermath of the battle of Down in 1260.<sup>82</sup> When Walter failed in a similar campaign in 1262, even though his army had the justiciar and John de Verdon in its ranks, he

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<sup>75</sup> 'Saga of Hákon Hákonarson', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 611-13.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 611.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 612-3.

<sup>78</sup> *CDS*, I, 2351; *Diplomatic documents*, ed. Chaplais, 226-7 (...[rex] Norewaye cum magna multitudine navegii in forencecis insulis Scocye applicuit, set quo proponant divertere nondum scitur').

<sup>79</sup> Robin Frame, 'Ireland during the barons' wars', in *Thirteenth century England: 1. Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1985*, ed. P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1986), 158-67 (at pp. 164-5).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 165; see now, Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), chap. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *AC s.a.* 1256.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, s.a. 1260.

took the sensible course and made peace with Áed, who 'lay in one room and one bed with MacWilliam Burke, happy and cheerful; and next day the foreigners departed having concluded this peace'.<sup>83</sup> Before departing for England in 1263 de Burgh led another army into Roscommon, but the king of Connacht, Feidlim Ó Conchobair, wisely withdrew with his movable goods, and ultimately a detachment of Walter's army was attacked by a lesser lord of the locality with the loss of a hundred of his men, so that 'the army went home sorrowfully afterwards'.<sup>84</sup>

This is the first time in years that Áed is not mentioned alongside his father as the target of the English assault; in fact, there is a complete silence about his activities and whereabouts this year, and he may have been off elsewhere, making preparations for Hákon's arrival. In any case, when Walter de Burgh joined the Lord Edward shortly afterwards, we can take it that he informed him of the state of play in Connacht: in the previous year, the king and Edward had sent letters to Ireland, speaking of 'the discord lately stirred up there', and specifically asking Walter de Burgh, among others, to certify them 'regarding the state of Ireland'.<sup>85</sup> One can, therefore, imagine de Burgh expounding to Edward on Áed Ó Conchobair's increasing dominance there, the disquieting news that he had recently imported a contingent of Hebridean mercenaries to aid him, his alliance with certain well-known firebrands from the Isles, and perhaps too his fears over what lay in store if the latest rumours about a Norse invasion proved correct. It was surely as a response to this that Edward revived the earldom of Ulster which had lain dormant for twenty years and, on paper at least, made de Burgh master over all Connacht and Ulster, much the same assemblage of lands over which Brian Ó Néill had been claiming overlordship.

At Hákon's death the new earl of Ulster no doubt breathed a sigh of relief. Others did likewise. His threatened invasion must, after all, be seen against the background of Henry III's war with the barons, and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that had Hákon's campaign proved more successful he might have cut a deal with de Montfort and his allies. Indeed, it seems to have been in 1263 that the rebellious English barons were advised that they should 'above all...guard the sea, and...find alliances for themselves in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland'.<sup>86</sup> We know that they found a ready ally in Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. They were less than successful in gaining allies in Scotland because relations between Alexander and Henry were quite warm at this point. That leaves Ireland. As far as we can tell, the Anglo-Irish remained steadfast royalists throughout the duration of the war. Walter de Burgh probably brought troops with him to England in 1263 to aid Prince Edward.<sup>87</sup> After the spectacular baronial victory at

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, s.a. 1262.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, s.a. 1263.

<sup>85</sup> *CDI*, II, 727.

<sup>86</sup> 'Tewkesbury annals', in *Annales monastici*, I, 179-80; quoted in Frame, 'Ireland and the barons' war', 161.

<sup>87</sup> Frame, 'Ireland and the barons' war', 165.

Lewes in May 1264, Queen Eleanor, then in northern France, was said to be sending letters to the barons of Ireland, to demand help for the king in England.<sup>88</sup> True to form, many of the leading Anglo-Irish magnates (including Walter de Burgh, Theobald Walter, Maurice fitz Gerald and Maurice fitz Maurice) were in the royalist camp at the time of Evesham (August 1265) when the Montfort regime was smashed, and we have regular reports of their presence in England throughout that year and the next.<sup>89</sup>

With the Lordship depleted of manpower like this for lengthy periods of time, one would expect to see greater advantage taken of the situation by the Irish than appears to have been the case. Sir John Lloyd astutely observed of Llywelyn's close relationship with the barons that 'two powers can hardly wage war simultaneously against a third without entering, however divergent their ultimate aims, into a working alliance',<sup>90</sup> and for that reason one might have expected to find somewhere a hint of co-operation between the de Montfort party and the native Irish. But it never emerges. If one were to judge from the account of the Lewes campaign of 1264 which appears in the Irish annals, the Irish were indifferent to and rather poorly informed on developments across the Irish Sea:

A great war arose between the king of England and the king of Wales, and the earls of England rose against Edward (*sic*) and his son, and a battle was fought between them, and Edward, the king of England, and his son, were captured there, along with John de Verdon, and a great slaughter besides was committed between them.<sup>91</sup>

What is most of interest here is that the annalist sees the real war as that between Llywelyn and Henry III. Such a war was perfectly cognizable to an Irish writer of the thirteenth century, a baronial reform movement perhaps a little less so.

It was, of course, the high profile adopted by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd on the Montfortian side which helped to ensure that the barons of the Welsh march remained royalist. Conversely, though, the royalism of the Anglo-Irish baronage should have pushed the native Irish into the reformers' camp, at least empathetically, though no overt sympathy is discernible in Irish sources. The Scottish chronicle of Melrose is a good deal more sympathetic, and has a lengthy account of the gruesome dismembering of Simon de Montfort's corpse after Evesham, which concludes:

...[another] foot was sent to Llywelyn, the prince of the Welsh, who had entered into a treaty with Simon the subject-matter of which has been open to suspicion, and on which I do not touch on account of the evil surmises that are afloat respecting it...Now, because Simon had promised to give his daughter to Llywelyn ...(who did indeed marry her afterwards) it was for this very reason that the other foot of the former was sent as a present to the latter: and this was done as an insult to both the one and the other of them, that by this compliment the prince [of the Welsh] might perceive how much the English hated him for his connexion with this Simon.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 161; 'Waverley annals' in *Annales monastici*, II, 365.

<sup>90</sup> Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 732.

<sup>91</sup> *ALCé* s.a. 1264.

<sup>92</sup> Trans. Joseph Stevenson, *The church historians of England*, IV, pt. i (London, 1856), 227.

On the whole, however, Llywelyn benefited from his liaison with de Montfort, and his strengthened position as a result was recognized in the very favourable terms accorded him in the Treaty of Montgomery signed in September 1267.

On the other hand, the ending of the barons' war freed the Anglo-Irish magnates for activity in Ireland, and the Irish began to feel the brunt of their assault. In the next few years the pages of the annals are full of warfare between both sides. Standing as it does in such stark contrast to the relative quiet in the country during the headier days of the barons' war in England, one is tempted to conclude that a prime factor in the increasing unrest was the return to Ireland of the Anglo-Irish barons themselves, so that by 1270 an Anglo-Irish chronicler is reporting that 'quasi omnes Hibernici guerraverunt'.<sup>93</sup> It was Walter de Burgh who initiated the warfare when he 'made a great raid on' Áed Ó Conchobair in 1267.<sup>94</sup> Ó Conchobair, in spite of the severe illness that dogged him at this time, defeated them in open battle, but again this took place only because 'the foreigners of Ireland challenged' him to meet them.<sup>95</sup> It was perhaps as a result of Áed's successes that Robert d'Ufford was sent to Ireland as justiciar in the following year: the Irish annals report his purpose as being 'to order and rectify Ireland', and immediately tell us that he took advantage of Áed Ó Conchobair's infirmity by bringing an army of the colonists to Connacht, where they built a castle at Roscommon.<sup>96</sup> Just how ineffective their efforts were in the face of Ó Conchobair at his brilliant best was demonstrated in 1270 when he obtained one of the greatest victories of his career at the battle of Áth in Chip; and between this year and the next the annals list nine different castles which he either demolished or burned.<sup>97</sup>

Áth in Chip was probably the signal to try more desperate measures. When a new justiciar arrived in Ireland in the autumn of the year, he was accompanied by a contingent of Welsh mercenaries.<sup>98</sup> This may be the first instance of their employment by the government in Ireland since the reign of King John. Their arrival in Ireland was a harbinger of things to come during the reign of John's remarkable grandson, Edward I. When he succeeded to the throne of England on 16 November 1272 a new era began in the affairs of the Irish Sea region.

<sup>93</sup> Robin Flower, 'The Kilkenny chronicle in Cotton MS Vespasian BX1', *Analecta Hibernica*, 2 (1931), 332.

<sup>94</sup> *AC* s.a. 1267.

<sup>95</sup> *AC* s.a. 1268.

<sup>96</sup> *do chorugad* ḡ *do certagad na hErenn*: *AC* s.a. 1269.

<sup>97</sup> *AC* s.a. 1270, 1271. *AU* says of Áth in Chip, perhaps anachronistically, that 'no greater battle-rout was ever given by the Gaidil to the foreigners in Ireland previously', though as such the battle fails to get a mention in Otway-Ruthven's *History of medieval Ireland*.

<sup>98</sup> *CDI*, II, 890.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FROM THE CONQUEST OF WALES TO THE BRUCE INVASION, 1272-1318

In any survey of Ireland's relations with its Celtic neighbours, the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries merit special attention. For the countries concerned this period was anguished and traumatic, culminating in the Edwardian conquest of Wales, the first Scottish war of independence, and the extraordinary invasion of Ireland under the new Bruce royal house of Scotland in 1315. The upheavals of these years are the subject of this chapter, in which each of these three cataclysmic episodes will be examined for the light they throw on relations between the Celtic countries in the age.



## *The conquest of Wales*

On 2 August 1274, Edward I, the returned crusader, landed at Dover. It may be unfair to say that from that point onwards he and the prince of Wales, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, were edging towards war, but trouble was brewing. The immediate *casus belli* was Llywelyn's refusal to render homage and fealty for his principality, but his reasons for so behaving are complex, and are the real explanation for the breakdown in relations that led eventually to war.<sup>1</sup> Part of the problem concerned the vigorous policies of certain marcher lords, principally Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford (though his grandson of the same name who shortly succeeded him was the real offender), and Roger Mortimer of Wigmore. Within months of the Treaty of Montgomery, de Clare began building the fortress of Caerffili in his lordship of Glamorgan; Llywelyn understandably saw this as a threat to his new-found authority and tore it to the ground in 1270, though work on re-building it began almost immediately, and ultimately Llywelyn lost out in the tussle.<sup>2</sup> North of Glamorgan, Brecon was held by the de Bohun earldom of Hereford, the heir to which, the young Humphrey de Bohun, led a violent and substantially successful campaign to undermine Llywelyn's authority there and to coax his vassals from their allegiance to the Welsh prince.<sup>3</sup> Further north still, in Maelienydd in the middle march, the long-standing rivalry between Llywelyn and Roger Mortimer erupted into confrontation, with Llywelyn claiming that the latter infringed the Treaty of Montgomery by building the castle of Cefnlllys.<sup>4</sup> The cumulative effect of these three sets of encroachments was to convince Llywelyn that the terms of the treaty (as he interpreted them) were being infringed, with the connivance of the royal government.

It is interesting to note that all three of Llywelyn's principal marcher opponents had significant landed interests in Ireland, and it is worth considering whether it may be wrong to isolate their entanglements with Llywelyn in the march, from the early 1270s, and which ultimately forced a war there, from events in Leinster at the same time. De Clare, as lord of Kilkenny, had the most substantial interests in Ireland, having succeeded to his mother's fifth share of the Marshal lordship of Leinster.<sup>5</sup> Both the de Bohun and Mortimer families' interests in Leinster were in right of wives who were granddaughters of William Marshal: the de Bohuns held Carnew on the borders of Wicklow and Wexford, and Aghaboe in County Laois (Humphrey de Bohun granted them to his brother Gilbert on his succession to the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 326-30; David Stephenson, 'Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and the struggle for the principality of Wales, 1258-1282', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, 1983, 36-47 (at p. 44).

<sup>2</sup> J.E. Lloyd, 'Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and the lordship of Glamorgan', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 6th ser., 13 (1913), 56-64.

<sup>3</sup> William Rees, 'The medieval lordship of Brecon', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, 1915-16, 165-244 (at pp. 196-9); Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 322.

<sup>4</sup> J. Beverley Smith, 'The Middle March in the thirteenth century', *BBCS*, 24 (1970-72), 77-93.

<sup>5</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 90-97; Michael Altshul, *A baronial family in medieval England: the Clares, 1217-1314* (Baltimore, 1965), *passim*.

earldom in 1275); the Mortimers' acquisition centred on the important castle and manor of Dunamase in County Laois.<sup>6</sup> It is this Leinster connexion common to all three families that interests us, because it is a remarkable fact that Leinster first emerged as a trouble-spot for the Dublin government at the same point when tensions began to mount in the march.<sup>7</sup> The first ever full-scale expedition against the Irish of the Wicklow mountains took place in 1274: royal service was probably proclaimed - it was led by the new justiciar, Geoffrey de Geneville, lord of Trim and of Ewias Lacy in the south-east march, and the sheriff of Limerick was among those captured in Glenmalure by the Irish - but it was an embarrassing failure.<sup>8</sup> What is most remarkable about this revolt is that it marks the revitalization of the ancestral kingdom of Leinster, under of the leadership of Muirchertach Mac Murchada and his energetic brother Art; they emerge as leaders of the revolt, exploiting the preoccupations of the Anglo-Irish barons with events across the Irish Sea (including their immediate overlord Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, who was lord of Chepsow and Nether Went and of extensive estates in Carlow, Kildare and Wexford, and William de Valence who held Pembroke and Wexford, and the important manor of Odagh in County Kilkenny).<sup>9</sup>

That the Dublin government took the situation in Leinster very seriously indeed is evident from the fact that when the justiciar heard in February 1275 that Edward I proposed 'a metre conseil por amender lestat de la terre [of Ireland]' at his Easter parliament, de Geneville wrote back saying that even this short delay was too great, that the country had further deteriorated and more immediate action was necessary.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there was another campaign against the rebels later that year, when the 'army of Tristeldermot' (now Castledermot, Co. Kildare) was proclaimed,<sup>11</sup> which succeeded in capturing the king of Leinster, Muirchertach Mac Murchada, at Norragh in County Kildare,<sup>12</sup> whereupon his brother Art took over leadership of the Leinster rebels. Perhaps the most ambitious of the

<sup>6</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 104-6. For a discussion of the transmarine possessions of certain Anglo-Irish families, see J.R.S. Phillips, 'The Anglo-Norman nobility', in *The English in medieval Ireland*, ed. James Lydon (R.I.A., Dublin, 1984), 87-104.

<sup>7</sup> There is some evidence that Leinster was in Llywelyn's thoughts at this time, or at least that he appreciated the need to neutralize the potential of the Anglo-Irish colonists there for use as levers against him. One of the thorns in his side was his brother Rhodri, and on 12 April 1272 the latter formally renounced all claim to a share of Gwynedd, in return for 1000 marks in order to marry a daughter of John le Botiller, a member of a powerful Anglo-Irish family (For whom, see *Cal. close rolls*, I, 506; *CDI*, II, pp. 34, 189). It has been doubted that the marriage ever took place (Lloyd, *History of Wales*, II, 702), but Rhodri did receive at least two instalments totalling 150 marks by the year 1280 (see *Dictionary of Welsh biography*, s.n. Rhodri ap Gruffydd; cf. Edward Owen, 'Owain Lawgoch - Yeuain de Galles: some facts and suggestions', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, 1899-1900, 6-105 (at pp. 28-30)).

<sup>8</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 318; *36th P.R.I. rep D.K.*, 37; for events in Leinster in these years, see Robin Frame, 'The justiciar and the murder of the Mac Murroughs in 1282' (Select documents XXIX), *IHS*, 18 (1972-3), 223-30; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 14-20; J.F. Lydon, 'A land of war', in *NHI*, II, 256-60.

<sup>9</sup> See Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 80-90; Eric St J. Brooks, *Knights fees in Counties Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny* (I.M.S., Dublin 1950).

<sup>10</sup> *Documents on the affairs of Ireland before the King's Council*, ed. G.O. Sayles (I.M.S., Dublin, 1979), no. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *36th P.R.I. rep D.K.*, 46.

<sup>12</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 318.

campaigns of these years took place in 1276, when de Geneville brought 2,000 men from his lordship of Trim and Maurice fitz Maurice brought troops from Connacht.<sup>13</sup> The expedition was led by the latter's son-in-law, Thomas de Clare, younger brother of Gilbert, earl of Gloucester, one of those responsible for pushing Llywelyn over the brink. The remarkable victory of Mac Murchada over such odds is delighted in by the 'Clonmacnoise' annalist:

There arose great contention and warrs betweene the lord Deputy of Ireland and mcMurrogh king of Leinster. mcMurrogh gave a great overthrow to the Deputy & killed many of his army and wounded himself grievously. mcMurrogh alsoe took Hostages of the Englishmen and caused them to eat their horses in Gleann for famine.<sup>14</sup>

Coming as it did just when hostilities were about to open in Wales, this reverse suffered by Edward I's forces in Ireland must have come as consoling news to Llywelyn.

It would, of course, be dangerous to speculate on a symbiotic association between the Leinster war and events in Wales. However, no part of Ireland was physically nearer to Wales or more closely bound up with the fortunes of the marcher lords as a result of the latter's shared stake in both regions. Certain it is that the bloody happenings in the Wicklow massif would have been noted in Snowdonia - during the 1276 campaign the ports of Wicklow and Arklow were both heavily defended as part of the manoeuvres against the rebels,<sup>15</sup> and one can well imagine news of developments there being brought in merchant ships across the Irish Sea - and their implications were no doubt carefully weighed up by the Welsh. They would have noted too the disaster that befell Thomas de Clare when a campaign against the 'enemies' of Slieve Bloom ended up with his men having to eat their own horses to survive,<sup>16</sup> and Llywelyn would surely delight in the 'grievous and continuous costs about the defence of his [Irish] lands' which Roger Mortimer incurred at this point, and which meant that he and his tenants at Dunamase in County Laois had to be excused in January 1278 from contributing to a subsidy towards the costs of the war.<sup>17</sup>

Late in 1276 Edward I, in effect, declared war on Llywelyn: feudal summonses were issued in December 1276, for a muster to take place at Worcester on 1 July 1277, and by November the war was over. Ireland's involvement in that first Welsh war was limited in the extreme and the military participation of Anglo-Irishmen was minimal.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps as a result, native Irish chroniclers are strangely silent on the subject. Part of the reason for the failure of the Irish colony to help out in the campaign is that while Edward was in Wales in 1277 conducting a blitzkrieg against Llywelyn, his deputy in Ireland was engaged in a remarkably similar exercise less than 100 miles away against Mac Murchada in Wicklow. It is an

<sup>13</sup> *CDI*, II, 1389.

<sup>14</sup> *AClon* s.a. 1276.

<sup>15</sup> *36th P.R.I.rep. D.K.*, 37, 41.

<sup>16</sup> 'Kilkenny chronicle', ed. Flower, s.a. 1277; it may, however, have taken place in or before 1276 (*36th P.R.I.rep.D.K.*, 33). The fact that *AClon* has the justiciar's men eating their horses in Glenmalure in 1276 suggests that there is some confusion in the tradition.

<sup>17</sup> *Cal. close rolls, 1272-9*, 435; Lydon, 'A land of war', 264.

<sup>18</sup> See Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 155-9.

extraordinary indication of the cross purposes at which king and deputy were operating to find that at the very point when the former was writing to Ireland seeking supplies from the colony for his use in Wales, the Irish justiciar sent a messenger to the king's council requesting him to send 2,000 Welshmen who would be settled in Ireland, and whom the justiciar could use when he needed them 'to go against the Irish'.<sup>19</sup> Edward's main army entered Wales from Chester in late July 1277, was at Rhuddlan by late August and at Degannwy by the end of the month; he was effectively mounting a siege of Snowdonia, with Llywelyn's men being encircled and their food supplies cut off. No major engagement took place but the pressure on Llywelyn was such that less than ten weeks later he agreed to terms.<sup>20</sup> We are not so well informed as to details of the campaign in Ireland by Edward's new deputy, Robert d'Ufford, but it took place before Michaelmas of that year. Contingents came from many parts of Ireland, led by the justiciar and Thomas de Clare, and assembled at the campaign-base at Castlekevin in County Wicklow at about the same time that the royal army was making its way into north Wales. If it followed the pattern set by the expedition in the previous year, the rebels were then encircled by the placing of wards at various locations in the foothills, and were isolated in their mountain fastness at Glenmalure,<sup>21</sup> again closely paralleling the tactics then being put into effect against the Welsh rebels in Snowdonia. The latter laid down their arms on November 9; within weeks, the justiciar of Ireland was reporting to Edward that 'the thieves who were in Glenmalure had departed'.<sup>22</sup> After Llywelyn's surrender, Edward began building new castles at Rhuddlan, Flint, Aberystwyth and Builth.<sup>23</sup> When the Irish were forced out of Glenmalure, Newcastle Mc Kynegan was re-built and work began on strengthening the defences of Castlekevin.<sup>24</sup>

The correspondence between both campaigns is significant. The royal campaign against Wales was, appropriately, much more elaborate and a great deal more costly than that of the king's deputy in the Irish colony, and the castle-building programme that followed was on a scale found hardly anywhere else in Europe, let alone Ireland. The difference in scale can be easily accounted for: far greater resources were available for the Welsh campaign since Ireland was still expected to fend for its own defence; the royal ire had been roused by Llywelyn, royal authority challenged, the conventions of diplomacy flouted in a way that no one Irish lord had done, and this singularity of target was crucial. Edward knew what needed to be done in

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<sup>19</sup> 'Remembrance ke le rei envoe a la iustice en Irlande ii m. Gualays pur feffer (i.e. 'to enfief?') en la terre le rei ke la iustice les put avoir quant il eust mester pur aler sur les Irreis': P.R.O. Chancery Misc. 10/13/18; printed in Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland before the King's Council*, no. 19. The memorandum can be dated to the first half of 1277 (see A.J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The request of the Irish for English law, 1277-80', *IHS*, 6 (1948-9), 265-6; Aubrey Gwynn, 'Edward I and the proposed purchase of English law for the Irish, c. 1276-80', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 5th ser., 10 (1960), 122.

<sup>20</sup> See J.E. Morris, *The Welsh wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), 126-35.

<sup>21</sup> Lydon, 'A land of war', 258; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 18; Otway-Ruthven, *History of medieval Ireland*, 202.

<sup>22</sup> *CDI*, II, 1400.

<sup>23</sup> See J.G. Edwards, 'Edward I's castle building in Wales', *Proc. British Academy*, 32 (1946), 13-81.

<sup>24</sup> See the two important papers by G.H. Orpen, in *JRSAI*, 38 (1908), 17-27 (on Castlekevin), 126-40 (on Newcastle Mc Kynegan).

Wales; no one as yet quite knew what the solution was to the mounting crisis in Ireland. But leaving all such considerations aside, the fact is that from the very moment of his accession Edward I was faced with a stern challenge to his authority from Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and an array of other Welsh lords under him; at the same time, at the very heart of his Irish colony, the environs of Dublin itself were being threatened by a confederacy of Leinster lords under the banner of the traditional overkings of Leinster and Dublin, the Meic Murchada. The grievances of Welsh and Irish were similar - indeed, the same few individuals were the cause of distress to both. Their actions were similar, if conventional - the attempt to galvanize widespread unrest; the launching of raids on the plains to harass the settler communities in the region, before withdrawal to a safe haven in the uplands; by all accounts, an unusually unified effort to undermine the sometimes fragile hold of the king and his barons on their frontier lordships. And the latter's response in both Ireland and Wales was, as we have seen, so closely aligned as to suggest that they viewed both wars in the same light, attempted the same remedy in both, applied the lessons learned in one to the prosecution of the other, and saw them, however inaccurately, as a common menace. Hence, in November 1276, after the forces of his Irish government had suffered their severest setback yet in the Wicklow mountains, and when his brinkmanship with Llywelyn had run its inevitable course, Edward I wrote to Philip of France, referring to 'our wars of Ireland and Wales which have lately broken out'.<sup>25</sup> They are two separate wars, but Welsh and Irish have a common complaint and a common foe; the English were surely worried that they might make common cause. We have no evidence that they did during the 1277 war, but it is almost certainly the case that they took solace from each other's successes, if only because of the tremendous opportunity offered on such occasions by their opponents' distraction elsewhere.

The correlation between events in Wales and Leinster continues beyond 1277. With the defeat of both Llywelyn and the Leinster lords towards the end of that year, things were relatively quiet in both regions for a number of years; at least, the appearance of calm prevailed. The Meic Murchada were still considered a danger. Their overlord, Roger Bigod, as marshal of England, had headed the feudal host which assembled at Worcester in the summer of 1277 to confront Llywelyn, and two years later he visited his Irish estates in the attempt to sort out the problem of the Meic Murchada, being urged by the justiciar to 'deal with them tactfully, lest any disturbance of the king's peace be plotted by them'.<sup>26</sup> Muirchertach and Art Mac Murchada spent most of this time in custody, and it was Bigod's intention to negate their contribution to the prevailing unrest by removing them from Ireland altogether, rather in the way that Gilbert de Clare, having taken prisoner the last native ruler of Senghenydd at Cardiff

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<sup>25</sup> *Treaty rolls preserved in the Public Record Office*, ed. Pierre Chaplais, 2 vols (1955-72), I, no. 153.

<sup>26</sup> Frame, 'Murder of the Mac Murroughs', 224.

in 1267, sent him for safe keeping over to Kilkenny.<sup>27</sup> It is not known if the brothers did spend any time in exile: Muirchertach spent at least part of the period 1280-81 in custody in Roger Mortimer's castle of Dunamase.<sup>28</sup> But, in any case, a decision was soon made to find a more permanent solution to the problem and, on 21 July 1282, at Arklow, Muirchertach and Art were murdered,<sup>29</sup> 'a politically motivated crime, planned by the justiciar', Stephen de Fulbourne.<sup>30</sup> Robin Frame has observed that the 'peace of Leinster depended, in the justiciar's view, on neutralizing the traditional leaders of the Irish, thus depriving the septs of the focus they needed if their discontent were to be welded into cohesive opposition'.<sup>31</sup> The timing of the assassinations may be worth examining. The Munster 'Inisfallen' annalist is unusually fulsome in his praise of these two Leinster princes, and it is noteworthy that his next entry is a description of the Welsh war which followed the revolt that broke out there at Easter (the first mention of Wales in that chronicle for twenty-five years): 'A great war between the king of England and the king of Wales in this year, so that innumerable people were killed by them on both sides, and it is calculated that more English were killed than Welsh'. We may suspect that the annalist is only too happy to tell us that the Welsh seem to be getting the better of their opponents, because this time we know for certain that there is a connexion between the Welsh revolt and subsequent events in Ireland.

We have the testimony of a man in a position to know, Thomas fitz Maurice, head of the Desmond Geraldines. He had very extensive holdings in Waterford, Limerick, and Kerry, and stated (in a letter to the chancellor of England, Robert Burnell, bishop of Bath and Wells) during the course of the 1282-3 war that 'propter guerram Wallie Hybernici in partibus Hybernie magis sunt elati quam consueuerant et quidam moti sunt de guerra et quidam prompti sunt ad guerram mouendam'.<sup>32</sup> The value of this letter has not gone unnoticed,<sup>33</sup> but for our purposes its significance can hardly be underestimated. In examining the correlation between periods of warfare in Wales and Ireland in the thirteenth century, one can begin to suspect a certain interdependence or reciprocity, but must almost always grapple in vain for a clear contemporaneous statement of the fact. Here we have one. The effect of the general rising which broke out in Wales on 22 March 1282, led initially by Llywelyn's brother Dafydd, later by the prince himself, was, according to this eye-witness, to make the Irish more *elatus* than usual - exalted, proud, haughty, perhaps. Some of them *moti sunt de guerra*, were moved

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<sup>27</sup> 'Captus est Griffinus ap Reys in castro Kerdiviae postea missus ad Kilkenni ad incarcerationandum': 'Chronicle of the thirteenth century. MS. Exchequer Domesday', printed in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 3rd ser., 8 (1862), 272-83 (at p. 282).

<sup>28</sup> Frame, 'Murder of the Mac Murrroughs', 225.

<sup>29</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 319.

<sup>30</sup> Frame, 'Murder of the Mac Murrroughs', 227.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Facsimiles of national manuscripts of Ireland*, ed. J.T. Gilbert, 4 vols (Dublin, 1874-84), II, plate lxxvi, 2; *CDI*, III, 366.

<sup>33</sup> Lydon, 'A land of war', 241.

to war, others *prompti sunt ad guerram mouendam*, were ready, inclined to make war. A clearer statement of the effects on the Irish of the stirring news from Wales would be hard to find. We can place reliance on fitz Maurice's testimony. Granted his purpose in writing was to explain his reasons for not immediately going to England to render homage for his lands now that he had come of age; but he did not need to use the effects of the Welsh war as an excuse. He had a good reason for not leaving Ireland: as he goes on to explain, the magnates of Ireland had requested him to take part in a campaign against the Irish in the coming winter,<sup>34</sup> and he sought permission merely to comply dutifully with this. There seems, on the whole, little reason not to take his statement at face value. It is a vital revelation of the effects of the Welsh uprising on the Irish. At the very least it reveals a perception current among the colonists in Ireland that the Celtic peoples took heart from each other's successes, and attempted to emulate them, and that, therefore, an insurrection in one of the Celtic countries was likely to lead to a similar outburst elsewhere. The disclosure contained in Thomas fitz Maurice's letter must be one of the cornerstones of any discussion of the effects of the Welsh wars of this age on Ireland.

The scale of the reaction in Ireland to the news from Wales, as described by fitz Maurice, is all the more remarkable in view of the critical situation that already prevailed there, so that one can well understand his disquiet. The preceding year, 1281, for instance, had been summed up by the 'Inisfallen' chronicler in these words: 'Great and general war between the foreigners and the Irish, so that between them many people were slain, and many depredations committed'. It was at about this time that the Anglo-Irish archdeacon of Meath stated in a letter to the English chancellor, clearly indicating with which side his own sympathies lay, that 'the Irish are hostile to the English and cease not to disturb their peace. Those who govern do not know how to conduct themselves with modesty. They always strive with tyrannical domination to tread on those subject to them'.<sup>35</sup> He was describing the careers of men like Conchobar son of Domnall Bregach Ó Máel Sechlainn who, at his death in 1277, was lauded by an Irish annalist as 'he that most warred with englishmen in his owen tyme, a second Guairy for bounty, and a lyon for strength, and a tyger for fierceness in tyme of enterprisers (*sic*) and onsets, & one hoped to be King of Ireland if he were suffered by the English',<sup>36</sup> or Taichlech Ó Dubda, king of the Uí Fiachrach Muaide in County Mayo, who, when slain by an Anglo-Irishman in 1282, was described as 'the best man for generosity and valour, for striving and struggling in defence of his patrimony against foreigners and marauders'.<sup>37</sup> This emphasis on the duty of the Gaelic lord to act as defender of his 'dúthaig

<sup>34</sup> For which, see *AI* s.a. 1283.

<sup>35</sup> *CDI*, III, 142. For a brief discussion, see Aubrey Gwynn, 'Nicholas Mac Mail Íosa, archbishop of Armagh (1272-1303)', in *Féil-sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill*, ed. John Ryan (Dublin, 1940), 394-405 (at p.400).

<sup>36</sup> *AClon* s.a. 1277.

<sup>37</sup> '...in fer rob ferr enech ꝛ engram, robo mo cendairec ꝛ continn re gallaib ꝛ re danaraib ima duthaig ica ditin': *AC*; *ALCé*; *AClon* s.a. 1282.

(patrimony)' in the face of foreign aggression explains the contemporary actions of Domnall Ruadh Mac Carthaig, king of Desmumu (or Desmond), who in 1280 had made peace with rivals in his own dynasty, so that 'all were at war with the foreigners',<sup>38</sup> and who in the following year intervened successfully in the Tuadmumu (or Thomond) succession dispute: the less than impartial 'Inisfallen' chronicler describes him as '*comhairlighteoir Herean* (counsellor of Ireland)' and says that he sent a messenger and letters to the Uí Briain contestants there 'pointing out that they were [only] wasting Ireland and their own patrimony (*gu rabadar i cur Héran acus a ndidhchi* [i.e. ndúithche] *féin amudhu*)'; they agreed to follow his advice, and he spent three weeks in Tuadmumu, where he brought about peace and divided the kingdom between both rivals, 'and he came back to his own land in triumph and with good wishes'.<sup>39</sup>

It was in these circumstances and in the following year, on July 21, that Muirchertach and Art Mac Murchada were 'treacherously slain by the foreigners in violation of the peace of the king of England',<sup>40</sup> and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that Thomas fitz Maurice's statement reveals the motivation of the justiciar in ordering the murders. The Welsh revolt broke out exactly four months earlier, when Dafydd ap Gruffudd attacked Roger Clifford in his castle of Hawarden. The event is reported in the 'Kilkenny' chronicle, which also, incidentally, notes that Clifford was in Ireland in 1270.<sup>41</sup> When Edward I responded to the events at Hawarden, the lord of Kilkenny, Gilbert de Clare, was appointed commander of the forces opposing the Welsh in South Wales, Roger Mortimer took charge in the middle march, and Humphrey de Bohun's role as constable of England was acknowledged by a prominent role in the campaign that followed.<sup>42</sup> The first serious defeat of the English army in the field took place on June 17 when Gilbert de Clare was routed at Llandeilo Fawr. Among those killed was the son of William de Valence, lord of Wexford.<sup>43</sup> After this defeat the English were in disarray, paralyzed into inactivity, and Llywelyn himself came to the fore as leader of the revolt, instilling fresh heart into the men of Wales and spurring the insurgents into further activity.<sup>44</sup> Thomas fitz Maurice's statement is evidence that the Irish too were taking heart from Welsh successes. Exactly five weeks after the Welsh victory at Llandeilo, Muirchertach and Art Mac Murchada were murdered on the express instructions of the chief governor of Ireland, and the culprits generously rewarded. The assassinations have all the hallmarks of a panic reaction; a tense atmosphere prevailed in Leinster at this point, and one suspects that the defeat of the lord of Kilkenny, and the death of the lord of Wexford's son in the same battle, contributed in no small measure to that tension.

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<sup>38</sup> *AI* s.a. 1280.

<sup>39</sup> *AI* s.a. 1281.

<sup>40</sup> *AI* s.a. 1282.

<sup>41</sup> 'Kilkenny chronicle', ed. Flower, 322-3.

<sup>42</sup> See Morris, *Welsh wars*, 155-8.

<sup>43</sup> *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1282; Morris, *Welsh wars*, 166.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 266-7.



The brutal murder of the Meic Murchada proved extraordinarily successful. As Frame noted, by depriving the Leinster Irish of a leadership capable of making an appeal to ancient loyalty, the dissension in the province lacked focus. The decade or more of comparable peace that prevailed in the region after their demise (so that another full-scale expedition was not needed until 1295) clearly shows that Muirchertach and Art had been able to tap an emotive upsurge among the Gaelic population of south-east Leinster, and channel it into concerted unrest. Their removal, therefore, paid rich dividends. It is possible that the lesson learnt in Leinster in the summer of 1282 passed back across the Irish Sea. Muirchertach, we have seen, had been in custody in 1281 in Roger Mortimer's castle at Dunamase. Mortimer had been a long-standing and very bitter opponent of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (after the battle of Evesham, Mortimer's wife had been sent as a trophy the head of Llywelyn's ally, Simon de Montfort), but in 1281 Roger made a treaty of mutual support with the Welsh prince,<sup>45</sup> though Mortimer's motives are unclear and nothing came of it. Roger Mortimer died on 26 October 1282; a little over six weeks later, his old foe Llywelyn, was also dead, killed in a mysterious encounter with the English which more than one contemporary source explicitly (as in the chronicles) or implicitly (as in the words of Archbishop Pecham) ascribes to treachery on the part of Roger Mortimer's sons.<sup>46</sup> Had they learnt the lesson of the July assassinations at Arklow? The effect, in any case, was much the same. Llywelyn's death was a disaster for Welsh independence: 'Then all Wales was cast to the ground', as the Welsh chronicler put it.<sup>47</sup> Only Llywelyn could hope to unite Wales. Without him the tables were turned: the invading army had the whiff of victory in its nostrils, and continued inexorably to wear down their Welsh opponents, now led by Llywelyn's brother Dafydd, until the latter's own capture on 28 June 1283. The Welsh prince was torn to pieces by horses, hung and beheaded, his heart and intestines removed, his quarters were despatched to four English towns, and his head placed on the Tower of London alongside his brother's,<sup>48</sup> where we may suppose Brian Ó Néill's was more than two decades earlier.

The deaths of the Welsh princes and the collapse of their principality are noted by the Munster chronicler (as usual, events in Wales go unrecorded by Gaelic annalists in the northern half of Ireland) in the following terms: 'The king of Wales was killed by the king of England, and David his brother took the kingship after him and was killed immediately in that year, and the kingship of Wales was taken by the king of England after that (*acus rigi Breatan do gauail do ríg Sachxan 'na deagydh sen*)'.<sup>49</sup> If this chronicler is writing contemporaneously

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<sup>45</sup> *Litere Wallie*, 99-100; for a discussion, see *ibid.*, lxii; Stephenson, 'Llywelyn ap Gruffydd and the struggle for Welsh independence', 45.

<sup>46</sup> For a full discussion, see Llinos Beverley Smith, 'The death of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd: the narratives reconsidered', *WHR*, 11 (1982), 200-13.

<sup>47</sup> *Brenhinedd y Saesson* s.a. 1282.

<sup>48</sup> See Ralph Maud, 'David, the last prince of Wales', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion*, 1968, 43-62 (at p. 62).

<sup>49</sup> *AI* s.a. 1283.

with the events he describes (and that is the accepted wisdom), he appears to be in no doubt about the finality of Edward's achievement. The king's intentions, in his own words, to 'put an end finally to the matter that he has now commenced of putting down the malice of the Welsh'<sup>50</sup> were, therefore, common knowledge in Ireland, and their import fully appreciated; indeed, the annalist's remarks smack of the very wording of the Statute of Wales (or Rhuddlan) promulgated on 19 March 1284, with its declaration that Divine Providence had 'wholly and entirely transferred under our proper dominion the land of Wales with its inhabitants, heretofore subject to us in feudal right...and has annexed and united the same into the Crown of the...realm (of England)'.<sup>51</sup>

Such regular transmission of information across the Irish Sea at this point was, no doubt, partly the consequence of a greater involvement by the Anglo-Irish in the 1282-3 war than had been the case in 1276-7. As in the earlier case, Edward I's awareness of the troubled state of Ireland was such that he did not send military writs to the inhabitants seeking their participation in his conquest, but we know the identities of some Anglo-Irish who did, including Thomas de Mandeville of Ulster; he built on the ugly precedent established in recent days in Wales and Ireland by having the king issue from Rhuddlan on 14 February 1283 a mandate to the Irish justiciar to pay 'what is due to him for the head of O'Donnell, proclaimed to be cut off, and which Thomas caused to be borne to the exchequer in Dublin'.<sup>52</sup> Evidence is not lacking of the use to which Ireland was put as a source of supply of provisions for the campaign.<sup>53</sup> We are fortunate, for example, in having the full text of the treasurer's accounts for Roger Bigod's lands in Carlow, Wexford and Kildare for the period of the second Welsh war, which record such things as the expense of making canvas bags for transporting the earl's treasure to Wales (£200 was sent to him at Aberconway), the sale of large quantities of wool from the Bigod estate at Ballysax, Co. Kildare, to help finance his journey to Wales, the manufacture of iron headpieces for the earl's own use, the transport of two tuns of ale to him at Rhuddlan, and the purchase of wheat and oats from Dublin and Welsh merchants.<sup>54</sup> Contact of this kind served to make the day-to-day progress of the Welsh war both a matter of importance to a great many people living in Ireland, and a subject on which they were kept very well informed. We must add to that the presence of Welsh soldiers in Ireland in, apparently, ever increasing numbers in the aftermath of the conquest. In the autumn and early winter of 1285, for example, 76 Welsh foot and four Welsh *vintenarii*, with a constable in

<sup>50</sup> *Cal. various chancery rolls*, 275.

<sup>51</sup> Quoted in R.R. Davies, 'Law and national identity in thirteenth-century Wales', in *Welsh society and nationhood*, ed. idem, R.A. Griffiths, I.G. Jones, and K.O. Morgan (Cardiff, 1984), 68.

<sup>52</sup> *CDI*, II, 2049; cf. 2051; for his service in Wales, see *ibid.*, 2021. For other Anglo-Irish who served in Wales at this point, see *ibid.*, 2148, 2310; III, 86, 274 (pp. 74, 75).

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, *Cal. various chancery rolls*, 228, 236, 241, 246, 255, 261, 264, 266, 268, 273; and Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 159-69.

<sup>54</sup> James Mills, 'Accounts of the earl of Norfolk's estates in Ireland, 1279-1294', *JRSAI*, 22 (1892), 50-62.

charge of them, were brought from Aberconway 'to the king's service in Ireland...for the defence of that country', and stationed at the royal castles of Roscommon and Rindown.<sup>55</sup> They were needed 'for the expedition of Welshmen into Connacht against the king's enemies there',<sup>56</sup> a neat reversal of the deployment of the Irish forces of Connacht against the Welsh themselves exactly four decades earlier. Once the scare caused by the rebellion of Rhys ap Maredudd in 1287 had ended, men from Wales again made their appearance in Ireland: a group of 22 Welshmen under a certain 'Donok ap David' formed part of the garrisons at Roscommon and Rindown for the best part of a year from 1 August 1288.<sup>57</sup> These numbers are small and the expense involved relatively minor, but numbers increase considerably thereafter. The justiciar, William de Vescy, had a troop of 51 Welsh retainers in his pay throughout the summer of 1291.<sup>58</sup> During the winter there were still 48 Welshmen 'remaining in Ireland by the king's order to preserve the peace there',<sup>59</sup> and this became a standing force in the years following.<sup>60</sup>

As ever, no conclusions can be drawn about the empathy, or lack of it, of the Welsh for the Irish from the willingness of individual Welshmen to allow themselves be deployed against the latter in the armies of the Dublin government. As noted above, a far more revealing gauge is the statement of Thomas fitz Maurice that the aftershock of the Welsh quake of 1282-3 was felt in the south of Ireland. This is the sort of spontaneous outburst in response to external stimuli that may have happened in Leinster in the mid-1270s and, for that matter, we have seen in an earlier chapter what may have been another instance of it a full century earlier in 1173:<sup>61</sup> one assumes the phenomenon made more than one appearance in the intervening period. What we fail to unearth in either of the two major Welsh wars of 1277 and 1282 is evidence that the actual war itself spilled over into Ireland, as King John's dispute with his marcher barons had in 1210 or as the de Lacy and Marshal wars had done in the 1220s and 1230s. However, Ireland did fit into the picture, if only the background, when Rhys ap Maredudd broke out in revolt in 1287.

Rhys ap Maredudd was the great-grandson of the Lord Rhys of Deheubarth. His refusal to join in the Gwynedd-led native coalitions of 1277-83 meant that he remained intact, indeed, in an enhanced position, in South Wales after the conquest, being lord of almost all Cantref Mawr and a small part of Ceredigion, which he ruled from his imposing fortress at Dryslwyn. Embittered, however, by disappointment at the lack of royal favour shown him for

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<sup>55</sup> *CDI*, III, 548. *Vintenarii* are commanders of a group of twenty infantry (Sweetman has 'vintners!').

<sup>56</sup> *CDI*, III, 814.

<sup>57</sup> *CDI*, III, 683.

<sup>58</sup> *CDI*, III, 936.

<sup>59</sup> *CDI*, III, 1032.

<sup>60</sup> *CDI*, III, 1116; IV, pp. 46, 47, 83, 123, 156, 164, 169, 198, 216, 223, 239, 269, 283, 302, 326, 335, 352; V, pp. 2, 33, 107.

<sup>61</sup> See above, 51-5.

his loyalty, angry at the refusal to bestow upon him Dinefwr, the ancient capital of Deheubarth, agrieved by what he saw as the harassment of royal officials, he broke out in rebellion in June 1287.<sup>62</sup> In 1285, Rhys had married a sister of the lord of Abergavenny, John de Hastings, who since 1283 had held the barony of Ballyadams in County Laois.<sup>63</sup> Among the witnesses to de Hastings's charter to Rhys on the occasion of the marriage were the lords of Kilkenny and Wexford, Gilbert de Clare and William de Valence. Both de Clare and Roger Bigod, the lord of Carlow, were related to Rhys's mother, a niece of the last Marshal earl of Pembroke, a fact commented on at the time.<sup>64</sup> Rhys's insurrection was confined to south-west Wales, and had fizzled out by the end of the summer of 1287 with the seizure of Dryslwyn by the royal army. He himself, however, was not yet captured and it was said that Gilbert de Clare was among the marcher lords pressing for a truce about Michaelmas.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, ironically, since his revolt was directed primarily against the intrusion of royal officials, there may have been a certain sympathy for Rhys's cause among similarly resentful marcher barons: the native Welsh, on the other hand, had little sympathy for him, 'a Welsh lord who had never responded to the call of patriotism'.<sup>66</sup> In the early weeks of 1289 Rhys ap Maredudd was still at large, and Thomas Wykes, our best-informed English commentator on the rising, has it that it was rumoured that he thought of going to Ireland with the earl of Gloucester's approval and lingering in refuge in the earl's lands there (*annuente comite Gloucestriae ut vulgariter dicebatur, partes Hyberniae adeundas putavit, ut ibidem in terris comitis supradicti tanquam speciali refugio moraretur*).<sup>67</sup> This is an extraordinary accusation, and one is tempted to take it with a pinch of salt, but early in February 1289 the deputy justiciar of North Wales was specifically instructed to ensure that Rhys was prevented from going to Ireland.<sup>68</sup> This shows that Wykes was not alone in suspecting Rhys's intentions, and that the government took seriously the possibility that he might find a welcome reception across the Irish Sea. It may be worth pointing out that the Anglo-Irish 'Kilkenny' annalist, who takes a great interest in the Irish career of Gilbert de Clare's brother Thomas, is the only Irish chronicle to record the outbreak of hostilities between the 'barones Anglie et Reysmeredic',<sup>69</sup> and that the Dublin annalist, who is very interested in the affairs of Gilbert himself at this point (recording in elaborate detail his marriage to Joan of Acre in 1290, the birth of his sons in subsequent years, and the couple's visit to Ireland in 1293), records the drawing and hanging of Rhys ap

<sup>62</sup> See J.B. Smith, 'The origins of the revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd', *BBCS*, 21 (1964-6), 151-62.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, 'Origins', 157; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, III, 105.

<sup>64</sup> R.A. Griffiths, 'The revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd, 1287-88', *WHR*, 3 (1966), 121-43 (at p. 135); *Calendar of ancient correspondence concerning Wales*, ed. J. Goronwy Edwards (Cardiff, 1935), 138-9.

<sup>65</sup> 'Chronicon vulgo dictum chronicon Thomae Wykes', ed. H.R. Luard, *Annales monastici*, IV (RS, 1869), 370-71; Griffiths, 'Rhys ap Maredudd', 134-5.

<sup>66</sup> Griffiths, 'Rhys ap Maredudd', 132; cf. 134-5.

<sup>67</sup> *Annales monastici*, IV, 311.

<sup>68</sup> *Cal. various chancery rolls*, 323.

<sup>69</sup> 'Kilkenny chronicle', ed. Flower, 333.

Maredudd at York in 1292,<sup>70</sup> the only Irish-based writer to do so. However difficult it may be to believe that a man such as Gilbert de Clare might offer shelter in his lordship of Kilkenny to a Welsh fugitive, the fact is that contemporaries felt that there was nothing improbable about a Welsh lord, with his back to the wall, looking to Ireland for a refuge of last resort, and did not doubt that there would be those in the latter country willing to succour him in his plight.

In many ways, of course, this was the quintessential, constantly recurring theme of Hiberno-Welsh relations in preceding centuries. Rhys ap Maredudd was pushed into rebellion because 'his princely pretensions were no longer compatible with the ambitions and assumptions of the new royal dispensation'.<sup>71</sup> Professor Davies has suggested that, more so than physical assaults, 'hurtful blows to his dignity'<sup>72</sup> were what pushed him over the edge. If so, Rhys, aware that his demise represented the virtual extinction of the ancient royal house of Deheubarth, must have harboured memories of other dark days his dynasty had seen in the past, yet from which it had recovered, and perhaps, therefore, he contemplated emulating the achievement of his grandfather's grandfather, Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr, who spent half a lifetime in exile in Ireland and yet returned and won back his patrimony.

Though the suppression of the revolt proved a costly enough business, there is little or no evidence that the Irish government was asked to contribute to it.<sup>73</sup> It was otherwise with the great nationwide revolt that erupted in Wales in 1294. The defence of Edward I's new regime there depended on a necklace of magnificent, though, as it transpired, rather poorly garrisoned castles. When a series of simultaneous uprisings broke out all over Wales in the autumn of 1294, it was the castles' function merely to survive as royal islands in a rebel sea until reinforcements came, and then to act as stepping-stones for the giant who would come to restore his rule. It was this all-pervading concentration on the survival of the castles that gave Ireland such a crucial role in the events of 1294-5: for the embattled castles needed to be victualled by sea, and Ireland was the obvious source of supply. Thus, almost Edward's first act on hearing of the outbreak was to order his officials in Dublin to supply foodstuffs and wine for Wales;<sup>74</sup> up to forty ships were to be seized to carry them, and criminals were to be press-ganged into service as mariners.<sup>75</sup> We are fortunate in still having the accounts of the man charged with munitioning the castles of Harlech and Cricieth, which are a vivid insight into the role played by Irish supplies, ships and seamen in their survival.<sup>76</sup> Though the number of Anglo-Irish soldiery who served in the war was negligible,<sup>77</sup> Edward I had good cause to be grateful to his transmarine colony for keeping his conquest intact.

<sup>70</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 321, cf. 320-23.

<sup>71</sup> Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 381.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>73</sup> See Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 169-70.

<sup>74</sup> *CDI*, IV, 164.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 169, 182.

<sup>76</sup> See J. Griffiths, 'Documents relating to the rebellion of Madoc, 1294-5', *BBCS*, 8 (1935-7), 147-59.

<sup>77</sup> See Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 170-78.

The Irish victualling contribution is all the more significant in view of the fact that Ireland itself was in a very disturbed state at this time. The latest twist in the long-running Geraldine-de Burgh feud, the seizure in early December 1294 of Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, by John fitz Thomas Fitzgerald, baron of Offaly, 'led to confusion throughout Ireland',<sup>78</sup> with the earl being held in custody in the latter's castle of Lea, Co. Kildare, until the following March.<sup>79</sup> The implications of this ugly row for the stability of the colony were considerable,<sup>80</sup> not least because it encouraged the Irish to make hay while the sun thus shone. The inevitable result was that about the beginning of April 1295, the Irish 'devastated Leinster, burning Newcastle and other vills'.<sup>81</sup> This attack on Newcastle Mc Kynegan was the first outbreak by the Irish of the Wicklow mountains since the murder of the Meic Murchada thirteen years earlier, and it was led by a son of Muirchertach, the slain king of Leinster. When eventually received into the king's peace in July, the terms of submission reveal that it was a widespread revolt and that 'Mauricius' had managed to enlist to his cause many of the traditional sub-kings of the province.<sup>82</sup> It is certain that the Fitzgerald-de Burgh dispute facilitated the rising, and it is possible that famine contributed to the impulse to rebel,<sup>83</sup> but it is surely an extraordinary fact that the previous Leinster war coincided almost exactly with the climactic events at the close of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's reign, and that this later war in Leinster parallels, almost exactly to the day, the course of the 1294-5 rebellion in Wales. The latter insurrection was really a series of risings in north, south, and west Wales, though their simultaneous outburst suggests that they were pre-arranged.<sup>84</sup> The revolt in Glamorgan, for instance, was specifically directed against the heavy-handed policies of Gilbert de Clare, the rebels describing it as a 'war against the earl'.<sup>85</sup> The earl in question came to Ireland in October 1293 and stayed, it appears, about a year.<sup>86</sup> No Irish source tells us what de Clare was doing in Ireland. That information is supplied by a set of English annals, which tells us that the earl, 'hearing that the magnates of Ireland (*magnates Hyberniae*) had begun cruelly to lay waste and destroy the very abundant lands which he had in Ireland, crossed over to Ireland, taking his wife, the countess, and an innumerable abundance of warlike men, and thus entirely subdued his shameless and savage enemies, some of them being killed, others driven away'.<sup>87</sup> The *magnates Hyberniae* who opposed the earl of Gloucester in 1293-4 must surely be native

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<sup>78</sup> AC s.a. 1294.

<sup>79</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 323.

<sup>80</sup> For discussion, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 113-18; Otway-Ruthven, *History of medieval Ireland*, 210-14; Lydon, 'The years of crisis, 1254-1315', in *NHI*, II, 186-7.

<sup>81</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 324.

<sup>82</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 61.

<sup>83</sup> A suggestion made in Lydon, 'A land of war', 260.

<sup>84</sup> J. Griffiths, 'The revolt of Madog ap Llywelyn, 1294-5', *Trans. Caernarvonshire Hist. Soc.*, 16 (1955), 12-24 (at p. 12).

<sup>85</sup> Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 383; Morris, *Welsh wars*, 251-2.

<sup>86</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 322, 323.

<sup>87</sup> 'Annals of Osney', in *Annales monastici*, IV, 336.

Irish lords in rebellion against the de Clares. If so, he found himself facing a war on both sides of the Irish Sea, and the Welsh insurgents who rose against him about Michaelmas 1294 must have planned to take advantage of the crisis facing him in Ireland.<sup>88</sup>

One of the first actions of the North Welsh rebels under Madog ap Llywelyn was to cross the Menai Straits from Anglesey and launch an attack on Caernarfon, centre of royal administration in the region. This was a 'classic anti-colonial revolt',<sup>89</sup> and so, having taken the town and destroyed the town walls and castle, it was with particular vengeance that the colonists' official documents housed in the exchequer were ransacked and burned.<sup>90</sup> The event took place quite soon after the initial outbreak, perhaps before the end of October 1294.<sup>91</sup> It is a curious fact that within a couple of months of this incident,<sup>92</sup> the castle of Kildare was captured and the town and surrounding district despoiled by English and Irish (probably part of the inter-baronial feud): then, however, we are told that 'Calvagh combussit rotulos et tallias comitatus'.<sup>93</sup> This was An Calbhach Ó Conchobair Failge, a lifelong thorn in the side of the English of the Leinster midlands. There is no need to think that An Calbhach, in destroying the records of the colonists' local administration, was deliberately aping the actions of Madog ap Llywelyn, even if one can assume that the exciting events in Wales were being widely reported in Ireland. What cannot be gainsaid, though, is that Madog and An Calbhach were responding to the same set of impulses, and were motivated by the same goals; perhaps one or other of them was 'more elated than usual' (to use Thomas fitz Maurice's phrase) by the news reaching them from the other shore.

Were that the case, it is likely that it was the Irish who were reacting to the stimulus of Welsh revolt. The Leinster lords' raid on Newcastle Mc Kynegan occurred in early April,<sup>94</sup> before news had yet reached them of setbacks in Welsh fortunes, in particular after King Edward began his occupation of Anglesey.<sup>95</sup> It was in mid-April that he ordered the construction of a new castle at Beaumaris. This is how the Dublin annalist reported the news: 'Edward, king of England, built the castle of Beaumaris in Venedotia, which is called the mother of Wales, and commonly Anglesey, entering it directly after Easter, and subjugating to his *imperium* the Venedotians, that is, the powerful men of Anglesey'.<sup>96</sup> After this point the rebels' cause was lost, and the same annalist reports Madog ap Llywelyn's capture in these

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<sup>88</sup> For the war in Glamorgan, see Morris, *Welsh wars*, 251-2.

<sup>89</sup> Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, 383.

<sup>90</sup> Griffiths, 'Madog ap Llywelyn', 14; idem, 'Two early ministers' accounts for North Wales', *BBCS*, 9 (1937-9), 50 and n. 3.

<sup>91</sup> Morris, *Welsh wars*, 253.

<sup>92</sup> If the chronology of the Dublin annalist is to be trusted, after the capture of the earl of Ulster on December 11 (*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 323; cf. *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 190).

<sup>93</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 323.

<sup>94</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 324.

<sup>95</sup> See Morris, *Welsh wars*, 263.

<sup>96</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 324.

terms: 'and immediately afterwards, namely, around the feast of Blessed Margaret, Madog, then the *electus* of Wales, placing himself at the king's mercy, was led to London by Lord John de Havering, and shut in the Tower, awaiting the king's mercy and will'. We know from other sources that Madog's submission occurred either on July 31 or during the first few days of August,<sup>97</sup> so the chronicler in Dublin is not quite right in placing it *circa* July 20, but it is worth noting that the Leinster rebels were formally received into the king's peace on July 19.<sup>98</sup> The coincidence is remarkable but perhaps no more than that. What is most important is the extraordinary way in which the fortunes of both Welsh and Irish ebbed and flowed together. We shall probably never know if any measure of co-ordination entered into their actions. What we can afford to suspect strongly, however, is that each side took careful view of the other's actions; they delighted in the other's successes, becoming disconsolate at their defeat. Thomas fitz Maurice's remarks have, as yet, to suffice as testimony to the former; now, with Madog's failure in 1295, we have evidence for the latter. For the first time in the Irish annals, regret is expressed about news from Wales, specifically about the immediate consequences of Edward's conquest of the Welsh. After putting down the revolt, Edward proceeded with the expedition to Gascony which his Welsh distractions had delayed, bringing troops from the conquered principality with which to flaunt his new mastery. This is how the contemporary 'Inisfallen' annalist reports it:

Ríg Saxin du thrihid (*sic*) Bhreactnach ꝓ do breith moran leiss dibh issi' Gascune cuini cotha do bhi eturru ꝓ rig Franc. Truagh amh sein, vair fae [*?cuma*] la Saxibh gidh an do thuidisse no ged as tístes.

The king of England subdued the Welsh and brought many of them with him into Gascony to the war between them and the king of France. That indeed was a pity, because the English cared not whether the [Welsh] fell there or survived.<sup>99</sup>

It is the first of several such comments by the same annalist, as we shall see, which appear to indicate that, though the light of Welsh independence may have been flickering on the point of extinction, the tempo was rising elsewhere in the Celtic lands, awareness of their common experience being, perhaps, brought into sharper focus by the news from Wales.

<sup>97</sup> 'Annals of Dunstable', *Annales monastici*, III, 387; Morris, *Welsh wars*, 265-6; Griffiths, 'Madog ap Llywelyn', 22.

<sup>98</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 61.

<sup>99</sup> *AI s.a.* 1295.



*Ireland and Scotland in the late thirteenth century*

On 20 September 1286, at Turnberry, the chief castle of the earldom of Carrick, an obscure agreement was entered into by a motley assortment of individuals.<sup>1</sup> Though we know little of the circumstances in which it was instigated, of the motivations of those involved, or of its implementation, the Turnberry 'band' reveals a lot about the relationship between Ireland and Scotland in the late thirteenth century, and, indeed, captures in microcosm something of its complexities. The parties involved were among the most important men in Ireland and Scotland, and it occurred at a very critical moment in the history of the latter kingdom, six months after the death without male heir of King Alexander III. It goes without saying, therefore, that we must treat the agreement with the utmost seriousness; yet it is oddly appropriate that it is shrouded in darkness, a fact symptomatic of our difficulties in piecing together a true picture of Ireland's dealings with Scotland in this age.

However, it is the identity of those involved and the probable purpose of their conjunction which best reveals the complex nature of that relationship: Hebridean lords joining forces with some of the most high-ranking nobles of Scotland to aid the leading Anglo-Irish magnate and an aggressive English *arriviste* to the ranks of the colonists in Ireland, in a campaign which can only have had deleterious consequences for the native rulers there. On the Scottish side were Patrick of Dunbar, earl of March, and his three sons; Walter Stewart, earl of Menteith, and his two sons; Robert Bruce, lord of Annandale, and his two sons, including Robert, earl of Carrick (father of the future king); James the Steward of Scotland and his brother, Sir John Stewart of Jedburgh; and Áengus Mór mac Domnaill of Islay and *filius ejus legitimus*, Alexander. Together they declared 'quod nos cum tota potentia nostra indeficienter adhærebimus...in omnibus negotiis suis' to Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, and Thomas de Clare, lord of Thomond, younger brother of the earl of Gloucester. They add that 'cum eis atque complicitibus suis fideliter stabimus contra omnes eis adversantes' (saving, as usual, fealty to the English king and the late Scottish king's heir). That is the extent of the commitment, with the addition of an enforcing clause to the effect that de Burgh and de Clare 'cum omnibus suis complicitibus et confederatis' may overrun and destroy all the goods of any defaulters on the Scottish side. As it stands, the pact is one-sided and offers nothing to the Scottish signatories in return for their involvement, so we may take it that there is more to the arrangement than meets the eye. Clearly a bargain was struck at Turnberry in September 1286, and the Scottish confederates could expect a *quid pro quo*. What is this likely to have been? What support were they intending to give de Burgh and de Clare, and why? And how significant is the particular alliance of individuals on the Scottish side?

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents illustrative of the history of Scotland*, ed. Joseph Stevenson 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1870), I, no. XII.

Since the confederates evidently planned a campaign in Ireland in aid of de Burgh and de Clare, the solution of the mystery lies in the Anglo-Irish colony. We must establish what it was that brought these two Anglo-Irish barons together in 1286, and why they needed the assistance of the particular Scottish accomplices who joined forces at Turnberry in September. Two things strike historians as odd about the Irish background to the arrangement. One is the very fact of de Burgh's alliance with de Clare. In the mid-1270s, Thomas de Clare had married a daughter of Maurice fitz Maurice (younger son of Maurice fitz Gerald, second baron of Offaly), and, because of the well-established feud between both families, it has been noted that this Geraldine alliance led inevitably to enmity with the de Burghs.<sup>2</sup> On the face of it, he made an unlikely bedfellow of the earl of Ulster. The second is that de Clare's base of operations was Thomond (largely located in the present County Clare), and if this is where the proposed campaign was to take place, it is difficult to envisage circumstances in which Scottish military aid might have been thought necessary. It is possible, however, to suggest an explanation.

Thomas de Clare's father-in-law, Maurice fitz Maurice, was indeed a leading opponent of the de Burghs, and the bitter feud between them since the mid-1260s is well-attested.<sup>3</sup> However, Maurice died in 1286. We do not know exactly when, but he was dead before November 10,<sup>4</sup> and, one strongly suspects, before the Turnberry band was formed on September 20. Maurice left only two daughters, de Clare's wife and her sister. At the same time, the main line of the family, by descent from Maurice's older brother (and bearing the title 'baron of Offaly'), was in trouble.<sup>5</sup> Maurice's nephew, the third baron, drowned in the Irish Sea in 1268, whereupon custody of the estate during his young son's minority was granted to Thomas de Clare. The heir, Gerald fitz Maurice, succeeded as fourth baron in the early 1280s while not yet of age, but was obviously ailing and died without offspring in 1287.<sup>6</sup> Friar Clyn calls Gerald *capitaneus Geraldinorum* and tells us that 'hereditatem suam dedit domino Johanni filio Thome, filio adwunculi sui'.<sup>7</sup> This was John fitz Thomas, son of Maurice fitz Maurice's younger brother, and now the senior surviving male Geraldine. We do not have the charter by which the fourth baron enfeoffed fitz Thomas of the barony but there is some confirmation of Clyn's statement in the letter of attorney which Gerald issued on 26 June 1287 authorizing delivery to John of seisin of his manor at Lea, Co. Laois.<sup>8</sup> John did indeed shortly succeed as fifth baron, but he also spent years buying out all the rights and claims of the various female heirs to Geraldine lands,<sup>9</sup> and ended up as the most powerful landowner in

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<sup>2</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 83-4; Aoife Nic Ghiollamhaith, 'Dynastic warfare and historical writing in North Munster, 1276-1350', *CMCS*, 2 (1981), 75; Lydon, 'A land of war', 253.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Lydon, 'The years of crisis, 1254-1315', in *NHI*, II, 183.

<sup>4</sup> *CDI*, III, 277.

<sup>5</sup> See the excellent study by G.H. Orpen, 'The FitzGeralds, barons of Offaly', *JRSAI*, 44 (1914), 99-113.

<sup>6</sup> He was dead before September 18: *CDI*, III, p. 207.

<sup>7</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, s.a. 1287.

<sup>8</sup> *The Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, ed. Gearóid Mac Niocaill (I.M.S., Dublin 1964), nos. 40,41.

<sup>9</sup> For the numerous grants and quitclaims to him of Geraldine lands in all four modern provinces, see *ibid*, *passim*.

Ireland, with the possible exception of Richard de Burgh. Hence the rivalry between the two men. But we may assume that Thomas de Clare was equally unhappy at the prospect of John fitz Thomas's succession to the title, and may have felt that he had a claim to at least part of the estate, were it established that the daughters of the first and second sons, including de Clare's wife, had a better claim than the son of the third son, John fitz Thomas.

We may speculate that it was this common antipathy to fitz Thomas that forced de Clare and de Burgh together in September 1286. But why did they need Scottish support? At his father-in-law's death Thomas de Clare succeeded to a half-share of his estate. Maurice fitz Maurice held the barony of Carbury (Co. Sligo) along with Sligo castle; in theory too he held all the land of Fir Manach along with C  el Uisce castle; and claimed all T  r Conaill.<sup>10</sup> When de Clare's sister-in-law sold off her share of the inheritance to John fitz Thomas in 1293 it consisted of a moiety of the cantred of Conmaicne C  ile (barony of Kilmaine, Co. Mayo), a moiety of the cantred of Cr  ch Cairpri (Carbury, Co. Sligo) including Sligo itself, two cantreds and two *tuatha* of T  r Conaill, a moiety of the territory surrounding Lough Erne, and seven *tuatha* of Fir Manach.<sup>11</sup> The other half of this estate is what came to Thomas de Clare in 1286, and we may suppose that when the Scottish parties to the Turnberry band promised to de Clare and de Burgh that 'in omnibus negotiis suis...fideliter stabimus contra omnes eis adversantes', they were involving themselves in the latter's attempt to set their seal on these disputed north-western territories once and for all, perhaps in the face of the opposition of John fitz Thomas, certainly at the expense of the hereditary native rulers.

Why should the Scots be willing to do so? The reigning king of T  r Conaill,   ed son of Domnall   c    Domnaill, was the stumbling block in the way of any Anglo-Irish expansion into the north-west. His father was apparently reared in fosterage in Knapdale at the landward end of Kintyre with the then rulers of the area, Clann Suibne.<sup>12</sup> His mother was a member of the same dynasty.<sup>13</sup> In the early 1260s, however, Clann Suibne were ousted from Knapdale by the Stewarts of Menteith. They sought to make a home for themselves in Ireland. The origins of Clann Suibne's territorial hold on the Fanad area of Donegal can probably be assigned to these years. Also, in 1267 Maelmuire an Spar  in Mac Suibne turned up in the Owles, the territory surrounding Clew Bay in County Mayo, was captured, and handed over to Richard de Burgh's father, in whose prison he later died.<sup>14</sup> In seeking to prevent the dispossessed native

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<sup>10</sup> *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, no. 31; by a grant of his father dated 1254x1257. The editor is surely incorrect to say (p. xii) that this is a 'Grant by Maurice son of Gerald of lands in Leinster, Connacht and Ulster to his son Maurice'; the text says that it is a grant of the lands in Carbury, etc. 'pro quieta clamancia quam michi fecit de tota terra Offalye', etc. Maurice, in other words, gave up his right to the Leinster lands in return for a grant of the lands in Sligo and Ulster.

<sup>11</sup> *Red Book of the Earls of Kildare*, no.32; see also Katharine Simms, 'The medieval kingdom of Lough Erne', *Clogher Record*, 9 (1976-8), 126-141.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, *Poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe*, no. VII, qtt. 2, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Walsh, 'O'Donnell genealogies', *Analecta Hibernica*, 8 (1938), 377.

<sup>14</sup> *AC*; *ALC  *; *AFM* s.a. 1267.

rulers of Knapdale finding a safe haven on the western seaboard of Ireland, the de Burghs were facilitating the expansionism of the Menteith Stewarts. However, the latter continued to face opposition from Clann Suibne down to the reign of Edward II. Clann Suibne were able to do so presumably from their base in Tír Conaill, backed by its powerful king, Áed Ó Domnaill. If the Turnberry band had Ó Domnaill as one of its targets, this would explain why the earl of Menteith, Walter Stewart, and his two sons, Alexander and John, were party to it.

Experience showed that the best way to undermine an Irish king was to espouse the pretensions of a rival. Áed Ó Domnaill had a half-brother, Toirrdelbach, whose mother was a daughter of Áengus Mór mac Domnaill of Islay. There seems little reason to doubt that this Hebridean lord involved himself in the Turnberry band in order to secure his grandson's installation as king of Tír Conaill. Let us examine the progress of that involvement. The Annals of Connacht are very sparing in describing the events of 1286, having just two obits, a brief notice of an outbreak of cattle-plague, and the following:

A great hosting by the earl of Ulster into Connacht so that he destroyed many of the monasteries and churches of Connacht, but even so he obtained supremacy everywhere he went, and took the hostages of all Connacht; and he brought the army of Connacht with him after that, and took hostages from Cenél Conaill and Cenél nEógain. And he deposed Domnall son of Brian Ó Néill and gave the kingship to Niall Cúlánach Ó Néill on that expedition.

This was the first attempt by Richard de Burgh after his coming-of-age to assert his authority over the Irish lords of Connacht and Ulster; if it was a summer campaign, and the Turnberry band followed it in September, then de Burgh was laying the groundwork for what he intended to be a radical re-distribution of power in the north-west of Ireland. It was the prospect of this that enticed Áengus mac Domnaill to join in the venture.

Unfortunately for de Burgh, however, his leading ally, Thomas de Clare, died in the summer of 1287 (apparently of natural causes) just when he might have contemplated making his move.<sup>15</sup> That was postponed until the following year when de Burgh came to Connacht, intending to intervene in the Ó Conchobair succession struggle, but (remarkably, in his own lordship) was faced down by John fitz Thomas and the government army:

A hosting by the Red Earl...to Connacht, until he came to Roscommon against Magnus son of Conchobar Ruad [Ó Conchobair], king of Connacht at that time, and against Fitz Gerald [i.e. John fitz Thomas] and the King's men. And they all assembled to oppose him, and challenged the earl to advance beyond that point, so that the earl then decided to retire from the country and afterwards disbanded his army.<sup>16</sup>

If the purpose of the Turnberry band was to assist de Burgh in circumstances such as these, it was already proving of little effect. And if, as seems likely, Áengus mac Domnaill had joined forces with him hoping de Burgh would step up the pressure on Áed Ó Domnaill, he was soon disabused of the idea, and it looks as though he took matters into his own hands in 1290: 'Áed Ó Domnaill was deposed by his own brother, i.e. by Toirrdelbach Ó Domnaill, who took the

<sup>15</sup> For a typically exhaustive study of the circumstances of de Clare's death, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 99-104.

<sup>16</sup> *AC* s.a. 1288.

kingship himself through the power of his mother's kin, Clann Domnaill, and of many other galloglasses'.<sup>17</sup> This is the first occurrence in the Irish annals of the term *gallóclaeach*. It does not, of course, mean that warriors from Innse Gall made their first appearance in Ireland on that occasion, but it is the first time we hear of them actually toppling an Irish king, which is a measure of the extraordinary proliferation in their numbers in the north-west of Ireland in recent years. This is clearly not what the earl of Ulster had intended to come out of the Turnberry pact. Toirrdelbach Ó Domnaill's brother-in-law was Domnall Ó Néill whom de Burgh had deposed four years earlier, and it is noticeable that he re-appeared as king in Tír Eógain in tandem with Toirrdelbach.<sup>18</sup> A year later the earl restored the *status quo ante*: he found a replacement for Ó Néill and he also restored Áed Ó Domnaill in Tír Conaill. When Domnall Ó Néill eventually recovered his kingdom in 1295 (which he was to hold on to for the next thirty years), the Four Masters tell us that both he and Clann Domnaill of the Isles offered shelter to the exiled Toirrdelbach Ó Domnaill, who continued to trouble Áed until the latter killed him in 1303.<sup>19</sup> De Burgh, therefore, can hardly be said to have gained much from Áengus mac Domnaill's participation in the Turnberry band.

Áengus Mór was, however, quite incidental to the overall scheme of things. Perhaps the Turnberry band's real importance is in revealing the identity of some of those who were already preparing to line up behind the Bruce faction in opposition to John Balliol should the succession to the Scottish kingship be thrown open (With Alexander III's death in March 1286 his infant granddaughter, 'the Maid of Norway', was the last vulnerable product of the direct royal line). So it may be of relevance that a late sixteenth-century transcript of the 'band' in a British Library manuscript follows a document, which I have not seen discussed elsewhere, described as an *amicabilis confoederatio* between, on the one hand, Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, and his brother, and, on the other, James the Steward of Scotland and his brother, and Walter, earl of Menteith, and his son.<sup>20</sup> No details of the alliance are given and it is assigned to the year 1283 which may be premature; but its link to the Turnberry band, both by virtue of the documents' consecutive location in the manuscript and of the overlapping of names involved, seems obvious. If so, the band was largely a Bruce enterprise: those who signed up for it were being recruited into the Bruce camp. Not alone that, but the fact that the *confoederatio* mentions only Bruce of Carrick and not his father, lord of Annandale, and that those who signed the 'band' assembled at Turnberry, rather than at either of the elder Bruce's

<sup>17</sup> AC s.a. 1290.

<sup>18</sup> AC s.a. 1290.

<sup>19</sup> AC, ALCé, AU, AFM s.a. 1303. Ó Néill seems to have arrived at a *modus vivendi* with de Burgh since it is many years before we again hear of animosity between them. Toirrdelbach Ó Domnaill presumably benefited from this easing of tension and, though the annals are not clear on the point, the 'chiefs of the foreigners of the north' who were killed in the 1303 battle may actually have been fighting on his side.

<sup>20</sup> B.L. MS. Lansdowne 229, fol. 111v. At the end of the copy of the band is the note: 'Hac charta est in custodia Augustini Styward de Lakyngeth in Com. Suffolk, generosi, 1575'.

castles of Annan or Lochmaben, suggests that the earl of Carrick was the one most closely involved in its instigation.

Robert Bruce (father of the future king) was earl of Carrick in right of his wife. The balance of the evidence, based on the Bruces' actions at this point and for the next forty years or so, indicates that he asserted a claim to the lands of his wife's grandfather in Larne and Glenarm in County Antrim, held of the earldom of Ulster for a generation or more now by the de Mandeville and Bisset families respectively. His prospects of making anything of the claim were slim without the goodwill of the earl, Richard de Burgh. It may have been at Turnberry that a marriage was mooted between de Burgh's sister and another of the allies, James the Steward of Scotland, though a full decade passes before we obtain confirmation that the marriage had taken place at some unknown earlier date. As part of the marriage-deal, the Steward obtained the earl's castle at Roo, near Limavady in County Derry, along with the burgh and demesne, and the rents of English tenants enfeoffed by the earl of Ulster in Ciannachta. Ironically, this latter area had been held of the crown by Alan of Galloway; not having descended - as far as we know - through his daughter Derbforgaill to John Balliol, the lord of Galloway, it now ended up in the possession of the Steward, a leading opponent of the Balliols and one of the Bruces' most loyal adherents. Perhaps this was not just coincidence. After he succeeded to the earldom of Carrick, the future Robert I himself married a daughter of the earl of Ulster in 1302; yet we hear of no similar grant of lands within the earldom to him. He perhaps hoped to exploit the marriage to retrieve the Carrick estate in Antrim. It is possible, therefore, to see in the Turnberry band the jockeying for position in the succession stakes that followed the death of Alexander III. Within a few months of the King's death the Bruces had seized the royal castles of Wigtown and Dumfries, and their forces had overrun Buittle, caput of the Balliol estate in the south-west.<sup>21</sup> In the spring of 1290 we hear that they were planning to oust Balliol from his third share of the former Huntingdon estate in the Garioch.<sup>22</sup> Since they clearly sought to outmanoeuvre Balliol at every turn, perhaps they sought to resuscitate the Carrick inheritance in Ulster at the expense of that of Galloway.

Both families were well used to exerting their influence to ensure that Ireland was made profitable use of by them and those they favoured. The Bruce-Stewart association was matched by that of the Balliols with the Comyn family, who were not short of landed interests in Ireland.<sup>23</sup> Then there were connexions via the church. John de Balliol, for instance, received confirmation in 1280 of a royal charter first granted thirteen years earlier, instructing the municipal officials in Dublin and Drogheda to facilitate the abbot, monks and men of

<sup>21</sup> Geoffrey Barrow and Ann Royan, 'James fifth Stewart of Scotland, 1260 (?) - 1309', in *Essays on the nobility of medieval Scotland*, ed. Keith Stringer (Edinburgh, 1985), 166-87 (at p. 172).

<sup>22</sup> G.W.S. Barrow, *Robert Bruce and the community of the realm of Scotland*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh, 1988), 43-4 (unless otherwise stated, all subsequent references are to this edition); Geoffrey Stell, 'The Balliol family and the Great Cause of 1291-2', in *Nobility of medieval Scotland*, ed. Stringer, 150-65 (at p. 151).

<sup>23</sup> *CDI*, II, 1470, 1596, 1619, 1744, 1904, 1906, 1975, 2076, 2128, 2150, 2190-91, 2193; III, 55, 58, 210.

Dundrennan in Galloway in coming to Ireland, purchasing 240 crannocks of wheat, 'and anything else for the maintenance of their house', and exporting them yearly to Scotland.<sup>24</sup> In 1282 Bruce, the earl of Carrick, was granted a licence so that his men could come to Ireland to buy wine, corn, etc., and export them; he received a similar licence in 1291.<sup>25</sup> Now, the monks of Dundrennan were exporting goods from the Drogheda-Dublin region because they held land in Meath.<sup>26</sup> One is strongly tempted to conclude that the same situation pertained in the case of the Bruces. After succeeding to the earldom the future Robert I obtained a safe conduct on 20 April 1294, to last until Michaelmas 1295, 'in going to Ireland, remaining there, and returning'.<sup>27</sup> He had, therefore, legitimate business to conduct in Ireland, business which might take up to eighteen months to complete: it is a reasonable supposition that he had landed interests to attend to within the earldom of Ulster. It is worth contrasting these licences with that granted to Alexander Mac Dubgaill of Argyll on 11 July 1292. It is almost certain that the latter did *not* hold lands in Ireland; hence the safe conduct is for him 'and his men and merchants, whom he frequently sends to Ireland with his goods and merchandise to trade'.<sup>28</sup> Mac Dubgaill, therefore, was an exporter, Dundrennan and the Bruces were importers, a facility they were able to avail of, it appears, because of tenurial links with Ireland.

The conclusion to be drawn from the happy survival of the text of the Turnberry band is that the relationship between Ireland and Scotland in the late thirteenth century was a good deal closer and more complex than sometimes allowed. It has long been an article of faith among historians (and hence has received little real investigation) that a steady undercurrent of contact flowed between Gaelic Ireland and Gaelic Scotland. By contradistinction, the tendency has been to minimize the interfusion between the Scots and the colonists in Ireland. The Turnberry band provides a rude awakening from this reverie: one returns to the sources with a more watchful eye, albeit hampered by lack of documentation. Inevitably, Scottish contact was concentrated within the part of Ireland technically at least within the palatine jurisdiction of the earl of Ulster, from which little in the way of documentation survives. Only when the earldom was in royal hands do the skies clear. So, let us take one document that has survived in the royal archives, dating from the period immediately after the death of Walter de Burgh in 1271, to see what it may reveal of the relationship between Scotland and the Anglo-Irish colonists in Ulster.

Towards the end of the following year, 1272, an inquisition was held in Twescard in north County Antrim.<sup>29</sup> It was presided over by Sir William fitz Warin, recently appointed by

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<sup>24</sup> *CDI*, II, 1736; *CDS*, II, 182. Without such licences trade was a risky business: in 1295, after things had gone sour between England and Scotland, the merchants of Dundrennan found themselves arrested when they docked at Cork (*Cal. just. rolls*, I, 77).

<sup>25</sup> *CDI*, II, 1928, III, 945; *CDS*, II, 211, 535.

<sup>26</sup> *CDS*, III, 967, 969, 1157.

<sup>27</sup> *CDI*, III, 136.

<sup>28</sup> *CDI*, II, 1136.

<sup>29</sup> *CDI*, II, 929.

Prince Edward as seneschal of the earldom during the minority of de Burgh's heir. Fitz Warin's family had a long pedigree in Ulster. He was a grandson of William de Serlande,<sup>30</sup> who was enfeoffed by King John during his 1210 expedition with lands in Ulster, and was later constable of Carrickfergus castle and seneschal of the earldom.<sup>31</sup> The fitz Warins also shared a feature common to many Ulster landholders since the days of the de Lacy expansion into the province: they held lands in Meath, where, around 1247, Alan fitz Warin (probably William's father) made a grant of lands bordering those of William de Lacy, witnessed by, among others, Hugh Tyrel, then seneschal of Ulster, John Bisset and Henry de Mandeville.<sup>32</sup> Yet, arguably, the fitz Warins were as closely associated with Scotland as with Ireland. After the battle of Stirling Bridge in September 1297, William fitz Warin was entrusted to hold Stirling castle for the English.<sup>33</sup> At some stage in 1298-9, Alexander Comyn wrote a letter of recommendation on fitz Warin's behalf to Edward I.<sup>34</sup> Comyn was brother of Earl John of Buchan; in the period 1297-9 he was closely involved with John Comyn of Badenoch, Alexander Mac Dubgail of Lorne, and Lachlan son of Alan Mac Ruaidrí of Garmoran in a violent campaign in the west highlands and islands of Scotland, directed at least in part against Clann Domnaill of Islay.<sup>35</sup> Was fitz Warin also involved in the alliance? All the participants were linked by close marriage-bonds with Alexander Mac Dubgail, the leading power at that point in the west of Scotland: Lachlan Mac Ruaidri was his son-in-law and John Comyn of Badenoch his brother-in-law.<sup>36</sup> But Mac Dubgail had a sister, Mary, 'an indefatigable snapper up of well-considered husbands', as Professor Barrow put it, married at one stage to Magnus, king of Man, to Hugh of Abernethy, and to Malise earl of Strathearn.<sup>37</sup> At some unknown stage Mary also married William fitz Warin, making him too Mac Dubgail of Lorne's brother-in-law.<sup>38</sup> William died in 1299 and when arrangements were made later that year for securing Mary's dower, Alan fitz Warin, William's son and heir by another marriage, quitclaimed any rights he had to 'all Sir William's goods in Scotland'.<sup>39</sup>

So much for the fitz Warins. The purpose of the Twescard inquisition over which William presided in 1272 was to make enquiry into the behaviour of Sir Henry de Mandeville, former seneschal of Ulster and bailiff of the north Antrim area. He was killed within a few years in conflict with fitz Warin in that district.<sup>40</sup> Although he left several sons and the de

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<sup>30</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 11, 63-4; III, 50, 56-7.

<sup>31</sup> *CDI*, I, 538, 674; Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 260, n. 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Cal. Gormanston register*, 160.

<sup>33</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 88, 344, n. 10.

<sup>34</sup> *CDS*, V, 211.

<sup>35</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 107, 156; idem, *The kingdom of the Scots* (London 1973), 381-2.

<sup>36</sup> *CDS*, II, 903, 1204, 1631. Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 582.

<sup>37</sup> Bower, *Scotichronicon*, V, 369; Barrow, *Kingship and unity*, 130, 137.

<sup>38</sup> *CDI*, IV, 698; *CDS*, II, 1117.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Mary appointed the prior of Holmcultram, a religious house with a long history of close contacts with Ulster, as attorney to receive her dower in Ireland (*Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 115).

<sup>40</sup> *CDI*, II, 1918.



Mandevilles continued to be a force of significance in Ulster for the next sixty years or so, we do not hear of another Henry de Mandeville there until 1319, when 'Annraoi Mac Dauill' was involved in the death of Domnall Ó Néill's son.<sup>41</sup> In 1323 he was appointed constable of the 'bonnacht' of Ulster,<sup>42</sup> and in 1326 he was keeper of the peace in the bishopric of Down;<sup>43</sup> he was said to be in possession of some of the goods of the earl of Ulster's daughter-in-law in 1327,<sup>44</sup> and was described as 'seneschal of Ulster' when he agreed to a year-long truce for Ulster with Robert Bruce that same year.<sup>45</sup> As a result of various transgressions of which he stood accused or because of resentment of the position of power which he had attained in Ulster, Henry did not survive long after William de Burgh, the fourth earl, arrived in Ireland in 1331:<sup>46</sup> he suffered a lengthy imprisonment in Dublin castle and was released only after the earl's murder in 1333, in the belief that he alone could quell the Irish rebellion there.<sup>47</sup> He was finally killed in 1337.<sup>48</sup> Henry was married to a granddaughter of William fitz Warin and gained tenure of some of that family's lands in Berkshire.<sup>49</sup> But the probability is that he is to be equated with the Sir Henry de Mandeville who was among the magnates of Scotland who did homage to Edward I in March 1296, who was a juror that August at an inquisition into the holdings in Wigtownshire of Elena la Zouche, who was written to by Edward I on 24 May 1297, who received £20 in 1311-12 for a horse killed in action against the Scots in the service of Edward II, and who was in the English garrison in Berwick in 1312.<sup>50</sup>

Several of the jurors at the 1272 Twescard inquisition seem to have had family links with Scotland of varying degrees of intimacy. Michael Bonekyl was probably of Bunkle in Berwickshire. Matthew Malerb must have been connected with the substantial Stirlingshire landowning family of Malherbe.<sup>51</sup> Reginald le Cheyne was surely a member, if not the head (whose name was Reginald for at least two generations in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries) of a prominent family who were lords of Inverugie in Buchan and Duffus in Moray. Reginald Cheyne was one of the Scots who participated in the treaty with Llywelyn

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<sup>41</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1319.

<sup>42</sup> Robin Frame, *English lordship in Ireland 1318-1361* (Oxford 1982), 217, n. 86. For the 'bonnacht', see Edmund Curtis, 'The "Bonnacht" of Ulster', *Hermathena*, 46 (1931), 87-105, Simms, *From kings to warlords*, 138-9.

<sup>43</sup> [Edward Tresham] (ed.), *Rotulorum patentium et clausorum cancellariae Hibernie calendarium* (Rec. Comm. Ire., Dublin, 1828), 33. Hereafter cited as 'Tresham'.

<sup>44</sup> Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland before the King's Council*, 127.

<sup>45</sup> Ranald Nicholson, 'A sequel to Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland', *SHR*, 42 (1963), 30-40.

<sup>46</sup> For allegations of his involvement in the rebellious activities of Maurice fitz Thomas, the first earl of Desmond, see G.O. Sayles, 'The legal proceedings against the first earl of Desmond', *Analecta Hibernica*, 23 (1966), 12-13.

<sup>47</sup> Philomena Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of ancient petitions (SC8) in the Public Record Office, London', *Analecta Hibernica*, 34 (1987), 36; *Cal. close rolls, 1333-7*, 209; Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, 216-24.

<sup>48</sup> *AC*; *AFM* s.a. 1337.

<sup>49</sup> Frame, *English lordship in Ireland*, 49, n. 138, 213-4.

<sup>50</sup> *Documents and records illustrating the history of Scotland*, ed. Francis Palgrave (Rec. Comm., London, 1837), no. CVIII; *CDS*, II, 730, 824, 884; III, pp. 393, 394. See also, J.R.H. Greeves, 'Robert I and the de Mandevilles of Ulster', *Trans. Dumfriesshire & Galloway Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 3rd ser., 34 (1955-6), 59-73.

<sup>51</sup> For whose affairs, see Barrow, *Bruce*, 105-6.

ap Gruffudd in 1258,<sup>52</sup> he was chamberlain of Scotland for at least part of the period 1266-1278, and was sheriff in Kincardine.<sup>53</sup> He and his son (and their relative, Henry Cheyne, bishop of Aberdeen, 1282-1328) were prominent on the English side before Bannockburn, and Reginald Cheyne the younger was warden of Moray for the English at the time of Robert Bruce's rebellion.<sup>54</sup> The Aberdeenshire connexion suggests the possibility that they made their appearance in Ulster in association with the Bissets, a rather more successful implant from the same part of Scotland. Reginald Cheyne was not a comparative outsider added to the list of jurors to lend it weight. It emerged during the proceedings of the inquisition that he had seen military action in the north Antrim area against the reigning king of Ciannachta, Cú Maige Ó Catháin; the latter's succession to the kingship had been facilitated by Henry de Mandeville, the subject of the enquiry, who apparently sought to bribe another member of the local gentry, John son of Sir Henry Logan, into coaxing Cheyne away from his opposition to Ó Catháin.

The implication that Cheyne might have been responsive to pressure from Logan is interesting. The Logans had been in Ulster from the earliest days of the conquest. A Walter de Loga[n] witnessed one of de Courcy's charters, 1183 x 1200,<sup>55</sup> but managed to survive into the de Lacy era: he was one of the men captured by King John in Carrickfergus castle in 1210, and was included among the magnates written to by Henry III over a decade later.<sup>56</sup> At the time of the Twescard inquisition the head of the family was Alan Logan, whose affiliations are implicit in the letter of protection in Ireland granted in 1280 to him along with Hugh and John Bisset and William fitz Warin.<sup>57</sup> In 1299 Alan fitz Warin (the occurrence of the name Alan in both families may not be unconnected) had the wardship and marriage of Alan Logan's son John, which he granted to his own stepmother Mary, sister of Alexander Mac Dubgaill, as part of her dower settlement.<sup>58</sup> Thus, to some extent at least, was John Logan's future to be determined by Clann Dubgaill of Argyll. John Logan was later to play a decisive role in Ulster history by being one of the murderers of the last de Burgh earl of Ulster in 1333,<sup>59</sup> but had earlier displayed rather more loyalty, perhaps taking his lead from the pro-English line of Clann Dubgaill, particularly against the Bruces in Ireland in 1315-18 (though not all Logans agreed with his stance), and was among the Anglo-Irish requested by Edward II to take part in a proposed expedition to Scotland in 1310.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Littere Wallie*, no. 317.

<sup>53</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 588.

<sup>54</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 175, 266, 309.

<sup>55</sup> Printed in Mac Niocaill, 'Cartae Dunenses', 421.

<sup>56</sup> *CDI*, I, 476, 1001.

<sup>57</sup> *CDI*, II, 1656.

<sup>58</sup> *CDI*, IV, 698.

<sup>59</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, 24. The unrest in Ulster at this time was described in the extents of the earldom as the 'war of John Logan': Orpen, 'The earldom of Ulster', *JRSAL*, 43 (1913), 137-9.

<sup>60</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 298, 349; Robin Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland, 1315-18', *IHS*, 19 (1974), 3-37 (at 29-30); Tresham, 13.

There may have been other Logan links with Scotland. Walter Logan, lord of Hartside in East Lothian, had a grant of Luce in Annandale from Robert Bruce in 1298, was sheriff of Lanark in 1301, and was among those whose lands were confiscated by Edward I for adhering to Bruce in 1306.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that John Bisset then petitioned to be granted seisin of these Scottish lands, and, although we do not know of any link between Walter and Ireland at this point, we may perhaps surmise that Bisset's attempt to obtain Walter's Scottish lands was occasioned by some enmity between both men in Ulster.<sup>62</sup> What that was we cannot say, but Walter witnessed at least two charters in the company of Reginald Crawford, sometime sheriff of Ayr;<sup>63</sup> the latter was executed in 1307 when he landed in Galloway with an Irish army in the company of Thomas and Alexander Bruce, having penetrated the Bissets' galley-patrol in the North Channel,<sup>64</sup> which may be another hint of Logan-Bisset animosity. However, the only clear mention of Walter Logan in an Irish context which I have found comes on the very eve of the Bruce invasion of Ireland when, on 4 May 1315, Edward II assigned to him the task of choosing from the Irish lands of Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, 'et alibi in partibus illis ubi melius videritis expedire', 500 hobelars and armed foot to be sent to England.<sup>65</sup>

One final juror at the 1272 inquisition may be worth looking at. Elias Sandal was still alive at the turn of the century when Alan fitz Warin petitioned to retrieve from him a manor in County Antrim; it had formerly been held by Alan's father William, but had been granted by default to Elias in the earl's court, even though fitz Warin had the king's protection while on service in Gascony.<sup>66</sup> A jury at Bushmills (Portkamen) in 1277 included an Adam son of Elias,<sup>67</sup> who is almost certainly the Adam Sandal whose death in 1303 is recorded in the Irish annals.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, he was killed in the final encounter between Toirrdelbach Ó Domnaill of Tír Conaill, backed by his relatives, Clann Domnaill of Islay, and his half-brother Áed who had the support of Clann Suibne of Knapdale. Also killed in the encounter was a colonist called 'mac Ugosa', who may have been a son of Hugh Bisset of Glenarm. It is interesting that the next entry in the annals is an account of Edward I's campaign in Scotland, in which a leading role was played by an army drawn from Ireland led by the earl of Ulster. There is a possibility that both were connected. One of the successes of the Irish army in Scotland was the seizure at the beginning of August 1303 of the Stewart castle of Rothesay on Bute, which,

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<sup>61</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 358, n. 88; Charles Johnson, 'Robert Bruce's rebellion in 1306', *EHR*, 33 (1918), 366-7.

<sup>62</sup> Palgrave, *Documents and records*, no. CXLII, p. 304.

<sup>63</sup> *Registrum S. Marie de Neubottle*, ed. Cosmo Innes (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1849), no. 139, cf. 146; Barrow, *Bruce*, 146, 354, n. 1.

<sup>64</sup> *Chron. Lanercost*, ed. Maxwell, 179-80.

<sup>65</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 143.

<sup>66</sup> Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of ancient petitions', 26. The manor of 'Haghianton' is probably the 'Hathranton', in the deanery of Twescard, diocese of Connor, recorded in the contemporary ecclesiastical extents (Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore*, 74). I am grateful to Dr Connolly for providing me with her full transcript of the petition.

<sup>67</sup> *CDI*, II, 1328.

<sup>68</sup> *AU; AFM; AC; ALCé* s.a. 1303.

for the next sixteen weeks, was held by a garrison under the command of John Bisset.<sup>69</sup> Edward I's chamberlain for Scotland at the time was Sir John Sandal,<sup>70</sup> and in 1306 his valet was one Richard Bisset.<sup>71</sup> In 1316 Sir John held the prebend of Finglas near Dublin.<sup>72</sup> In this same year, Hugh Bisset and John Logan were victorious in the field against the Scots in Ulster and at about the same time Logan and an individual called John Sandal captured, in Ulster, Alan Stewart of Jedburgh and brought him to Dublin castle.<sup>73</sup> Was this tenant of the earl of Ulster identical with the man who played such a vital role for many years in the prosecution of Edward I's war against the Scots?<sup>74</sup> Even if not, we are on fairly safe ground in thinking that they were of the same family.

Clearly the cross-channel links of the inhabitants of the Ulster colony in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries are far more extensive than has been allowed. It is a subject which is deserving of greater attention, though such an investigation would not come within the scope of this dissertation. It has been my intention merely to call attention to the intimacy of the relationship in order to provide a framework within which the apparently intensified interactions of the Bruce years may be viewed. An insensitivity to this context has been one of the failings in the historical assessment of the Bruce wars in general and Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland in particular. Awareness of it does not make the Bruce invasion any the less remarkable but it does serve to make aspects of it somewhat easier to explain. Above all else, the familiarity with Ireland of those at the highest level of Scottish society, both native and feudal - the Bruce and Balliol factions and their respective allies (on one side, the Stewarts and Clann Domnaill, on the other, the Comyns and Clann Dubgaill) - meant that when a crisis erupted in Scotland in 1286, and especially after war with England broke out a decade later, it was bound to have implications for Ireland. It was likely that it would produce a reaction in Ireland at least on a par with that caused there by the Edwardian wars in Wales, and, because of the close links of both Gaídil and Gaill in Ireland with the principal actors on the Scottish stage, the war itself might spill over onto Irish soil.

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<sup>69</sup> For the campaign, see James Lydon, 'Edward I, Ireland and the war in Scotland, 1303-1304', in *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, ed. idem (Dublin 1981), 43-61.

<sup>70</sup> For whom, see *DNB*, s.n.

<sup>71</sup> Palgrave, *Documents and records*, no. CXLII, 315.

<sup>72</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, 'The mission of John de Hothum to Ireland, 1315-1316', in *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, 62-85 (at p. 70).

<sup>73</sup> *Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin*, II, 298, 349.

<sup>74</sup> A possibility first alerted to me in a written communication from Professor G.W.S. Barrow.

## *The Anglo-Scottish war*

When Alexander III was accidentally killed in 1286 the event went unrecorded in Irish sources. Four and a half years later the tragic death of his infant granddaughter Margaret threw the succession to the kingdom of Scotland into confusion, but that too went unnoticed by Irish writers. The first smattering of interest showed itself only when the Dublin annalist recorded the choice of John Balliol as king and his performance of homage to Edward I at Newcastle upon Tyne on 26 December 1292; but perhaps this was simply because several of the unsuccessful claimants whom he lists had Irish connexions, including the future Robert I, John de Hastings, lord of Abergavenny and of the barony of Ballyadams, Co. Laois, and, most importantly perhaps, William de Vescy, lord of Kildare.<sup>1</sup>

The ellipsis in the commentary, we know from experience, is no indication of a lack of cross-channel contact. As a matter of fact, during this period of silence in our Irish sources, an event took place - underrated by modern writers, very revealing as an early indicator of the breakdown in Anglo-Scottish relations, and of considerable consequence for the future course of the Scottish wars - in which one or more leading individuals in Ireland, and probably an Irish army, were involved. Since 1266 the Isle of Man had been an integral part of the realm of Scotland, Alexander III's heir, until his death in 1284, bearing the title 'lord of Man'.<sup>2</sup> However, in concluding the happy arrangement whereby the island had been thus effectively sold off by the Norse to the Scots, nobody thought to ask the Manx for their view: their native rulers in the past had consistently preferred to associate themselves with England rather than Scotland. So, in 1275 Gofraid, an illegitimate son of the last king of Man, Magnus mac Amlaíb Duib, arrived in the island and, like many a sea-lord before him, was acclaimed as king by the inhabitants. The Scots assembled a fleet of ninety ships from Galloway and the Isles to oppose him and to bring the Manx back into line. This western army was led by the rather unlikely figure of John de Vescy, lord of Alnwick in England and Sprouston in Scotland, and a member of a family recently introduced to Ireland; but its real propulsion came from the likes of John Comyn of Badenoch, justiciar of Galloway, Alan son of Thomas of Galloway, Alexander Mac Dubgaill of Argyll, and Alan Mac Ruaidrí of Garmoran, all veterans of similar such western enterprises. Gofraid was defeated, and his forces butchered to the number of 537, though he and his wife and a few others managed to escape to Wales.<sup>3</sup> This quelled the Manx, but it certainly did not make for any greater acquiescence in Scottish rule. In 1288 the sheriff of

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<sup>1</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Handlist of the acts of Alexander III*, ed. G.G. Simpson (Edinburgh, 1960), no. 171.

<sup>3</sup> 'Chronicle of Lanercost', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 672-3; 'Annals of Furness', in *Chronos. Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett, II, 570-71; *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 50r.; Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 582.

Dumfries accounted for the expense of guarding the land of an individual 'killed in Man in the service of the king',<sup>4</sup> which presumably refers to further trouble there in the interval.

If the Manx sought the chance to throw off Scottish rule, the English were anxious to assist them, and, some time after the death of Alexander, took over the island. The first we hear of this is in February 1290 when Edward I issued a safe-conduct to certain merchants to facilitate their business on the island, which was addressed to 'the keepers of the land of Man, and...all other his friends, bailiffs and faithful subjects'.<sup>5</sup> Not long afterwards, at an assembly of the islanders held at Rushen abbey, the Manx agreed, 'under their common seal', to 'bind themselves to obey the king of England as their lord', adding that they stood in great need of his protection.<sup>6</sup> Then on June 4 more of the story is revealed. Edward issued a letter to 'all the inhabitants of the Isle of Man', noting, crucially, that 'dilectus et fidelis noster Ricardus de Burgo, comes Ultoniae, insulam praedictam cum pertinentiis reddidit in manus nostras'.<sup>7</sup> At some unknown date, therefore, between the death of Alexander III in March 1286 and the first mention of English rule just under four years later, Richard de Burgh had taken control of the Isle of Man. The involvement of the ruler of Ulster in the affair was wholly appropriate, in terms of the island's long history of contact with the east Ulster region. When an armed force under the command of the earl of Ulster seized control of Rushen castle, installed a garrison there, and appointed bailiffs to run the Isle of Man on the earl's behalf, the ruler of what had formerly been the kingdom of Ulaid succeeded, at least temporarily, in doing what its kings had for centuries themselves attempted to do. It was appropriate too in terms of the English government's insistence throughout the earlier part of the century in having its dirty work in the north Irish Sea area done for it by forces drawn from Ireland. On 20 June 1290 King Edward empowered his acquisitive bishop of Durham, Anthony Bek, to receive to the peace the men of the Isles, 'sub guerra et discordia commorantes'.<sup>8</sup> This action indicates that Edward had more than Man in his sights. He was continuing a policy pursued by his father and grandfather in the days of the kingdom of Man and the Isles, and one which persisted throughout the later history of the lordship of the Isles,<sup>9</sup> that of exploiting the centrifugal tendencies of the outlying districts of Scotland for English ends. In attempting to detach the Islesmen from the Scottish cause, Edward was happy to make use of Ireland. That involved courting the affections of all sides in the region by granting them licences to go to Ireland to

<sup>4</sup> *Rotuli scaccarii regum Scotorum: the exchequer rolls of Scotland*, ed. John Stuart and George Burnell, 23 vols (Edinburgh, 1878-1908), I, 35.

<sup>5</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1281-92*, 366.

<sup>6</sup> *Foedera*, I, 737; *CDS*, II, 438.

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson, *Documents*, no. CIII.

<sup>8</sup> Stevenson, *Documents*, 161-2.

<sup>9</sup> For which, see Alexander Grant, 'Scotland's 'Celtic fringe' in the later middle ages: the MacDonald Lords of the Isles and the kingdom of Scotland', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 118-41.

trade, as happened to both Alexander Mac Dubgaill and Áengus mac Domnaill on 11 July 1292.<sup>10</sup> It also may have involved using the Ulster army to conquer Man on his behalf.

But the suspicion must persist that de Burgh's role was more than just the implementation of English royal policy. If anything, the seizure of part of the Scottish realm in the late 1280s ran counter to English policy at that point, occurring as it did at a stage when Edward I was still behaving in a reasonable and even-handed manner with the Scots.<sup>11</sup> Did de Burgh have his own plans for the region? The Scottish suppression of the island in 1275 was largely a Galloway affair, done with the backing of the Comyn-Clann Dubgaill faction. The rulers of Galloway had long coveted the island and Alan, father of the then lady of Galloway, Derbforgaill Balliol, had come very close to making this hope a reality; for his part, Alexander Mac Dubgaill's father Eógan had attempted to make himself king back in 1250.<sup>12</sup> And the Comyn connexion with the island is revealed in 1292 when Edward I gave the earl of Buchan licence to cover eight turrets of his castle at Cruggleton in Galloway with lead from a mine in the Calf of Man.<sup>13</sup> Because of the enmity between them that stretched back over a century, it would not be a surprise to find the rulers of Carrick opposing this Galloway enterprise: in doing so, the Carrick faction would be backed, no doubt, by their Stewart henchmen and by Clann Domnaill, motivated in part at least by opposition to the Comyns and Clann Dubgaill. These were, of course, the very people whose assistance Richard de Burgh had enlisted in the Turnberry band of September 1286, and they were entitled to expect to have their backs scratched in return. Was this what his occupation of Man was about? Of them, the one closest to de Burgh at this point was the Steward (given his proposed marriage to the earl's sister): in 1289, in his capacity as sheriff of Ayr, James the Steward accounted for the expenses of 'duobus predicatoribus euntibus in Hyberniam cum litteris regis Anglie pro terra Mannie'.<sup>14</sup> We do not know who the recipient was but in view of the Steward's association with him we may conjecture that the letters were addressed to Richard de Burgh.

This is, however, about the only hint we have of involvement by the Turnberry clique in de Burgh's Manx exploits. There is one intriguing, though still rather mysterious, possibility as to their plans. After John Balliol was installed as king, a vassal king acknowledging Edward I as his lord superior, he quickly found that the English king was intent on exploiting his newly won overlordship by instituting a right of appeal from Balliol's court to his own.<sup>15</sup> One of the very few who made such an appeal was a lady called Affreca, 'kinswoman and heiress, as she asserts, of Magnus [mac Amlaíb Duib], formerly king of Man', who claimed that the island was hers by right and heredity, and that she had approached King John's presence on the matter

<sup>10</sup> *CDI*, III, 1136, 1137.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of this precise point, see Barrow, *Bruce*, 28-9, and Prestwich, *Edward I*, 361-2.

<sup>12</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 48r.; for the Manx activities of both men, see above, 105-8.

<sup>13</sup> *CDS*, II, 616.

<sup>14</sup> *Exchequer rolls. Scotland*, I, 47.

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion, see Barrow, *Bruce*, 57-60.

many times without satisfaction, and now appealed her case to the king of England.<sup>16</sup> This, the first we hear of her, is in the summer of 1293. The next we hear of her is in 1305, by which time she appears to have been married to the powerful Somerset baron, Simon de Montacute, to whom she quitclaimed all her rights in the island.<sup>17</sup> In her charter, however, she describes herself for the first time as Affreca 'de Counnocht'. What her connexion with Connacht was in is [e] anybody's guess, but Richard de Burgh was, of course, lord of the province. Furthermore, Affreca's son or stepson, William de Montacute, seems to have had some link with de Burgh, since he appears in 1307 in the company of the earl's chief justice, Nigel le Brun, when they arrested some of Robert Bruce's adherents in Ulster.<sup>18</sup> In the same year he was present with the earl at a council held at Mullingar when arrangements were made for sending a fleet under Hugh Bisset to join his father Simon de Montacute in the Isles.<sup>19</sup> That, for the moment, appears to be as far as we can trace the putative association between de Burgh and Affreca and her de Montacute abettors, and it is hardly much to go on. But it does at least raise the fascinating prospect that the first shots in the Anglo-Scottish war were fired from Ireland.

It was obvious that Ireland would have a role to play in the ensuing struggle. The Welsh rebellion against Edward, led principally by Madog ap Llywelyn of Merioneth, which broke out in September 1294, stiffened Scottish resolve in the face of their increasingly high-handed treatment by the English king. Within a couple of months of the Welsh outbreak the Scots had obtained a papal absolution from the oaths which Edward had extracted from them under duress.<sup>20</sup> Thereupon they entered negotiations with the French, then at war with England, and the treaty concluded between both sides on 23 October 1295 was to the effect that if Edward invaded Scotland, the French would keep him distracted elsewhere; if, on the other hand, Edward entered France, the Scots king would 'invade England as widely and deeply as he can, attacking by every kind of military operation'.<sup>21</sup> Like the Welsh before them, therefore,<sup>22</sup> the Scots were discovering that hand in hand with a campaign of opposition to the English king went the attempt to foment trouble for him elsewhere. We do not know that the Welsh ever instigated this in Ireland; if not, their activities caused what must have been a spontaneous combustion among the Irish. The Welsh, of course, could only gain from such a sympathetic outburst across the Irish Sea, since they themselves were for the most part free of ties with the colonists there, and in many cases suffered at their hands in the same way that the native Irish did. The problem for the Scots when their breakdown in relations with the English occurred

<sup>16</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 18.

<sup>17</sup> For de Montacute, see Seán Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet: a new source for the Bruce invasion', *Proc. R.I.A.*, 91, C (1991), 303-15 (at p. 305).

<sup>18</sup> For William de Montacute, see *ibid.*, 306; for le Brun, see T.E. Mc Neill, *Anglo-Norman Ulster* (Edinburgh, 1980), 63-4.

<sup>19</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 333.

<sup>20</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 63 and 338, n. 44.

<sup>21</sup> *Acts of the parliaments of Scotland*, ed. T. Thomson and C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75), I, 451-3.

<sup>22</sup> See R.F. Treharne, 'The Franco-Welsh treaty of alliance in 1212', *BBCS*, 18 (1958-60), 60-75.



was that they could not make such ready recourse to Irish support since, as products themselves of 'the Anglo-French era', their ties and sympathies had lain hitherto with the colonial community in Ireland. In fact, in Ireland a Scot, ipso facto, was regarded as *Anglicus* before the law, as found by a case taken in Cork in 1297.<sup>23</sup> One of the most remarkable consequences, therefore, of the rupture with England that took place in the 1290s, was that the Scots (most spectacularly in the case of the Bruces), in trying to sow the seeds of trouble for Edward and his successors, were forced into the camp of the native Irish.

For the time being, however, there were rather more immediate considerations. All the evidence suggests that a ready market existed in Scotland for part at least of the agricultural surplus produced in Ireland in the thirteenth century. It is not surprising that within a month of the signing of the Franco-Scottish offensive and defensive alliance in October 1295, Edward I had orders despatched to all the ports and merchant towns of Ireland, even as far south as Kerry, to the effect that 'no merchant or other...take out of Ireland any victual or other thing which may advantage any person of Scotland'; anyone caught doing so was to be arrested and his lands and goods taken into the king's hands; any Scot arriving in Ireland, whether a cleric, a layman, or a merchant, was to be arrested until the king's will was known<sup>24</sup> - hence the arrest in Cork of the merchants of Dundrennan, whose religious house was favoured by the Scots king, John Balliol.<sup>25</sup> If his instructions were carried out, Edward would have gained overnight another substantial advantage over the Scots to add to the superiority he already enjoyed, in that without access to Irish supplies the Scots would undoubtedly be less well equipped for offering resistance to the anticipated Edwardian invasion.<sup>26</sup> Hardly surprising that two years later, after their victory over the English at Stirling Bridge, we find the Scots led by William Wallace and Andrew Murray writing to the merchants of Hamburg and Lübeck to inform them that the ports of Scotland were once more open to German merchants.<sup>27</sup> There was an obvious need to compensate for Edward's choking off of supplies from Ireland. But that was all very well until Robert Bruce ascended the throne. The Bruces' geographical centre of gravity meant that the North Sea ports had a limited efficacy, at least for the early years of his reign. For the Bruces, the western sea-route was the real life-sustaining artery, and so Ireland was pivotal. Choking off Irish supplies to the Scots was one plank of Edward's policy; the other was putting the fruits of the colony to his own use, its supplies, its financial resources and its manpower. On 1 January 1296 Edward I issued writs of military summons to twenty-eight of the magnates of Ireland who, after some hard bargaining, assembled a force of over 3,000 men and a fleet of well over 150 ships, and sailed for Scotland in early May, the largest force to

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<sup>23</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 158.

<sup>24</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 74.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>26</sup> A point discussed briefly in Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 65-6.

<sup>27</sup> See Joseph Stevenson, *Documents illustrative of Sir William Wallace*, Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1841), 159; cf. Dilley, 'Scottish-German diplomacy, 1297-1327'.

have left Ireland in over half a century.<sup>28</sup> This only partly explains why Edward's invasion of Scotland in 1296 brought forth more comment from Irish-based writers than did the entire course of his Welsh wars. It was Edward's very success against the Welsh that alerted men's attention to the threat facing Scotland. As he edged towards war in 1295, no one in Ireland who had lived through the Welsh conquest could be in any doubt about the scale or significance of what lay in store. From the Anglo-Irish point of view, therefore, the Scots had been well warned and deserved everything they got, as we shall see. In the reaction of the Irish chroniclers (and we have a report of the invasion in both Connacht and Munster annal-compilations) there is nothing of the nonchalance and indifference - indeed, the utter silence in one case - which had typified their response to the Welsh wars.

The Dublin annalist's long account of the prelude to the invasion describes how the Scots, 'having broken the peace which they had entered into with the lord king of England', made a league with the French and, 'conspiracione facta', rose up against their rightful king, John Balliol, imprisoning him in a castle and choosing a council of twelve peers to administer the kingdom in his stead. The author is of the view that the Scots were unhappy from the start with Balliol's election. They behaved as they did, we are told, 'in pure spite of the king of England, since, the Scots claimed, the said John had been set over them' by Edward, whereas most modern historians would rather suggest that it was Edward's provocative treatment of King John, and the latter's feeble response, that caused his support to slip away. As to the invasion itself, its purpose, the author says, was 'to chastise the arrogance and presumption of the degenerate Scots against their own father and king'.<sup>29</sup> This account, and the quiet relish with which the author records the English successes in the field - 7,000 Scots killed at Berwick, as opposed to one English knight and some foot, 700 Scottish horse slain at Dunbar, with only loss of foot on the English side - compares starkly with the negative tone of the native Connacht chronicler commenting on the same events:

A great expedition by the king of England into Scotland, and the nobles of the foreigners of Ireland along with him, that is, Richard de Burgh, earl of Ulster, and Fitz Gerald, i.e. John fitz Thomas, so that they obtained great power over all Scotland on that expedition. And they despoiled lay properties and churches, and in particular they destroyed a monastery of Friars Preachers, so that they did not leave one stone standing on another of it. And they killed churchmen and many women on that expedition also.<sup>30</sup>

The Inisfallen annalist who, in the previous year, had complained of Edward treating as expendable the Welsh levies pressed into his service in Gascony, is equally scathing. There could be no possibility of the Irish condoning what was going on in Scotland, in fact, for the first time in the annals the chagrin felt by the Irish at English successes against another Celtic foe is given a voice: 'A great hosting by the king of England, and the nobles of England, Ireland and Wales, into Scotland, and the king of Scotland and Scotland herself were taken by

<sup>28</sup> See James Lydon, 'An Irish army in Scotland, 1296', *The Irish Sword*, 5 (1961-2), 184-90.

<sup>29</sup> *Chartul. St. Mary's, Dublin*, II, 325-6.

<sup>30</sup> *AC* s.a. 1296; see also, *ALCé*; *AU*; *AFM*.

them without opposition or strife. And that was a disappointment to the Irish for great had been the reputation of the Scots for valour before that.'<sup>31</sup> It is an important notice. It gives a glimpse of the instinctual Irish reaction to news from elsewhere in the Celtic world. More than a decade earlier Thomas fitz Maurice had looked from the outside in at what he saw as a sense of elation among the Gaelic population at Welsh successes against the English; now an Irish writer was articulating their gloom and disappointment at the Scottish collapse.

Not that that empathy amounted to much in practice. Granted there was a rumour about in 1295 that the Irish and Welsh might join in the Franco-Scottish alliance, distracting Edward sufficiently to enable a French invading force to land in England.<sup>32</sup> There were indeed good grounds for fearing that the French might try to land,<sup>33</sup> but whether any formal overtures had been made to the Irish is open to grave doubt. If the words of an English song which seems to commemorate the events of 1295 are anything to go by, there was no general sense abroad that the Irish were about to become the final ingredient in the explosive cocktail:

Everywhere are preached the fraudulent actions of faithless men, who molest England by force of arms; the French, the Scots, and the Welsh, whose power may the Omnipotent...repress!...In the wolves' jaws the English have been of late; for, when all the turbulent chiefs of Wales were reduced, the Scots raised their spears, armed in their rags.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, there were probably Irish in the large contingent from the colony which served *against* the Scots in 1296. Thirty of the ships, with total crews of over 500 mariners, were sent to the Isles to combat the activities of Alexander Mac Dubgail,<sup>35</sup> who, as a Balliol supporter, had for some time now been out of favour with King Edward. One can well imagine that there were individuals in Gaelic Ireland only too happy to take advantage of the opportunity to settle an account with Clann Dubgail. The general impression of Edward's successful invasion in 1296 seems to have been this very point, that here for the first time the king of England was able to utilize to the full the resources of Ireland and Wales in order to bring the last independent Celtic state to its knees. The Inisfallen chronicler stresses this in calling it an expedition 'by the king of England, and the nobles (*maithibh*) of England, Ireland and Wales'. The Dublin annalist begins his account in very similar fashion: 'The Welsh, in large numbers, about fifteen thousand men, went to attack Scotland by the king's order. And at the same time the magnates of Ireland...came likewise to help, crossing the sea to Scotland'.<sup>36</sup> It is a perception echoed by several English chroniclers, summed up by Peter Langtoft in these words:

Now King Edward possesses Scotland entirely,  
Like Albanach had it at the commencement.  
The Welsh, the Irish, to our English aid doughtily;

<sup>31</sup> *AI* s.a. 1296.

<sup>32</sup> *Chronica Buriensis 1212-1301: the chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds*, ed. Antonia Gransden (London, 1964), 128-9.

<sup>33</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, 383-4; J.G. Edwards, 'The treason of Thomas Turberville, 1295', in *Studies in medieval history presented to F.M. Powicke*, ed. R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin, R.W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), 296-309.

<sup>34</sup> Wright, *Political songs of England*, 19-20.

<sup>35</sup> Lydon, 'An Irish army in Scotland, 1296', 187, n. 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 326.

Whereby, the Scots have through ours imprisonment,  
 And that land by this war is lost forever.  
 The Welsh are gone home, and the Irish returned  
 With sail and with wind; you English remain there.<sup>37</sup>

The emphasis laid by contemporaries on the Irish contribution to the subjugation of the Scots is worth noting, because it emerges before long that the king himself had grave worries about the effects of the Scottish war on Ireland. Both the Connacht and Munster annalists comment on Edward's unsuccessful Flanders campaign in 1297, a setback likely to have brought encouragement to his enemies elsewhere. The Dublin Anglo-Irish annalist adds that it was while the king was on the continent that William Wallace, 'per commune concilium Scotorum', fought the battle of Stirling Bridge against the English, his victory therein causing a general uprising of the Scots against the king of England.<sup>38</sup> Among those to break out briefly in revolt at this point was the future king, Robert Bruce, and Wallace himself has been shown to have belonged to the Stewart-Bruce faction. King Edward, in his opposition to Balliol, had until recently been showing favour to this group: for instance, on 10 September 1296, the same day in which he confirmed the earl of Ulster's grant of Roe castle to James the Steward, Edward had commissioned Alexander Stewart, earl of Menteith, to take the castles, islands, and lands of Alexander Mac Dubgaill into royal hands.<sup>39</sup> The Wallace revolt served to highlight the frailty of the recent conquest, and to Edward there must have been a hollow ring to the recent protestations of loyalty from the likes of the Steward and Bruce. The closeness of his association with both men meant that, not for the last time, the loyalty of the earl of Ulster had to be put to the test. On 30 March 1298, Edward sent an important letter from Westminster to de Burgh. It announced that he was about to depart for Scotland 'in aid of his lieges remaining there to repress the malice of his Scottish enemies and rebels'. Because of this, he 'very much wishes that peace and tranquillity should be maintained in Ireland', and, therefore, 'while the king remains in Scotland, the king commands and prays the earl so to exert himself that peace and tranquillity will be firmly maintained in his lands'.<sup>40</sup> Now, this may have had to do with de Burgh's infamous feud with John fitz Thomas (only finally resolved that October),<sup>41</sup> if the king was worried that any disturbance it caused could interfere with the supply of goods or men to his Scottish campaign. But the basic premise of the letter cannot be gainsaid: the successful prosecution of the war against the Scots was made easier if Ireland remained trouble-free. The obverse also surely applied and cannot have been lost on

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<sup>37</sup> Wright, *Political songs of England*, 300-01. See also *Chron. Bury St Edmunds* ('The Irish and Welsh were summoned and came in great numbers to help the king; they poured over the face of the earth like locusts' (pp. 131-2)); cf. 'Annals of Dunstable', in *Annales monastici*, III, 403-4; *The chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. Harry Rothwell, Royal Historical Society (London, 1957), 271, 284.

<sup>38</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 327.

<sup>39</sup> *CDS*, II, 847, 853; *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 31.

<sup>40</sup> *CDI*, IV, 506; *Foedera*, I, 888; *Parliamentary writs and writs of military summons*, ed. Francis Palgrave, 2 vols, (Rec. Comm., London, 1827-34), I, 312, no. 34.

<sup>41</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 119.

the Scots: a disturbed Ireland undermined the English offensive. An illustration of the fact was supplied for all to see later that same year. Until the late summer of 1298 the produce of Ireland contributed enormously to Edward's war-effort in Scotland.<sup>42</sup> At the end of August the king was at Ayr, the countryside roundabout denuded of supplies, and he stood in urgent need of provisions from Ireland. He wrote to Dublin seeking them and also informing private merchants there 'that they may securely come to Ayr, for the king is assembling his whole force there'.<sup>43</sup> However, at this point warfare broke out in Thomond, where Toirrdelbach Ó Briain, son of Tadc of Céal Uisce fame, laid siege to Bunratty castle (then in the king's hands),<sup>44</sup> and in Leinster, where John fitz Thomas's manor of Rathangan was burned and the surrounding countryside devastated by an Irish attack.<sup>45</sup> As a result, the justiciar, John Wogan, was compelled to organize a campaign against the Irish and the commitment of men and resources meant that for several months afterwards little or nothing left Ireland for Scotland.<sup>46</sup>

The effect on Ireland of developments in Scotland, while understated in the sources, was obviously considerable. It seems that the Scottish war had an emotional impact exceeding that of the conquest of Wales. For instance, it was reported that on the day of the massive defeat of Wallace at Falkirk the sun 'was red as blood throughout all Ireland'.<sup>47</sup> Individuals got caught up in the complicated tangle. Adam Vivian was a merchant of Drogheda, a loyal Anglo-Irishman who 'stood to the king's allegiance and peace and never gave counsel or aid to his enemies and rebels in Scotland'. Unfortunately for Adam, though, he was married to a woman of Ayr, and when they decided to flee the war and disturbance in Scotland, and landed in Ulster, they had all their goods confiscated by the seneschal on account of the embargo on Scottish trading contacts.<sup>48</sup> It was around this time that another individual called Adam of Ireland petitioned the king, on account of his good service in Wales and Scotland and elsewhere, for a grant of the freedom of the town of Dumfries; the problem facing this and other Anglo-Irishmen was, he explained, that 'the burgesses refuse to allow them to trade there because they are of the English nation'.<sup>49</sup> Robert Joye, a merchant and citizen of Dublin, had a ship of his arrested when it landed at Ayr, the merchandise confiscated, the sailors stripped of their very clothes. Then in 1306 various suspected culprits put ashore at Drogheda. They turned out to be simple herring-fishermen out of Ayr, Rutherglen, Irvine, and

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<sup>42</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 224-5; idem, 'Irish levies in the Scottish wars, 1296-1302', *The Irish Sword*, 5 (1961-2), 207-17.

<sup>43</sup> *CDI*, IV, 536.

<sup>44</sup> *CDI*, IV, 521.

<sup>45</sup> James Lydon, 'Edward I, Ireland and the war in Scotland, 1303-1304', in *England and Ireland in the later middle ages*, ed. idem (Dublin, 1981), 46.

<sup>46</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 225-6.

<sup>47</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 328. Curiously, the Welsh *Brut* texts also report that 'the sun reddened on that day in the beginning of autumn' (*Brut*, 122), though I do not think there is any need to assume transmission of information from one chronicle tradition to another.

<sup>48</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 229.

<sup>49</sup> Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of ancient petitions', 9.

Dumbarton, and were released on surety to the value of their boats and nets, provided they did not return to Scotland without licence, 'so that they may fish on the coasts of Ireland, and by their fishing procure their living in said land'. Simple fishermen they may have been, but no less a man than the king's lieutenant in Scotland, Aymer de Valence, interceded on their behalf, saying that the victualling of Rothesay and Inverkip castles depended on them.<sup>50</sup> They were the lucky ones. In the xenophobic atmosphere that wartime produces, Scotsmen like them were bound to find themselves under suspicion and perhaps ill-treated if they turned up in Ireland. Men from Gaelic Scotland may have fared even worse. In 1301, for instance, 'Gillepadyr Mc Ternan', 'Gillehone Pale', and 'Gilletuythel', all of Scotland, found themselves in custody in the prison of Drogheda on the side of Uriel, but were astute enough to escape southwards over the Boyne, taking refuge in St John's church on the Meath side of the town. When the terrified Scotsmen failed to appear before the court their chattels, worth 30s. 6d., were seized, it was found that they were 'of ill fame', and they were outlawed.<sup>51</sup> There may have been those in Ireland anxious to exploit the confusion caused by the war for dubious personal gain. One Elias de Stodholme complained in 1306 that, having been sent to Ireland to buy wine by the keeper of the king's victual at Carlisle, he landed at Greencastle in County Down, but was arrested by William de Mandeville, the seneschal of Ulster, and he and his mariners were imprisoned and their ship and its goods taken, on the erroneous grounds that 'Elias and his mariners are of the land of Scotland, when they are not'.<sup>52</sup>

Efforts to control the migratory flow between the two countries had been intensified at a parliament held in Dublin in 1300 which prohibited anyone landing in Ireland other than at the regular ports.<sup>53</sup> However, such injunctions were probably futile given the extent of the Scottish mercenary input into Irish warfare by that stage.<sup>54</sup> If the term *gallóclaeach* first occurs in the Irish annals in 1290, only two decades passed before it had gained sufficient currency to turn up as *galogelaghes* in an Anglo-Irish Latin chronicle, when 600 of them were reported as being killed by Richard de Clare in Thomond.<sup>55</sup> They were brought there from Connacht in the company of William Liath de Burgh, a first-cousin of the earl of Ulster,<sup>56</sup> indicating how widely spread they already were. A late source claims that Domnall Ó Néill, king of Cenél nEógain from 1283 to 1325, was the first to bring them to the province.<sup>57</sup> However, the

<sup>50</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 226-8.

<sup>51</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 405.

<sup>52</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 234.

<sup>53</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 306.

<sup>54</sup> For discussions of the Scottish military presence in Ireland in the later middle ages, see G.A. Hayes-McCoy, *Scots mercenary forces in Ireland, 1565-1603* (Dublin and London, 1937), 15-76; Andrew McKerral, 'West Highland mercenaries in Ireland', *SHR*, 30 (1951), 1-14; and now, James Lydon, 'The Scottish soldier in medieval Ireland: the Bruce invasion and the galloglass', in *The Scottish soldier abroad 1247-1967*, ed. G.G. Simpson (Edinburgh, 1992), 1-15.

<sup>55</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 340.

<sup>56</sup> See *AI s.a.* 1311.

<sup>57</sup> 'An leabhar Eoghanach', a late sixteenth-century tract on the history of the Uí Néill, printed in *Leabhar Chloinne Aodha Buidhe*, ed. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (I.M.C., Dublin, 1931), 31.

archbishop of Armagh and the bishop of Clogher used the occasion of the publication of Boniface VIII's famous bull *Clericis laicos* (1296) specifically to persuade several kings of the province including Ó Néill, Mac Mathgamna, and MagUidhir to give undertakings to the church that 'satellites et Scoticos nostros' would desist from impeding and robbing of their clothing and other goods 'clerics and church tenants travelling on their business, not only in fields and woods but by public roads and streets'.<sup>58</sup> This demonstrates the problem caused in Ulster by the escalation in their numbers, and contrasts with the complaint of the clergy of the province of Tuam in 1291 that they were impoverished 'per satellites Hibernicos et per guerram':<sup>59</sup> evidently, Scottish mercenaries were not yet a major problem in Connacht.

It seems certain that there was, at this juncture in the last decade of the thirteenth century, a sudden escalation in the numbers of warriors from the Western Isles seeking employment in Ireland.<sup>60</sup> In 1304 they turn up in Bréifne, where some *gallóclaíoch* were killed in battle under its king Matha Ó Raigillig.<sup>61</sup> A year later, 140 were killed fighting with the Uí Raigillig against the Uí Conchobair, including the heir (*oigri*) of Clann Suibne of Kintyre and Mac Buirrce 'head of the galloglasses of the country (*cenn galloclaeach an tiri*).<sup>62</sup> Four years later one Máeldomnaig Gallóclaeach was responsible for the death, again in Bréifne, of the king of Connacht, Áed son of Eógan Ó Conchobair.<sup>63</sup> By 1315, however, Ruaidrí son of Cathal Ruad Ó Conchobair had made himself king of Connacht with the help of galloglasses,<sup>64</sup> and the ensuing conflicts between him and his rival, Feidlim son of Áed Ó Conchobair, were such that the despairing annalist concludes that 'the whole of Moylurg was beggared and bare from that time on, for therein was no shelter or protection in church sanctuary or lay refuge, but its cattle and corn were snatched from its alters and given to galloglasses for the wages due to them'.<sup>65</sup> In the same year and the following one the wife of Áed Ó Domnaill of Tír Conaill hired a band of galloglasses (*ceitherni galloclaeach*) to attack enemies among the Uí Conchobair.<sup>66</sup> When Feidlim killed Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair in 1316, 100 galloglasses fell with

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<sup>58</sup> K.W. Nicholls, 'The register of Clogher', *Clogher Record*, 7 (1971-2), 361-431 (at p. 418); see also, Simms, *From kings to warlords*, 122.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Mc Neill, 'Harris: Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis', *Analecta Hibernica*, 6 (1934), 248-449 (at p. 319-20); *CDI*, III, 899.

<sup>60</sup> That, strictly speaking, is what the term *gallóclaeach* means; not a 'foreign' warrior, but a warrior from *Innsi Gall*. And since the Gaelic-speaking inhabitants of the latter themselves applied that title to their homeland, *gall* was clearly not used in a pejorative sense to mean 'foreign' (Innocent III's privilege granted to Iona in 1203 refers to the outer Isles as 'Insegal' (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, VII (1867), 4-5); Alan Mac Ruaidrí was described as ruler of 'Incha Guala' in 1286 (*CDS*, II, 288); in 1305, the bishop of Sodor sought a licence to make a visitation of 'the islands of Incheval' (*ibid*, II, 1717); Eógan Mac Dubgaill was appointed sheriff of 'Argyll and Inchevall' in 1307 (*ibid*, III, 18); and 'the barons of the whole of Argyll and Ynchevall' were among the magnates of Scotland to write to Philip of France in 1309 (*A Source book of Scottish history*, ed. W. Croft Dickinson et al. (London, 1958), 142).

<sup>61</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *Misc. Irish annals* s.a. 1304.

<sup>62</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU*; *AFM* s.a. 1305.

<sup>63</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AClon* s.a. 1309.

<sup>64</sup> *AC*; *ALCé* s.a. 1315.

<sup>65</sup> *AC*; *ALCé* s.a. 1315.

<sup>66</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU*; *AFM* s.aa. 1315, 1316.

him, led by Donnchad Mac Ruaidrí of Garmoran in Argyll.<sup>67</sup> Significantly, the Ulster annalist calls the Scots who fell in this battle 'noble galloglasses (*galloclacha uaisli*),<sup>68</sup> and we hear that another 140 of Clann Ruaidrí's warriors, led by *Mac Ruaidhrí nGallóglach* himself, were killed in the battle of Kilmore in Bréifne in the following year.<sup>69</sup> Robert Bruce was also in Ireland at this time and the Irish annals note that he came 'along with many galloglasses (*maille re moran do galloclaechaib*)'.<sup>70</sup> Such an army would not, by then, have appeared out of place, but - if we take it that the first occurrence in 1290 of the term *gallóclaeach* and its ubiquity in the sources immediately thereafter represents a development in military organization rather than just a change in terminology - the chances are that Bruce's galloglass bands would have appeared rather more out of the ordinary a generation earlier. The explanation for this development is probably manifold, but the likelihood is that the widespread warfare in the Isles, which we know took place in the years following the death of Alexander III, had something to do with it. Though it is to over-simplify a highly complex pattern of relationships, by and large Clann Dubgaill, Clann Suibne, and some of Clann Ruaidrí, prospered while Balliol prospered, then suffered English aggression while Edward I opposed him; later, after Bruce snatched the kingship, they adhered, like the rest of a rapidly disintegrating Balliol faction, to the losing English side. Conversely, Clann Domnaill in Islay and Kintyre were in trouble for a while, and in grave danger of losing everything (indeed, Alexander Mac Domnaill was killed by Mac Dubgaill 'and countless slaughter of his people along with him' in 1299),<sup>71</sup> but were rescued from oblivion by Bruce's success thereafter. These years were very difficult ones for the inhabitants of the Isles; allegiance to one side or the other was a gamble, and on its outcome depended their retention of lands, their military careers, and often their lives. It was in circumstances such as these that the heads of Clann Suibne or Clann Ruaidrí brought their warrior-bands to Ireland, taking service in the armies of Ulster and Connacht, where their lordly status was recognized and their military might rewarded, all the time keeping a weather-eye on the prospects of a restoration back home.

Fluctuating allegiances, cynical alliances, self-preservation - these are, therefore, some of the motivating themes of Hiberno-Scottish relations at this volatile moment. Such machinations were not confined to the desperate inhabitants of the Isles. The earl of Ulster refused to take part in the campaign in Scotland commanded over by Edward I and his son from July to September 1301. It can be plausibly argued that the earl's prevarication was a bargaining ploy intended to extract better terms of service,<sup>72</sup> but there may have been something more to it than that. De Burgh's absence from the campaign was big news, to which

<sup>67</sup> *AC*; *ALCé* s.a. 1316.

<sup>68</sup> *AU* s.a. 1316.

<sup>69</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU* s.a. 1317.

<sup>70</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU* s.a. 1317.

<sup>71</sup> *AC*; *AU* s.a. 1299.

<sup>72</sup> See Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 239-41.



the Irish annals specifically allude, and may be implying that this contributed to its failure: 'A hosting by the king of England into Scotland, and fitz Gerald and de Bermingham and the nobles of the foreigners of all Ireland, except the earl of Ulster, went with him on that hosting, and were in Scotland from a fortnight before Lammas until All Saints, but could not conquer it fully'.<sup>73</sup> The whole point of the campaign was to smash Scottish power in the south-west, the king announcing that 'the chief honour of taming the pride of the Scots' would fall to his son, the newly created prince of Wales.<sup>74</sup> Scottish strength in this region derived primarily from the fact that the vacillating Robert Bruce chose to oppose the English at this stage, and his castle at Turnberry was one of the prime targets of the assault. It was eventually taken in early September;<sup>75</sup> even in October, though, the new English garrison at Ayr was under threat from Bruce's men of Carrick.<sup>76</sup> An undated letter from the king to the Irish justiciar, almost certainly belonging to this year, ordered the latter to stay in Ireland if the earl of Ulster did not come to serve the king in Scotland.<sup>77</sup> Why? It was presumably not because the king feared that the earl might give aid to Bruce; but arrangements were probably already under way for Bruce's marriage to the earl's daughter (it was formalized in the following year),<sup>78</sup> and de Burgh cannot have been entirely above suspicion. Before the marriage went ahead, of course, Bruce joined the English side and so made it safe for de Burgh to be publicly associated with him. As a result largely of the earl's refusal to join the 1301 campaign the Irish force which took part was only about two-thirds the size of that which served in the successful campaign there five years earlier.<sup>79</sup> Wittingly or otherwise, therefore, the earl of Ulster had contributed, if only in a negative sense, to the inconclusive course of events in Scotland in that year.

It was otherwise in 1303. With his new son-in-law's sword now rather opportunistically back in its scabbard, de Burgh could afford to adopt a high profile in Edward's quest for what he termed the 'final and happy expedition of the war in Scotland'.<sup>80</sup> Although the army eventually assembled was the largest to leave Ireland during the course of the war,<sup>81</sup> as far as the Dublin annals of St Mary's are concerned, the earl's involvement, with that of his henchman Eustace le Poer, was the only thing worth noting about it: 'Eodem anno, Dominus Richardus de Burgo, Comes Ultonie, et Dominus Eustacius le Poer, cum magna potentia, Scotiam intraverunt'.<sup>82</sup> The annals put together by Friar Clyn of Kilkenny are even more blunt. Apart from one obit, 1303 is summed up in these words: 'Ricardus comes Ultonie Scotiam

<sup>73</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AClon*; *AU*; *AFM* s.a. 1301.

<sup>74</sup> *CDS*, II, 1191; Barrow, *Bruce*, 120-21.

<sup>75</sup> Lydon, 'Irish levies in the Scottish wars', 212-13.

<sup>76</sup> *CDS*, II, 1236.

<sup>77</sup> *CDI*, IV, 849.

<sup>78</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 331.

<sup>79</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 245.

<sup>80</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1301-7*, 159.

<sup>81</sup> Lydon, 'Edward I, Ireland and the war in Scotland, 1303-1304', 52.

<sup>82</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 291.

intravit'.<sup>83</sup> The Irish annals are similarly impressed with the news of the earl's participation: 'A great expedition by the king of England into Scotland and he took many cities. And the earl and many foreigners and Irish went from Ireland in a great fleet, and they conquered Scotland this time'.<sup>84</sup> And perhaps there is more than a hint here that the gains made were due to his presence. The annalist's admission that the Irish took part is also interesting. There had been Irish lords on the 1301 campaign: Domnall Ruad Mac Carthaig, king of Desmumu, was pardoned £100 for supplying the services of 80 foot,<sup>85</sup> yet even the Inisfallen annals, compiled by keen observers of his actions who were also ardent admirers, fail to record the fact, although it may in fact have hastened his death in the following year. It is interesting that in the Connacht annals the first entry for 1302 is a generous obit of Domnall Ruad, while the last entry for the preceding year is an account of the failed Scottish expedition, but no hint is given that either Mac Carthaig or any other Irish had taken part in it. It is possible that there was greater Irish involvement in the 1303 campaign, and a greater willingness to admit the fact, because it had the sanction of the earl of Ulster. If the Bruces had been building up contacts over the years with others in Ireland besides the de Burghs, it is possible too that the increased Irish involvement was by some of those sensitive to the nuances of Robert's new 'neutrality'.

Bruce's half-hearted adhesion to the English cause ended in the most startling fashion on 10 February 1306, when he murdered John Comyn of Badenoch in the Franciscan monastery at Dumfries. Within six weeks he had himself installed as king of Scotland, and the most extraordinary phase of the war of independence had begun. There was little overt sympathy for his action among the Anglo-Irish community. The Dublin chronicler records that, 'unmindful of his oath to the lord king of England', he killed Comyn and had himself made king, 'to the confusion of himself and of many others'; describing Bruce as 'pretensum Regem Scocie', the author also recounts his subsequent excommunication.<sup>86</sup> It may be of note that the previous entry but one in the same chronicle tells of another infamous murder which had as great an emotional impact on the Irish as the Red Comyn's murder had on the Scots: the slaughter of thirty or more of the Uí Conchobair Failge at a feast held in their honour by Piers de Bermingham at Carbury in County Kildare. Curiously, though, the Dublin chronicler is the only source to reveal that the perpetrator was another member of the Comyn family, Jordan.<sup>87</sup> We do not know his exact relationship to the Scottish Comyns but it is worth noting that exactly two years before his murder by Bruce, when the Red Comyn was forced to submit to Edward I, terms were drawn up for him and his following, for their lands, homages, goods and appurtenances 'en Engleterre, Escoce, et Irland'.<sup>88</sup> In 1310, the Red Comyn's son John

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<sup>83</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, 10.

<sup>84</sup> *AC; ALCé; AU; AFM* s.a. 1303.

<sup>85</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 244. Thomas Ó Riain also took part (*ibid*).

<sup>86</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 333-4.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 332.

<sup>88</sup> Palgrave, *Documents and records*, no. CXXXIII.

appointed a Richard Comyn as attorney to act on his behalf in Ireland.<sup>89</sup> During the course of Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland a Lord William Comyn 'et suos sequaces custodes pacis' did the Dublin government a favour by killing a leading Wicklow rebel Dúnlán Ó Broin; another Anglo-Irish chronicler records William's death 'cum duobus fratribus suis' later that same year.<sup>90</sup> Jordan Comyn's murder of Ó Conchobair Failge led to widespread unrest in the south of Ireland.<sup>91</sup> This continued in 1306, when 'commota est guerra inter Anglicos et Hibernicos in Lagenia', as a result of which a great army was assembled from various parts of Ireland 'ad refrenandam malitiam Hibernicorum Lagenie': in the campaign which followed the Dublin annalist singles out for special tribute the part played by the Ulster baron, Thomas de Mandeville, a man who was one of the most active Anglo-Irish opponents of the Scots throughout the war, and, as we shall see, to his dying day one of the Bruces' bitterest foes.

It would be quite wrong to speculate on an overt connexion between the course of events in Ireland and Scotland at this juncture - in particular between, on the one hand, Jordan Comyn's murder of Ó Conchobair Failge and the war it produced in Leinster, and, on the other, Bruce's murder of John Comyn which re-ignited the Scottish fuse. But that Bruce's rebellion produced a reaction in Ireland is clear. Professor Lydon has called attention to the fact that as soon as Bruce murdered Comyn the justiciar and magnates of Ireland were informed of the fact as a matter of urgency.<sup>92</sup> This can only be because the event had immediate implications for Ireland. Nothing like the negative tone of the Anglo-Irish annalists is evident in the reaction of Gaelic writers to the event. The Connacht-based writer notes that Bruce 'took the kingship of Scotland in opposition to the king of England, by force (*do gabail rige a nAlbain a n-agaid Rig Saxan ar ecin*)'.<sup>93</sup> It takes the Munster chronicler a year to catch up on the event. He first of all notes the death of Edward I on 7 July 1307, describing him as 'a knight most skilled and ruthless and brave (*ridiari is glicu ⁊ is angigiu ⁊ is crodu*), but adds:

...by him the greatest number of people fell in his time, though he did great damage to church and laity, for by him fell Llywelyn, king of Wales, and his brother, i.e. David, and by him the Welsh were subdued and are still in servitude, without a king of their own over them. And by him also great oppression was inflicted on the Scots, having banished their king from them, and he killed in one day 50,000 of them, it is said, and countless numbers of them on all sides on another occasion.<sup>94</sup>

It is the next entry which describes Robert Bruce's bid for the throne - 'Robert Bruce was defending the kingdom of Scotland and expelling the English therefrom, having killed the Red Comyn (*Robeard do Brius a[g] cosnam rigi nAlban ⁊ ag dicur Shax eisti ar marbad do in Cuminig Ruaid*)' - implying that Bruce's actions were in response to the king's demise, and making no bones of the fact that he intended reversing Edward's conquest. From the implicit

<sup>89</sup> CDS, III, 167, 321.

<sup>90</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 350; *Annals of Clyn*, 12.

<sup>91</sup> 'A great war in this year in Leinster and Desmumu between the foreigners and the Irish': *AI* s.a. 1305.

<sup>92</sup> P.R.O. E.101/369/11, fol. 146; Lydon, 'Edward I, Ireland and the war in Scotland, 1303-1304', 60, n. 69.

<sup>93</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU* s.a. 1306.

<sup>94</sup> *AI* s.a. 1307.

criticism, in the previous entry, of Edward's treatment of the Scots, we can perhaps take it that Robert Bruce's revolt met with the author's approval. This is just the sort of reaction Bruce himself was anxious to provoke. A man who murders a rival before the high altar of a church and usurps the kingship legitimately invested in another can expect little sympathy from clerical writers; that he was not condemned outright by Irish annalists was success in itself. It was Bruce's task to win over more widespread church approval for his *coup* on the grounds that it was an action of last resort, justified by the unlawful English occupation of his country. This is the line his supporters took. Barbour, his fourteenth-century biographer, has Bruce himself telling his followers before the battle of Methven in June that the man who dies for his country (that is, for Bruce's cause) goes straight to heaven.<sup>95</sup> One of his loyalists among the episcopate, the bishop of Moray, was accused in the same year of urging the Scots to support him, on the grounds that opposing the English was as good a cause as the struggle against the Saracens in the Holy Land, 'deceiving many christians by his false preaching and exhortations, exciting them to cause the spilling of the blood of christians'.<sup>96</sup>

The emphasis on the bishop's *falsas predicaciones* is of interest because clearly, from the English point of view, one of the most alarming things about Bruce's rebellion was the frenzied atmosphere it provoked, the English believing that Bruce's agitators were stirring up the volatile masses to follow his banner. This was precisely the charge made in an important eye-witness account sent from Forfar to some unnamed English official on 15 May 1307. The writer says that Bruce 'never had the goodwill of his own followers, or the people at large, or even half of them, so much with him as now'. His victories in the field were proof of the righteousness of his cause: 'it now first appears that he has right, and God is openly for him, as he has destroyed all the king's power, both among the English and the Scots, and the English force is in retreat to its own country, not to return'. Then he adds a revealing statement:

...they firmly believe, by the encouragement of the false preachers (*les faus prechours*) who come from the host, that Sir Robert de Bruys will now have his will...And may it please God to keep the King's life, for 'when we lose him, which God forbid' (say they openly), all must be on one side, or they must die or leave the country with all those who love the King, if other counsel and aid be not sent them. For these preachers have told them that they have found a prophecy of Merlin, how after the death of 'le Roi Coueytous' the Scottish people and the Welsh shall league together, and have the sovereign hand and their will, and live together in accord till the end of the world.<sup>97</sup>

At least one such prophecy survives dating apparently from in or just before 1307 describing how the Welsh and Scots will indeed join together, destroy the English, and rule the whole island.<sup>98</sup> The real significance, however, is in the use Bruce was allegedly making of vaticinal

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<sup>95</sup> Barbour, *The Bruce*, I, 225-80.

<sup>96</sup> Palgrave, *Documents and records*, no. CXLVIII; cf. E.M. Barron, *The Scottish war of independence* (2nd edn, Inverness, 1934), 295-8.

<sup>97</sup> *CDS*, II, 1926.

<sup>98</sup> W.F. Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts, chronicles of the Scots and other early memorials of Scottish history* (Edinburgh, 1867), no. XI. Skene ascribes it to the late eleventh century (p. xliii) but it seems to refer to Alexander III's death, John Balliol's reign, and Edward I's subjugation of Scotland, after which it gets fanciful, so it may have been written just before Edward's death (M.O. Anderson, 'The Scottish materials in the Paris manuscript Bib. Nat., Latin 4126', *SHR*, 28 (1949), 33-42; cf. M.E. Griffiths, *Early vaticination in Welsh with English parallels* (Cardiff, 1937), 198).

material for current political ends. Deliberately circulating rumours that age-old predictions of a Scottish and Welsh alliance were about to come to pass, was only one step short of initiating such a league; and not such a giant step at that. The Scots, we have seen, had formed a short-lived alliance with the Welsh in 1258. The Welsh insurrection in 1294 may have been sparked off in part by Edward I's insistence on them joining him on his campaign in France: that he took many of them to certain deaths there immediately after subduing them was an act forthrightly condemned by an Irish annalist. His insistence on the Scots doing likewise was what pushed Balliol over the brink and into rebellion. The Scots then sent envoys to negotiate a treaty with the French. On the same day that it was signed, a Franco-Norwegian pact was agreed to in which Scotland was intended to play its part.<sup>99</sup> Throughout the war there was intensive diplomatic activity with various North Sea German cities, and one of Robert Bruce's own diplomatic breakthroughs was the Scotto-Norwegian alliance of 1312.<sup>100</sup>

In the light of such activities it would be foolish to think that Bruce did not recognize the potential of Welsh support. It was at this stage that two of Edward I's officials in Wales warned that a war between England and Scotland would lead to a Welsh revolt; the reason, apparently, went without saying, or, as they put it in their letter, 'vous savez bien que Galeys sont Galeys'.<sup>101</sup> Welsh leaders such as Gruffydd Llwyd, with whom, as we shall see, the Bruces were later to flirt, were leading thousands of their fellow countrymen to Scotland to fight England's wars for her.<sup>102</sup> It was good news for the Scots when it happened that they quarrelled with English sections of the army, such as at Edinburgh in 1296 when, incidentally, the man sent to pacify the dispute had his charger wounded by one Ralph 'of Ireland',<sup>103</sup> or when, during the Falkirk campaign, the Welsh, having gone unfed (and at one point living on wine that again led to drunken brawls with their English counterparts), threatened to join the Scots. King Edward managed to play down the potential disaster this posed, allegedly in the words: 'What matter if both Welsh and Scots are our foes? We shall beat them both in a day'.<sup>104</sup> But it would have been better news for the Scots if the Welsh could have been dissuaded from contributing to the English war-effort at all.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See Ranald Nicholson, 'The Franco-Scottish and Franco-Norwegian treaties of 1295', *SHR*, 38 (1959), 114-32.

<sup>100</sup> Dilley, 'Scottish-German diplomacy, 1297-1327'.

<sup>101</sup> J.G. Edwards, 'Edward I's castle-building in Wales' *Proc. British Academy*, 32 (1946), 80-81.

<sup>102</sup> Morris, *Welsh wars*, 286-92, 313-14.

<sup>103</sup> *CDS*, II, 822.

<sup>104</sup> *Chron. Guisborough*, 325-6.

<sup>105</sup> As with Ireland, the Scots could do nothing but gain from a destabilized Wales. Indirectly, the Scottish war was having some effect. The air of suspicion caused by the trade embargo meant that the merchants of North Wales found themselves being hindered when they attempted to import merchandise and victuals from Ireland (Connolly, 'Irish material in the class of ancient petitions', 12). The ordinary obstacles in the way of communication across the Irish Sea were greatly exacerbated by the war, which may have made life easier for those trying to avoid the rigours of the law: in 1305 it was claimed that a minor and heir from County Kildare was kidnapped and brought 'to parts of Wales where the king's writ does not run, and kept there as if imprisoned'; five years earlier, when the king's keeper of weights and measures in Ireland was charged with irregularities, he fled to Wales, though in his case he was eventually captured and brought back to Dublin castle (*Cal. just. rolls*, I, 31; II, 78).

A method by which Bruce could help kill two birds with one stone was through Ireland. The Anglo-Irish colony made a hefty contribution to the English conquest of Wales and Scotland. It was a contribution the essence of which was summed up by a terse sentence from the Irish pipe roll for the year 1296, allowing the customs officials at Drogheda for 'sums expended in connection with provisions for the castles of Wales and the expeditions against Alexander of Argyll and the islands of Scotland'.<sup>1</sup> Here was the continuing Irish contribution in a nutshell:<sup>2</sup> expeditions against the rebels in western Scotland were being paid for by the Irish colony and were for the most part mounted out of Irish ports;<sup>3</sup> the continued quiescence of the Welsh was accomplished with the help of a fortress-dotted landscape, to a large degree finding its sustenance in Ireland. Limit the Irish capacity to do so, and the Scots and Welsh both gained. Now, if, in the weeks and months after his seizure of the kingship, Bruce was already making efforts to dislodge the Welsh from the inertia which had understandably transfixed them for a decade, we have no evidence of it. It was very different in the case of Ireland. Within a few short weeks of his murder of Comyn, Bruce or his men had seized the castle of Ayr, had, by an exchange, gained control of Dunaverty at the southern tip of Kintyre, had taken Rothesay by sea, had launched a siege of Inverkip, and had tried unsuccessfully to secure the surrender of Dumbarton.<sup>4</sup> Of this frenetic activity Professor Barrow has observed: 'The attention thus paid by Bruce to five of the fortresses which commanded the Firth of Clyde is striking proof of his awareness of the 'western approaches'. The way must be kept open for allies and supplies to reach him from Ireland and the Outer Isles, while enemies from the same quarter, and also English fleets based on Skinburness, must find their approach routes barred.'<sup>5</sup> Indeed, one might argue that Bruce's actions necessitate the conclusion that the securing of the route to Ireland was an integral part of his plan-of-action in seizing the kingship.

The wisdom of his actions was to be proven before very long. Robert I's early efforts were very uninspiring. By the summer of that year, in fact, he was little short of a fugitive.<sup>6</sup> Early in September he suffered a further blow when his wife and daughter were captured after the fall of Kildrummy castle in Aberdeenshire, and Barrow has speculated that they may have been intending to reach Orkney and thence Norway. However, an unpublished chronicle in the British Library has a story about the new queen journeying to join her father, the earl of

<sup>1</sup> *38th P.R.I.rep.D.K.*, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Its significance has been persuasively argued in Lydon, 'Ireland's participation'; for a summary of the case, see idem, 'The Bruce invasion of Ireland', *Historical Studies*, IV, ed. G.A. Hayes-McCoy (London, 1963), 112-13.

<sup>3</sup> For this, see W.S. Reid, 'Sea-power in the Anglo-Scottish war, 1296-1328', *Mariner's Mirror*, 46 (1960), 7-23.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Johnson, 'Robert Bruce's rebellion in 1306', *EHR*, 33 (1908), 336-7.

<sup>5</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 149.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-54, 160-61.

Ulster, in exile in Ireland, which may be nearer the mark.<sup>7</sup> It was towards the latter destination that Robert too now headed. Travelling by way of the Lennox and Loch Lomond, he came first to Bute and then Dunaverty castle, which his men had seized several months earlier almost as if he had foreseen his need of it. From Dunaverty, we can surely accept Barbour's claim that he crossed the thirteen miles of channel to Rathlin.<sup>8</sup> From Rathlin, I believe, Robert despatched his by now well-known letter seeking an alliance with the inhabitants of Ireland.<sup>9</sup> I have presented elsewhere my reasons for dating the letter to the winter of 1306-7,<sup>10</sup> which may be summarized here. The first is that the stated purpose of the alliance is so that 'our nation may recover its ancient liberty (*nostra nacio in antiquam reduci voleat libertatem*)', and I have argued that even though the term *nostra nacio* is an inclusive one intended to mean the Scots and Irish, Bruce would not contemplate the suggestion that Scotland's liberty yet remained to be won were the letter written, as hitherto assumed, at some stage after the battle of Bannockburn. It, therefore, emanates from the early part of the reign and I may add that a very similar phrase ('if ...the kingdom of Scotland [be] restored to its original liberty') occurs in the letter sent to Philip IV of France by the barons assembled for Robert's first parliament in March 1309.<sup>11</sup>

The other reason for ascribing the letter to the winter of 1306-7 is the fact that the text as it survives in formulary outline has had the emissaries' names erased and replaced by the initial letters 'A, B, et C', but that when they are repeated towards the end of the document they are given as 'T et A', as if the copyist neglected to alter them. Robert's insular exile ended in the early weeks of 1307 when two of his surviving brothers launched an invasion of Galloway, backed by an Irish army, led by an Irish king. His brothers names were Thomas and Alexander, and it would be a coincidence of extraordinary proportions indeed if these were not the 'T et A' of the formulary letter. Having said that, Professor Duncan has communicated to me his deduction that Alexander Bruce was the senior of the two brothers, in which case a document referring to them should read 'A et T'. His reason for suggesting so is that Alexander, named after the late king, was probably born before Thomas, named after the martyr; even if not, as dean of Glasgow, Alexander should have had precedence. However, every contemporary account, both chronicle and record, that I have noted which names the two brothers together puts Thomas first. Guisborough, who knew his Bruces since his priory was a foundation of the family holding the bones of the first Robert Bruce, says that Robert 'sent from him, with part of his army, his two brothers, that is, Lord Thomas Bruce who had always hated the English, and Lord Alexander, a cleric, who were unexpectedly captured by us

<sup>7</sup> B.L. MS Nero D.X., fol. 108v.: '...et post statim illam in exilium in Hibernia transmisit ad patrem suum comitem Ultonie a quo ad regem Anglie destinata cum honorem suscepta est.'

<sup>8</sup> For a full discussion of Bruce's possible whereabouts during the winter of 1306-7, see Barrow, *Bruce*, 166-70.

<sup>9</sup> Now *Regesta regum Scottorum*, V, ed. A.A.M. Duncan (Edinburgh, 1988), no. 564.

<sup>10</sup> Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 64-5.

<sup>11</sup> *Acts of the parliaments of Scotland*, I, 459.

at night and legally drawn and hung'.<sup>12</sup> The north of England Lanercost chronicler, again equally well informed on his subject, says that on 9 February 1307 (the date is a few days late) 'two brothers of Robert Bruce, Thomas and Alexander, dean of Glasgow, and Sir Reginald Crawford, desiring to avenge themselves on the people of Galloway, invaded their country with eighteen ships and galleys, having with them a certain Irish kinglet, and the lord of Kintyre, and a large following'. He adds that they were overcome by Dungal Macdouall, a chief of the Gallovidians, who captured all but two galley-loads of them. The Irish king and the lord of Kintyre, he tells us, were beheaded and their heads sent to Edward I, then staying at the writer's own priory.<sup>13</sup> Then Thomas and Alexander Bruce (again in that order), and Reginald Crawford who had been severely wounded, were taken to the king alive, who had them beheaded and their heads set on the gates of Carlisle.<sup>14</sup> A contemporaneous continuation of the *Flores historiarum*, compiled at Westminster, has an independent account, saying that Dungal Macdouall brought to the king 'the heads of Malcolm, lord of Kintyre, and of two Irish *reguli*. He also presented Sir Thomas de Bruys and Alexander his brother, dean of Glasgow, brothers of the false king, and Sir Reginald de Crauford...of whom Thomas was drawn, hung, and decapitated, the others simply hung and beheaded'.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, we have an official record of the expenditure by John de Droxford, keeper of the king's wardrobe, of £40 at Carlisle on 3 February 1307 'to pay Dungal Makedouel for the taking of Sirs Thomas and Alexander de Bruys and Reginald de Crauford.'<sup>16</sup> Also, the unprinted account book of the wardrobe expenses of the Prince of Wales details the payment on 19 February of 50 marks by gift of the prince to Dungal Macdouall 'capitaneo exercitus Galewadie' for bringing to the prince's court 'lords Thomas de Brus, Alexander his brother, and Reginald de Crauford, traitors of the king, captured by him in battle, along with the heads of certain other traitors of the parts of Ireland and Kintyre'.<sup>17</sup> It seems that contemporaries were in no doubt as to which of the brothers ranked first.

On the other hand, a rather more serious objection to the identification may be Robert's description of his emissaries as 'dilectos consanguineos nostros A, B, et C', since if Thomas and Alexander alone were involved in the delegation one would have expected 'fratres'. 'T' and 'A' are, of course, specifically empowered at the close of the letter to conclude an agreement in the king's name, but they may not have been alone in the embassy; hence the use of 'A, B et C' at the opening of the letter. Bearing in mind the intimate involvement in the enterprise of the Ayrshire gent Reginald Crawford, the looser term 'consanguineos' may have

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<sup>12</sup> *Chron. Guisborough*, 370.

<sup>13</sup> See J.R.H. Moorman, 'Edward I at Lanercost priory', *EHR*, 67 (1952), 261-74.

<sup>14</sup> *Chron. Lanercost*, ed. Maxwell, 179-80.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. Luard (RS, London, 1890), III, 136.

<sup>16</sup> *CDS*, V, 492, p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> B.L. Addit. MS 22923, fol. 14v.



been employed to cover the inclusion of him or another third party less closely related to the king.

It has been important to deal at length with this matter of the date of the letter not only because such a date would seem to make it the earliest act of King Robert I the full text of which survives (albeit in a formulary), but also because of its more immediate significance as a dramatic insight into Robert Bruce's policy and strategy in the initial stages of his kingship. One of the more remarkable features of this letter is the fact that it is likely to have had an appeal limited to the native Irish. It is addressed in the first instance to 'omnibus et singulis regibus Ybernie', then to the prelates and clerics, and finally the all-embracing 'incolis tocius Ybernie'. But it proceeds to say of the Scots and Irish people, using that noun in the singular ('nos et vos populus noster et vester'), that 'we have sprung from one seed of birth (*ab vno processimus germine nacionis*)', are free since ancient times (*ab olim liberi*)', and have 'a common language and custom (*tam lingua communis quam ritus*)'. The purpose of the embassy, he says, is 'to treat with you...about permanently strengthening and maintaining inviolate the special friendship between us and you so that with God's will our nation may be able to recover her ancient liberty (*ad tractandum vobiscum...super consideratione amicitie specialis inter nos et vos perpetue conuectente et inuiolabiliter obseruande per quam Deo disponente nostra nacio in antiquam reduci valeat libertatem*)'. Whatever about Robert Bruce's own qualifications to speak in such terms - even though he was, of course, purporting to speak on behalf of all Scots - his address could but ring hollow in the ears of Anglo-Irishmen. They could hardly feel that their *populus* shared the same ancestry, language and customs as the Scots, or that their ancient freedom had been lost and needed recovering by means of an alliance with the Scots against their English foes. The only context into which the letter fits, therefore, is an attempt by Robert Bruce, however unqualified for the task he may to us appear, to appeal to the common Gaelic inheritance of Ireland and Scotland, reminding the Irish that they too have lost their freedom at English hands, and suggesting that the way forward lies in joint action.

If this letter does belong to the winter of 1306-7, and if there is any truth in the contemporary rumour that Bruce was spreading propaganda about a proposed coalition with the Welsh, then it has a very real significance: Robert Bruce, almost from the moment of his seizure of the Scottish kingship, planned to mobilize the potential of both Ireland and Wales in order to overturn the recent annexation of Scotland. All going well, the Edwardian conquest of Wales would be reversed, and the gradual erosion of their freedom which the inhabitants of Ireland had for so long now been experiencing would finally be undone. Hindsight offers a rather harsh verdict on Bruce's plans. There cannot have been quite the 'breathhtaking

arrogance' in the scheme that modern writers are wont to see.<sup>18</sup> It is true that much had changed since the Welsh wars of 1277 and 1282-3, but the Welsh had produced one lacklustre (1287) and one impassioned revolt (1294-5) since then, and their restiveness under what contemporaries were happy to call the English yoke must have seemed self-evident. As for the Irish, their dissatisfaction with English rule was famous. Edward I had long since been informed by Simon Cusack, the Franciscan bishop of Kildare (1280-99), of the influence that certain Irish clerics had on the kings (*regulis*) of that country, encouraging them '[pro patria?] *nativa pugnare et Anglicos Hibernie conquis[itores?]. . . impugnare eorumque mobilia invadere*'.<sup>19</sup> For another Franciscan writer of the same period the real danger to stability in Ireland were the hereditary bards, whose evil praises of the plundering Irish lords, as he put it, made them become puffed up with pride, so that they 'cannot be converted to any good'.<sup>20</sup> The result was a country 'destroyed by war', as the dean and chapter of Derry described their diocese in 1293.<sup>21</sup> The king was sufficiently aware of the danger to claim, when seeking a limited contribution in personnel from Ireland for a campaign abroad in 1297, that he 'had ordered such a small number of them in order that they might be well apparelled and well mounted, and that Ireland after their going might remain better supplied'.<sup>22</sup> When he was seeking supplies from Ireland within weeks of Robert Bruce's coup in 1306, Edward insisted that the justiciar find them 'in places where they can do the greatest advantage to the king and least hurt to the men of those parts'.<sup>23</sup> When Edmund le Botiller turned up at Dublin with a force of men-at-arms in 1303, ready to join in the earl of Ulster's expedition to Scotland, he was told to remain in Ireland 'for the security of the king and of Ireland'.<sup>24</sup> This reminds one of the request made by an individual in 1307 who was heir to some lands in the west of Ireland that, although he was under age, he should be granted seisin of them, 'because the land of Connacht is in these days at war, so that the withdrawal of men out of those parts is full of danger'.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, rightly or wrongly, the perception abounded that the English hold on Ireland was in danger of collapse. In 1311 it was the desperate prayer of the ordainers that 'unless God improve the situation' the king's lordship of Ireland was 'on the point of being lost'.<sup>26</sup> Only a few years later a letter to the king from 'the middling people of Ireland' made the remarkable, if somewhat exaggerated, claim that 'ces quarant anz les Engleis ont perdu les treis parties et

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<sup>18</sup> A phrase used by Professor Duncan to describe a similar Bruce family initiative less than a decade later: 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland, 1315', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 114.

<sup>19</sup> Extracts from the much-damaged letter are printed in Little & Fitzmaurice, *Franciscan materials*, 52-3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-8.

<sup>21</sup> *CDI*, IV, 94.

<sup>22</sup> *CDI*, IV, 399.

<sup>23</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 247-8.

<sup>24</sup> *CDI*, V, 279.

<sup>25</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 310.

<sup>26</sup> *Statutes of the realm* (Rec. Comm., London, 1810), I, 157.

plus de ce qu fu conquis'; what is really significant, though, is that they add, in a reference to Edward Bruce's invasion, 'et ce avant la venue des Escotois'.<sup>27</sup> The clear implication is that a shove by the Scots will suffice to send the colony to oblivion. And thus, just as the Munster chronicle says of Scotland in 1307 that Robert Bruce was 'expelling the English from it (*ag dicur Shax eisti*)', so, exactly a decade later, the Connacht chronicle employs precisely the same expression in describing Robert Bruce's arrival in the colony 'to expel the foreigners from Ireland (*do dichur Gall a hErinn*)'.<sup>28</sup> The perception of both operations was the same: Bruce would do for Ireland exactly as he had done for Scotland.

And this, it seems, is what he had offered to do in the winter of 1306-7. The first problem he faced as a result was that in making his appeal to the native Irish, ipso facto he alienated whatever support he may have come to expect from the loyal Anglo-Irish, and he certainly made life very difficult for his father-in-law, the earl of Ulster. But opting for Irish support was his only real alternative since he could never really hope to convince sufficient Anglo-Irish to repudiate their allegiance to the crown and support his treasonable aims. The second problem he found himself with was that, as Robin Frame put it, in seeking 'the backing of 'all the kings of Ireland', he was asking for a unity quite foreign to Gaelic Ireland'.<sup>29</sup> But he, of course, knew that. And he knew that the Irish themselves were aware of the inherent weakness to which their fractiousness gave rise. One might instance the complaint of a poet writing on the assassination in 1311 of Donnchad son of Toirrdelbach Mór Ó Briain, king of Thomond, in a feud with rivals from his own dynasty:

Do you prefer, you traitors,  
the power of foreigners over Ireland?  
Ireland will be without a husband after Donnchad  
or she will belong to foreigners.

...It was senseless of them to commit the treachery;  
It was wrong not to consider Ireland.<sup>30</sup>

This too is the message to be taken from a poem composed in the late 1330s for Tomás Mag Samradáin, lord of Tellach Echach in Bréifne:

Éire is ruined by rivalry among Gaoidhil;  
not mutual love in peace is their policy;  
their anger keeps them apart;  
sad they cannot agree!

Their rivalry in desire of Banbha's land [Ireland]  
has deprived them of thick-grassed Fódla [Ireland];  
instead of attacking the foreigners, every troop  
of Conn's race [the Irish] is in turmoil.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Sayles, *Affairs of Ireland before the King's Council*, 99-101.

<sup>28</sup> *AI* s.a. 1307; *AC* s.a. 1317.

<sup>29</sup> 'The Bruces in Ireland, 1315-18', *IHS*, 19 (1974), 24.

<sup>30</sup> 'An fearr libhsi a lucht an fill/ nert allmurach ar Eirinn/ biaid gan chele a ndiaigh Donnchaidh/ no biaidh Eiri ag allmhorachaibh...Nir ciall doib denum an fill/ nir choir gan feghun d'Eirind'. From the poem beginning *Dé cédaín millter magh Fáil*, in B.L. Addit. MS 19995, fol. 5r. Dr Katharine Simms kindly supplied me with her transcript.

<sup>31</sup> *The Book of Magauran. Leabhar Méig Shamhradháin*, ed. and trans. Lambert McKenna (Dublin, 1947), no. XXIII, stt. 1, 2.

This awareness of the dangers involved in their personal divisions, and in the need to join together in a united opposition to the 'foreigners', was not confined to the poets. It is true that several of the leading Irish kings of the thirteenth century had questioned the wisdom of resisting the conquest, and that on one particular occasion a wide body of opinion (though not so the Irish of Ulster) had dallied with the prospect of securing their absorption into the common law.<sup>32</sup> But bitter experience cautioned against it. The Munster chronicle had condemned the murder of the Meic Murchada rulers of Leinster in 1282 as having been done 'in violation of the peace of the king of England', but the murder of the Uí Conchobair Failge princes at a feast in Piers de Bermingham's castle was the last straw. It produced possibly the most impassioned outburst against English rule to occur anywhere in the pages of that chronicle:

...And woe to the Irishman who puts trust in the king's peace or in foreigners after that. For although they had the king's peace, their heads were brought to Dublin, and much wealth was obtained for them from the foreigners. And when Piers was reproached for that, he said that he did not know of a foreigner in Ireland who had not undertaken to kill his Irish neighbour, and he knew that they would kill as he himself had killed...<sup>33</sup>

Piers de Bermingham did indeed bring the heads of his victims to the government who rewarded him with a grant of £100.<sup>34</sup> Only a matter of months later Dungal Macdouall of Galloway was somewhat less lucratively rewarded for presenting the occupation-government of Scotland with the grisly spectacle of the severed head of an unknown Irish king who had been persuaded to join Bruce's cause.

If the latter Irish king is at all representative, and if the words of the poets and annalists were heeded, there may have been a groundswell of support for the Scots in the aftermath of Bruce's coup. We may never know the identity of the Irish *regulus* who lost his life in the Bruce brothers' invading army, given the Irish annalists' usual reluctance to describe the activities of Irishmen abroad. He was, however, probably an Ulster lord, and the only such individual whose death is recorded in 1307 was Máelsechlainn Ó Gairmlegaig, *ardtaisech* of Cenél Moain, a branch of Cenél nEógain who then inhabited the barony of Raphoe in the west of the province.<sup>35</sup> The interesting thing about the Cenél Moain is that they had a penchant for Scandinavian personal names, such as Oláfr (d. 1179, 1260), Ragvaldr (fl. pre-1178), Sigtryggr (d. 1195) and, most interesting perhaps, Sumarlídi (d. 1239, 1292). This suggests that they involved themselves in maritime affairs and their chief may therefore have been the man who joined the Bruces in 1307. He was undoubtedly not alone. Fortunately for Bruce, he himself returned to Scotland by a different route from that taken by his brothers. If, however, his

<sup>32</sup> See A.J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The request of the Irish for English law, 1277-80', *IHS*, 6 (1948-9), 261-70; Aubrey Gwynn, 'Edward I and the proposed purchase of English law for the Irish, c. 1276-80', *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 5th ser., 10 (1960), 111-27.

<sup>33</sup> *AI* s.aa. 1282, 1305.

<sup>34</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 82.

<sup>35</sup> See O'Donovan, *AFM*, III, 37, note u.

brothers' army had a substantial Irish input, so too had Robert's. Guisborough has him returning to Scotland 'ab insulis Scocie ad quas fugerat, cum multis Hybernicis et Scottis'.<sup>36</sup> This army had left Ireland, at the latest, in late January. However, we also hear that at some point prior to April 18 certain 'enemies, rebels, and felons of Scotland', having arrived in the earldom of Ulster, were captured along with their harbourers, and brought to Dublin castle.<sup>37</sup> It is possible that this was part of a second attempt by Bruce, having begun to recover his grip on the earldom of Carrick, to enlist aid in Ireland. We certainly have evidence that supplies were being brought to him across the channel.<sup>38</sup> And, if anything, the attempt to blockade the sea-route between Ireland and Scotland intensified *after* Bruce's landing, as much as to suggest that this represented a life-line that demanded to be cut.

The first request in several years to Hugh Bisset to take to the seas against the Scots was made before 29 January 1307, in other words, before Bruce's return, when he was still 'lurking in the islands on the Scottish coast'; Hugh and his crews were to be paid for 40 days from setting sail.<sup>39</sup> On February 2 the Irish justiciar was ordered to help Hugh in any way he could to procure vessels in Ulster, and to man and victual them, in order to pursue Bruce in the Isles, and destroy his abettors' shipping.<sup>40</sup> By March 20, Hugh's 40 days' service had ended, and he had failed in the admittedly difficult task of intercepting Bruce's forces to prevent a landing. On this day he was present at a meeting of the council at Mullingar which sanctioned a further 40 days' service in the Isles in the fleet led by Simon de Montacute and John of Menteith, then opposed to Bruce. Hugh was allowed one great galley of 40 oars and other smaller vessels which he could procure on the coasts of Ulster, and there would be 600 men under him, armed to various specifications, 500 of whom would land to harass the Scots, the other 100 having always to remain with the vessels. If needs be, he was to have two knights and twenty esquires, mounted on light horses and hobbies, as part of the 600. In addition, it was decided to provide Bisset with five great ships besides those he was to obtain in Ulster, each manned with twenty mariners. Hugh's force was ordered to muster at Carrickfergus on April 11, in the presence of Simon de Montacute's son William.<sup>41</sup> His departure was apparently delayed, however, because the Irish pipe roll for 35 Edward I records the payment of the substantial sum of £240 in wages for Bisset's crews, for 40 days from May 2.<sup>42</sup>

All the surviving records of Hugh's campaign make it clear that what was envisaged was a substantial expeditionary force, designed to undertake an offensive assault by land and sea against those in the Isles (including Kintyre, of course, which, as a peninsula, was regarded as

<sup>36</sup> *Chron. Guisborough*, 370.

<sup>37</sup> *CDI*, V, 633; P.R.O. E372/152 (Pipe roll I Edw. II, m. 35d.).

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, *Cal. close rolls, 1307-13*, 339.

<sup>39</sup> *CDI*, V, 610; *CDS*, II, 1888.

<sup>40</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, II, 332-4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 332-4.

<sup>42</sup> *39th P.R.I.rep.D.K.*, 25.

an island) who continued to lend vital support to Robert Bruce. Bisset was undoubtedly selected for the task because his loyalty was not in question. He had served against the Scots throughout the war, and lost a horse, presumably in action, in 1296, being rewarded that same year with a grant of Irish lands and rents.<sup>43</sup> In 1298 he had 160 men under him in four ships harassing the Scots of the Isles,<sup>44</sup> was entrusted with the power to receive the inhabitants of the Isles into the king's peace,<sup>45</sup> and was granted the very large sum of £500 for a period of five years out of the issues of escheats.<sup>46</sup> In 1302 he was actually captured by the Scots, whereupon his people and lands in Ireland were granted protection for a year.<sup>47</sup> Whatever about his actions in the latter stages of Edward Bruce's invasion in 1315, which we shall deal with presently, the doubts about Hugh Bisset's loyalty in the early stages of the Scottish war seem unfounded.<sup>48</sup> They centre on three concerns. One is the ineffectiveness of his seaborne assaults, which is a little unfair, and if the government of the day - a good deal better informed than we can ever hope to be - was willing to pour money into the venture, they must have had hopes of yielding a result. The second is Walter of Guisborough's statement that a 'Thomas' Bisset invaded Arran in 1298, acting (he claims) on behalf of the Scots, and only came over to the English side upon hearing news of their victory at Falkirk.<sup>49</sup> Even if this is Hugh, Guisborough alone seems to have doubted his motives since his commission to oppose the Scots was issued the following October. The third worry over Hugh's loyalty is the fact that Robert Bruce was able to find shelter on the Bisset island of Rathlin in the autumn of 1306. However, even Barbour admits that the islanders opposed Bruce on his landing and hid their cattle from him in the castle, but were overtaken and captured by Bruce's men. Under this sort of duress, we are told that Bruce made a treaty with them, they acknowledged his claims, did homage and fealty, and subjected themselves to him as king, promising to provide for him and his 300 men.<sup>50</sup> It is probably wrong to blame Hugh Bisset for the Rathlin islanders' behaviour, and the fact that by year's end the government was sending Hugh off in pursuit of Bruce, with a very considerable force of men at a high cost to the government itself, indicates, certainly, that they had no suspicions about his behaviour and, possibly, that Bruce's intrusion into Rathlin was seen as added motivation for Hugh and as justification for employing him in particular to harry the Scots.

In any case, it seems reasonable to assume that Hugh Bisset and the mariners of the Ulster coast were specially chosen for the task of countering the Scots in the Isles because of

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<sup>43</sup> *CDI*, IV, 313, 320.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 555, 589.

<sup>45</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 218.

<sup>46</sup> *Cal. just. rolls*, I, 305.

<sup>47</sup> *CDS*, II, 1320; *Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 167.

<sup>48</sup> They have been discussed in Lydon, 'The Bruce invasion', 114.

<sup>49</sup> *Chron. Guisborough*, 329.

<sup>50</sup> Barbour, *The Bruce*, III, 659-762.

their familiarity with the region. But it is clear from the wording of Hugh's commission that it was not intended that he simply blockade the sea-route and keep aid from getting in and out to Bruce. That task, however, was given to Hugh's cousin John Bisset, who, at Carlisle on 16 June 1307, bound himself to Simon de Montacute 'to undertake the keeping of the Isles, and the sea-coast and the arms of the sea towards Kintyre, and the other Isles near this side of 'le Moel de Kentyre', so that the Scottish enemies should not pass out that way'; he was 'to maintain his watch' until July 23, and under his command there were to be four barges crewed by 100 stout men.<sup>51</sup> Here was an Ulster lord patrolling the Firth of Clyde, several months after Bruce's return to Scotland, with the intention of restricting the Scots' movements. The irony was that while John Bisset was on the high seas, the traditionally seafaring Argyllsman, Eógan Bacach Mac Dubgaill (John 'of Lorne' or 'of Argyll') was stationed on land, at Ayr, guarding the town and district against Bruce.<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, in an undated petition Eógan Bacach sought the release from prison in England of Sir David Graham, describing him as his son-in-law.<sup>53</sup> Now, back in 1279 an inquisition in Ulster found that David Graham was married to Muriel, daughter of the late John Bisset of Glenarm, part of whose estate he sought.<sup>54</sup> Though the Bisset line is very confused, the John alive in 1307 may have been Muriel's half-brother. If David Graham was, therefore, John's brother-in-law, and now married to a daughter of Eógan Mac Dubgaill, this may in part account for John Bisset's alignment with these opponents of the Bruces.

Be that as it may, not much more than a year later Robert I was strong enough to round on Clann Dubgaill for their continued opposition.<sup>55</sup> The elderly Alexander Mac Dubgaill, forced to surrender his fortress at Dunstaffnage, fled, Fordun claims, to England.<sup>56</sup> His son Eógan Bacach held out for a time against Bruce, probably at Inchconnell on Loch Awe, and in October 1308 he obtained a safe-conduct from Edward II to send ships to Ireland and England to provide victuals and munitions for the castle.<sup>57</sup> This he too was soon to lose. In June 1309, both father and son were with Edward II at Westminster planning an expedition to Scotland,<sup>58</sup> but on December 9 they landed in Ireland where, it had obviously been decided, they could be of best use, pending restoration of their Scottish lands.<sup>59</sup> On 1 April 1310 the treasurer of Ireland was ordered to pay £100 'for the sustenance of the men of Alexander of

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<sup>51</sup> *CDS*, II, 1941.

<sup>52</sup> *CDS*, II, 1957.

<sup>53</sup> *CDS*, III, 65. In the latter he is referred to as 'Sir Patrick' and then 'Sir David', and there were individuals of both names alive at the time, but as David was imprisoned in the tower of London after his capture at Dunbar in 1296 (*ibid*, II, 742), it is probably he who is intended.

<sup>54</sup> *CDI*, I, 1500.

<sup>55</sup> For the Argyll campaign, see Barrow, *Bruce*, 178-81.

<sup>56</sup> John of Fordun, 'Gesta annalia', CXXV.

<sup>57</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 58.

<sup>58</sup> *CDS*, III, 95.

<sup>59</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 278.

Argyll serving in Ireland' up until Lent, if still unpaid, and then until midsummer; a similar sum was to be paid for 'John of Argyll's men in Ireland'.<sup>60</sup> Alexander died soon afterwards and Eógan Bacach took over command of both forces, reporting to the king that he had only obtained 100 marks of the total of £200 due, whereupon the Irish treasurer was ordered on 18 January 1311 to pay the residue, along with another 100 marks for the period since November 11.<sup>61</sup> We are not told what Clann Dubgaill were doing in Ireland, but on June 18 Eógan was given permission to receive to the peace 'homines de Ergadia, Inchehalle et aliis forinsecis terris et insulis adjacentibus', and was issued a similar mandate on August 6.<sup>62</sup> We may conclude, therefore, that Clann Dubgaill, now banished from their homeland in Argyll, were based in Ireland, operating their galley-fleet out of Irish ports, and that the Irish exchequer was financing their bid to win back their lands and undermine King Robert's recent successes. This is confirmed by exchequer accounts for 1311 recording the payment of wages of men-at-arms and foot 'euntium in comitiva Johannis Dergaillia pro terris suis recuperandis in partibus Scocie'.<sup>63</sup>

Bruce's successes were now such that his weak rival on the throne of England could do little to withstand him. When Edward Bruce overran Galloway in the summer of 1308, the family's prospects were further improved (though several English garrisons remained intact), making it easier to gain access to supplies and opening the route to Ireland. As a result, in October 1309 it was necessary for Edward II to have the Irish justiciar issue another proclamation prohibiting merchants from exporting grain, victuals or arms and armour to Scotland, and any Scots entering Irish towns or ports were to be arrested: the same mandate was issued to the earl of Ulster.<sup>64</sup> Such instructions had by now a familiar ring. It is fairly clear, though, that they were widely ignored, because when the king issued a similar mandate in June 1310 he added that 'we know that the aforesaid enemies have been accustomed to be received in divers places in said land [of Ireland] and to obtain victuals, wheat and armour, and bring them to Scotland to succour our enemies in contempt of us and our expedition of war'.<sup>65</sup> Here was real concern at the ineffectualness of English efforts to offset Bruce's exploitation of Irish resources. Eógan Mac Dubgaill's base in Ireland was intended to bring this about, but of greater use still should have been the continued English occupation of the Isle of Man. Simon de Montacute, through his affiliation with Affreca de Cunnoght, sought to press his claim to the island and was out of royal favour for a time as a result.<sup>66</sup> However, it may be that the king realized the potential of the de Montacute interest in the island as a means of keeping the

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<sup>60</sup> *CDS*, III, 132; *Cal. close rolls, 1307-13*, 205.

<sup>61</sup> *CDS*, III, 132.

<sup>62</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 90, 93.

<sup>63</sup> Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 288, n. 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 73.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>66</sup> *Cal. chancery warrants, 1244-1326*, 379; *CDS*, III, 307.



Scots at bay. He found it opportune to exploit the family's Irish Sea interests for English ends, employing Simon as commander of a fleet operating out of Man, to complement the Irish-based force under Mac Dubgaill: on 8 August 1310 both were issued licences to receive to the peace 'our enemies in the islands of Scotland'.<sup>67</sup> By 1310 Robert I was strong enough to countenance ending the English annexation of Man which his father-in-law, Richard de Burgh, had effected twenty years earlier. De Burgh no doubt supported the de Montacute claim since Simon's son William, as noted above, appears to have been an adherent of the earl. If so, this may have been one of several wedges being driven of late between himself and King Robert. Fear of alienating de Burgh could, however, count for little alongside the strategic significance of the Isle of Man to the Scots.

In the autumn of 1310 Edward II at last bestirred himself to lead an expedition to Scotland. For this, he planned a large Irish contingent, over which he appointed the earl of Ulster commander.<sup>68</sup> The ships needed to transport them were to dock at Dublin by August 22. Within weeks of the planned departure, however, Edward wrote to the English towns who were to supply the fleet to say that the earl and the other Anglo-Irish could not go, and instead the vessels were directed to the Isle of Man 'to be led from there by our liege Simon de Montacute who is admiral of our fleet'.<sup>69</sup> From the Scots' perspective, the (unexplained) withdrawal of the Anglo-Irish from the expedition was heartening news, the only drawback to which was this new strategy of using Man as a bridgehead to Scotland. It was obviously critical for Bruce to nip this in the bud. It may, therefore, be worth quoting at some length from a letter on the subject written by Edward II on 15 December 1310:

We have learnt from certain persons that Robert Bruce, our enemy and traitor, is striving with all his power and purposes to despatch all his navy during the present winter from the outer islands to our island of Man, for the purpose of destroying it, and of establishing there a retreat for him and his accomplices, our enemies and rebels; and likewise to seize upon all victuals and other necessities in the aforesaid Isle of Man, for his own use and for the support of his said accomplices, and for the supply of his navy.<sup>70</sup>

To stop Bruce from doing so he ordered the sheriffs of the counties of north-west England to aid in the supply of men and victuals for a fleet to join the the seneschal of Man, Gilbert Mac Ascaill. A day later we get further news of the situation in Man from another letter of the king, this time to his officials in Ireland and England, in which he complains of 'the very many malefactors of the Isle of Man who, adhering to the party of Robert Bruce our enemy and traitor, have perpetrated great injuries against us and our lieges in England both within and without the liberties, where they linger and are received'. Gilbert Mac Ascaill would supply their names, and if they arrived in England they were to be imprisoned: letters to the same effect were to be sent to Ireland and Wales.<sup>71</sup> From this it is clear that there were those in

<sup>67</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 93.

<sup>68</sup> *Parliamentary writs*, I, 392, no. 63.

<sup>69</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 92.

<sup>70</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 96.

<sup>71</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 96; *Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 332.

Man who now backed its restoration to Scotland,<sup>72</sup> but the presence of the English fleet may have deterred the rumoured Scottish invasion. As a result, the English maintained dominance over the north Irish Sea area and in 1311 planned what Edward II himself called 'one of the greatest movements of the Scottish war': a fleet would assemble by midsummer at Larne, the Ulster port ironically once held by the earls of Carrick, now in the possession of Thomas de Mandeville, and would 'set sail for Scotland and the coast of Argyll' under the command of Eógan Mac Dubgaill.<sup>73</sup> It was intended that much of its manpower would come from Ireland, but to what extent this came to pass - in the absence of accounts for the fleet - it is difficult to say.<sup>74</sup> It did, however, meet at Larne; it did advance up along the Scottish coast under Mac Dubgaill's command; and he was thanked for his efforts by the king, who asked him to continue the task throughout the winter of 1311-12, promising that the Irish treasury would foot the bill.<sup>75</sup>

It goes without saying, in the light of this evidence, that Robert Bruce would avail of the earliest opportunity to alter the balance of power in the north Irish Sea region. Ejecting Clann Dubgaill from Argyll, courting the support of other native leaders in the west, sending his brother Edward to wreak vengeance on the Bruces' Galloway opponents - these had all been part of the process, and had gone a long way towards securing his supremacy. The next step was removing the English presence from Man. Just as Edward II had predicted, on 18 May 1313 Robert I landed on the island 'with a host of ships'. He laid siege to Rushen castle, his determination given added edge by the fact that its garrison was commanded by none other than Dungal Macdouall, the Gallovidian responsible for his brothers' deaths, who held out until June 11, when Bruce 'victoriously brought the land under his sway'.<sup>76</sup> The Dublin annalist reports the fall of Man on June 11. What is more important, though, is the statement in the same chronicle that, on May 31, during the course of his siege of Rushen, Robert Bruce sent some of his galleys to Ulster 'cum suis piratis ad depredandum'; they were opposed by the 'Ultonienses', who managed to drive them off, but, it adds, 'dicitur tamen quod idem Robertus applicuit per licenciam Comitis treugas capiendo'.<sup>77</sup> Bruce may have landed to make a truce in order to ensure that the inhabitants of Ulster did not lend aid to the Manx garrison, but it is more likely that what passed for a 'truce' was little more than an attempt by the Ulstermen to buy off his threat of aggression with a hefty down-payment of blackmailed supplies (the verb

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<sup>72</sup> As early as 1292 Edward I had complained that 'certain priests of the Isle of Man by conspiracy and false suggestion have made divers complaints against the king's ministers and others and so stir up the whirlwinds of suggestions that disturbances are feared' (*Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 31).

<sup>73</sup> *CDS*, III, 203, 216.

<sup>74</sup> *Parliamentary writs*, I, 142, no. 66; Lydon, 'Ireland's participation', 287-8.

<sup>75</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 107.

<sup>76</sup> *Cronica regum Mannie & insularum*, fol. 50r.; John of Fordun, *Gesta annalia*, CXXX.

<sup>77</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 342-3. There is confirmation from the Irish annals of Bruce's arrival on the Irish coast in this year (*AC*; *ALCé*; *AClon*).

used suggests that the 'taking' of tribute rather than the 'making' of a truce was the real business of the day).

This is what Bruce did fourteen years later in the summer of 1327: he landed in Ulster and made a 'truce' with the seneschal of the earldom, designed to last a year, which simply involved the handing over by the colonists there of 100 'cendres' of wheat and the same of barley, half at Martinmas and half at Whitsun.<sup>78</sup> If Robert's activities in 1313 were, therefore, a blueprint for what followed in 1327 - and perhaps, for all we know, several times in the interval - we may perhaps extrapolate from the greater surviving documentary detail of the 1327 enterprise as to what happened in 1313. In 1327 the man under pressure to conclude a truce with the Scots king was Henry de Mandeville, then seneschal of the earldom, and in an especially vulnerable position as holder of part of what had formerly been the Carrick estate in Ulster. In 1313 the seneschal was also a de Mandeville, William, and if, as the Dublin annalist believed, the earl of Ulster gave Bruce permission to land, then William de Mandeville must have had to deal with Bruce on the earl's behalf on the occasion. In 1327, Henry de Mandeville agreed to a truce on pain of full forfeiture: Robert Bruce, as king of Scotland, could secure the ejection of an Ulster tenant from such lands as he held there, if the colonists refused to supply the levy. Leaving aside the thorny question of what right King Robert had to do this, we may speculate that in 1313 a similar guarantee was sought that the Ulstermen would comply with the arrangement. Perhaps their non-compliance was one of the excuses used by Edward Bruce when, as we know, he was subsequently to take punitive action against certain of the colonists there.<sup>79</sup> Finally, by an extraordinary provision of the 'acorde' reached in 1327, Robert Bruce had included in its terms, and had specifically protected from attack by their local opponents, 'touz les Hyrois Dulvestre qi volent estre les soens e a sa foi'. At some earlier date, therefore, King Robert had extended his protection to the native Irish of Ulster, and perhaps it was to fulfil a commitment entered into with them that the army of Scotland, under Robert's brother Edward, landed in Ulster in 1315.

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<sup>78</sup> For this episode, see Ranald Nicholson, 'A sequel to Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland', *SHR*, 42 (1963), 30-40.

<sup>79</sup> The Dublin annalist reports for 1316 that 'Brus tenuit placita et occidit les Logans' (*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 349).

### *Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland*

Word for word, the unsuccessful Bruce invasion of Ireland has brought forth more comment than any other event or series of events in later medieval Ireland - with the possible exception of the rather more successful invasion it was intended to overturn, that of the Anglo-Normans almost exactly one and a half centuries earlier. Scottish historians have, by and large, tended to ignore the likelihood that the kings of Scotland had a 'policy' towards Ireland, have tended to underestimate the importance of their western frontier in a perhaps forgivable concentration on that to the south, have understated the Bruce interest in the Irish Sea region,<sup>1</sup> and have seen their involvement in Ireland as 'a digression', Edward Bruce's death in battle there as an 'inevitable' failure, and their wider plans for uniting the Celtic peoples as 'breathhtaking arrogance'.<sup>2</sup> It would be ungenerous to see in this a reluctance to admit that, even if its Gaelic inheritance was no longer the oxygen in the life-blood of the Scots nation, nevertheless, still in the early fourteenth century, a vital ingredient in the dynamic of Scottish society continued to be supplied by Ireland - that very 'seed of birth' it shared with the Irish of which Robert I was happy to boast. Irish historians, more prepared to at least nod in the direction of this shared Gaelic birthright, have offered an increasingly more generous assessment of the Bruce plans, and, whatever else, have always seen the invasion as a tremendously important milestone in the history of the Anglo-Irish colony, if not a turning-point on the path to its terminal decline.

It has been one of the aims of this dissertation to demonstrate that events in the history of the Irish Sea nations - of which the Bruce invasion is one of the most extraordinary and forms an appropriate end-point to the discussion - may become more easily explicable if they are viewed in a longer-term context. By adjusting our sights to this more distant landscape, its contours begin to take shape. As a result, events which often appear to happen out of the blue, around which it seems impossible to build a contextual framework, make more sense. It is less easy to ignore them, to relegate them to anecdote, or to explain them away as random eccentricities of the Celtic world. It may still not prove possible to explain each incident fully, but we can at least say that we have seen similar such occurrences on other occasions and that it fits into a pattern of long standing. So it is with the Bruce invasion. Professor A.A.M. Duncan recently stated his conclusion that the invasion was 'an expedition which cannot be explained by a close or continuous inter-relationship of Irish and Scottish families or politics'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Though Professor Barrow has been busy making up for lost ground in recent years. See *Robert the Bruce and the Scottish identity*, Saltire Pamphlets, new ser. 4 (Edinburgh, 1984), esp. pp. 15-17 (I am grateful to Professor Barrow for sending me a copy of this important paper); idem, *Bruce*, 3rd edn., chap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> The first two descriptions are those of G.W.S. Barrow, in *Bruce*, 1st edn., 339; the third is A.A.M. Duncan's, in 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland', 114.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland', 102.

But this seems to me to be unjustified. If it is not being unfair to do so, I should like to take Professor Duncan's statement as a theme for what follows, as, if he is correct, it has severe implications for my argument. If he is correct (and here, admittedly, I am taking his point to a logical extension which he perhaps does not intend), there is nothing in the political relationship between Ireland and Scotland in this era to explain why the Scots launched an invasion of Ireland, or why, specifically, they invaded when they did; and there is nothing in the dynastic inter-relationship to explain why some individuals in Ireland and Scotland supported the enterprise, and others not. It has been part of the purpose of this thesis to establish that such is far from being the case, and I therefore propose to devote this section to the examination of each of these points.

The question of what the Scots hoped to achieve when their parliament, meeting at Ayr in April 1315, decided to sanction an immediate invasion of Ireland has been a subject which has consumed attention. Several answers have been given, both by contemporary observers and modern historians - to cut off Irish supplies to the English or to obtain Irish supplies for the Scots themselves; to create a diversion for Edward II, stirring the Irish into widespread revolt, or even better perhaps, encouraging the Welsh to do likewise; to satisfy the covetousness of Edward Bruce; or to answer a plea by the Irish to help them end English rule. None of the suggestions lacks supporting evidence to sustain it. And the fact is that the Scots may have been happy to achieve even one of these suggested aims; because, ultimately, the fulfilment of one of them or all of them would produce (to a greater or lesser extent) the same result. It was that result which was their real motivating impulse. If Ireland stopped supplying the English war-effort, if the Scots increased their access to Irish supplies, if Edward II was diverted from confronting the Scots by revolts in Ireland and Wales, if Edward Bruce's alleged cupidity was satiated by winning himself a kingdom in Ireland, and if the Irish threw off the shackles of English rule, who gained? Robert Bruce. Surely Robert would have settled for the least spectacular of the goals historians have suggested he sought to achieve in Ireland and Wales in 1315-18 if it helped in any way to achieve the one goal which we know for certain he did seek: the recognition by England of the independence of the kingdom of Scotland and of his position as its king. That does not mean that he did not pursue with vigour the less easily attainable objectives, in particular the overthrow of English rule in Ireland and his brother's installation as king: the evidence of Robert's own campaign in Ireland in support of the venture speaks for itself. What it does imply is that, in their heart of hearts, the Scots knew that these were not ends in themselves; they were a means to an end, and when that end was otherwise obtained, they were abandoned.

There is solid proof of this fact. Robert Bruce was in a position virtually to dictate the terms of the treaty of Edinburgh-Northampton made with Edward II's queen Isabella and her lover Roger Mortimer on 17 March 1328. It is our surest guide to his core goal. By its terms, a

'good peace, final and perpetual' was concluded between the kings of England and Scotland, their kingdoms, and their subjects. The king of England rendered null and void all documents 'touching the subjection of the people or of the land of Scotland to the king of England'; any such documents were to be returned untampered to King Robert. The ephemeral nature of Scottish involvement in the affairs of Wales can be deduced from the absence of any mention of it in the treaty. Not so in the case of Ireland, and not so in the case of the other running sore that bedevilled Anglo-Irish relations during Bruce's reign - the Western Isles and Man. The text continues:

Item, it is treated and accorded that if any levy war in Ireland against the said king of England,...the aforesaid king of Scotland...shall not assist the said enemies of the said king of England; also...that if any levy war against the aforesaid king of Scotland...in the Isle of Man or in the other islands of Scotland, the said king of England...shall not assist the said enemies.<sup>4</sup>

Here we have his 'core' objective. Robert gets Scotland, the Isles and Man, and, in return, England can keep Ireland. That Wales was theirs to do with as they wished went, apparently, without saying. I think this treaty brings us close to discovering what the Bruces were up to *vis-à-vis* Ireland in the twenty years which preceded its negotiation. What the English had been doing by their annexation of Man and their support for dissident elements in the Isles was an attempt to undermine the Scots king and destabilize his kingdom. Now that they were content to let him and his kingdom be, the English promised to stop that. The reverse applies. Bruce had for years lent his support to those levying war against the English king in Ireland. He had done so to improve his own position in Scotland, and now that he had secured his position there he could resign himself, quite happily one assumes, to a less interventionist role across the North Channel.

In the light of the commitment Bruce made by the terms of the 1328 treaty we may perhaps view again his involvement in Irish affairs over the years. The hopes expressed in his letter to the kings of Ireland of 'permanently strengthening and maintaining inviolate the special friendship' between the Scots and Irish amounted to more than a request for aid: he committed himself to helping those Irish determined to end English rule in the country. If it was sent in the winter of 1306-7, he was in no position to do much about it at that point; but we have seen that there were 'enemies, rebels and felons of Scotland' acting on Robert's behalf in Ulster in or before the following April. The skies darken for three years until 1310, by which time his prospects had considerably improved, whereupon we hear of Edward II ordering the arrest of 'those adhering to Robert Bruce' in Ireland.<sup>5</sup> This is a significant revelation. Despite the disastrous outcome of the Galloway invasion early in 1307 in which an Irish kinglet had lost his life, Bruce still had backing in Ireland. It seems to have been a consistent theme of the

<sup>4</sup> Stones, *Anglo-Scottish relations*, 164-70.

<sup>5</sup> *Foedera*, II, pt. 2, 122.

Bruces' policy towards Ireland to gain the adherence of the native Irish and to seek to act on their behalf. Hence, Archdeacon Barbour has Edward Bruce treating with the 'Erishry of Ireland' in advance of his invasion.<sup>6</sup> Milo de Verdon, a leading figure among the Anglo-Irish gentry of County Louth, claimed in the autumn of 1315 that the Scots would attempt that winter to conquer Ireland 'par eide des Irreis Dirlande'.<sup>7</sup> We may recall also the specific provision, under the terms of Robert's 1327 truce with the seneschal of Ulster, for 'all those Irish of Ulster' who were his adherents. Its restriction to the native Irish is significant. Notwithstanding the support he received from a section of the Anglo-Irish community (demonstrated during the course of his brother's invasion, as we shall see), Robert, in his 1306 letter to Ireland and under the 1327 truce, concerned himself exclusively with the native Irish, espousing their cause by the first, promoting their welfare by the other, and, undoubtedly, over the years, seeking their allegiance. The Anglo-Irish who backed Bruce were engaged in traitorous acts, and it would perhaps have been out of the question to make reference to them in the truce. In contrast, ambiguity remained as regards the status of the native Irish, and it is clear that Robert I worked assiduously to exploit that fact for his own ends.

It was Robert who sought their adherence. It was Robert who committed himself to 'permanently strengthening' his 'special friendship' with these Irishmen, 'sprung from one seed of birth', so that 'our nation may be able to recover her ancient liberty'. And it was Robert, by his own tacit admission in 1328, who had offered his assistance to anyone in Ireland who would 'levy war' against the king of England. Domnall Ó Néill was by 1315 Bruce's leading adherent among the native Irish. When he made a justly famous appeal to Rome in 1317, Ó Néill said of the English that 'in order to shake off the harsh and insupportable yoke of servitude to them and to recover our native freedom which for the time being we have lost through them...we call to our help and assistance the illustrious Edward Bruce earl of Carrick, brother of the Lord Robert by the grace of God the most illustrious king of Scots, and sprung from our noblest ancestors (*de nobilioribus progenitoribus nostris ortum*)'.<sup>8</sup> There is more than an echo of Robert's letter about it. The emphasis on shared ancestry spurring joint action, and on ancient liberty lost and in need of recovery, is common to both documents. It originated in Robert's letter. It won approval from Ó Néill and his allies. But it remained an Irish response to a Scottish initiative. This is precisely the inference to be drawn from an anonymous, well-informed English chronicler (who may, as I discuss elsewhere, have got his information from the English naval commander and would-be ruler of the Isle of Man, Simon de Montacute) when he has Edward Bruce, prior to his arrival in Ireland, 'litteras eiusdem terre incolis...premittens, firmiterque proponens se dicte terre regem in breui futurum'.<sup>9</sup> And it is

<sup>6</sup> *The Bruce*, bk xiv, line 9.

<sup>7</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, 'Documents on the early stages of the Bruce invasion, 1315-1316', *Proc R.I.A.*, 79, C (1979), 263.

<sup>8</sup> *Scotichronicon*, ed. Watt et al., VI, 400-1.

<sup>9</sup> Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet', *Proc R.I.A.*, 91, C (1991), 303-15.

precisely what Barbour tells us happened when he says that Edward 'send and had treting/  
With the Erishry of Irland,/ That in thar lawte tuk on hand/ Of Irland for to mak hym king'.<sup>10</sup>

We must, therefore, see in the events of 1315-18 primarily a Scottish attempt to win support for their struggle against England by exploiting similar sentiment elsewhere. It may have been on a more elaborate scale, but it was entirely consistent with earlier policy. It followed in a natural progression from that which preceded it. We may examine briefly this course of events. On 7 February 1313 Bruce recovered Dumfries, the last of the castles holding out against him in the south-west.<sup>11</sup> It was commanded by his old enemy, the Gallovidian chieftain, Dungal Macdouall. The latter, as we have seen, fled to the Isle of Man and took charge of the English garrison in Rushen castle.<sup>12</sup> Edward Bruce was lord of Galloway and was granted the earldom of Carrick by Robert in this year. In the early summer the Scots invaded Man, and Professor Duncan is surely right when he describes this as 'an attempt by Edward Bruce, earl of Carrick, to hold the island as a logical extension of his conquest of Galloway'.<sup>13</sup> Ejected from Man too, it was almost inevitable that Dungal Macdouall would come to Ireland and, like Eógán Bacach Mac Dubgaill (they were close allies, Macdouall being executor of Eógán Bacach's will),<sup>14</sup> continue from a base there his opposition to the Bruces.<sup>15</sup> Just as Mac Dubgaill sought to regain Argyll from the Clann Domnaill supporters of Bruce who now dominated it,<sup>16</sup> Macdouall's aim was to recover his lands in Galloway from its new lord, Edward Bruce: both Clann Domnaill and Edward had good reason to want to root out such opponents from their Irish lair.

The Scottish victory over the English at Bannockburn in June 1314 has tended to obscure the fact that not everything was going their way: before the year was out Mac Dubgaill retook the Isle of Man.<sup>17</sup> We do not know the exact date on which this occurred. Edward II had obviously not yet heard the good news when he wrote to the treasurer of Ireland on 5 January 1315 ordering him 'to make provision for the decent sustenance' of Mac Dubgaill and his *familia*, 'now dwelling in Ireland'.<sup>18</sup> But by February 15, he had got word of it and ordered the Dublin government to pay money to Eógán Bacach 'for the support of his men keeping the

<sup>10</sup> *The Bruce*, bk xiv, lines 8-11.

<sup>11</sup> *CDS*, III, 304.

<sup>12</sup> He may have had an earlier interest in the island. In 1311 Macdouall appealed to the king about 'felonies' on Man which he claimed had been committed by Simon de Montacute (*Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 379).

<sup>13</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, V, p. 379.

<sup>14</sup> *CDS*, III, 912.

<sup>15</sup> On 23 July 1316 he was still serving in Ireland (*Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 355).

<sup>16</sup> For Bruce grants of former Clann Dubgaill and Comyn lands to Clann Domnaill, see *Registrum magni sigilli regum Scottorum*, ed. J.M. Thomson, I (Edinburgh, 1882), Appendix 2, nos. 56-8.

<sup>17</sup> *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 153; E101/237/2, m.2; for a discussion of its implications, see J.R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307-1322* (Oxford, 1970), 160-68.

<sup>18</sup> *CDS*, III, 415; *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 139-40.



Isle of Man, from which he lately expelled the Scots rebels, recovering it for the king'.<sup>19</sup> Now, in the previous September, the Irish exchequer had been ordered to pay the wages of twelve shiploads of mariners in Mac Dubgaill's employ against the Scots.<sup>20</sup> This was a rather paltry effort, and indicative of the fortunes of this campaign in the immediate aftermath of Bannockburn. We must compare it, therefore, with the king's instruction to the justiciar of Ireland exactly three days after he had announced the re-capture of Man, that the Irish government was to provide Mac Dubgaill with a force of 10,000 men (sixty of the ships needed for their transportation were also to come from Ireland), who were to be ready by April 7 to be led to Scotland by Eógan Bacach in order to oppose the Scots. This was not as empty a request as several of Edward's previous ones because, for the first time, he promised that he himself would pay their wages, and that a clerk would be sent to Ireland after Easter with sufficient funds.<sup>21</sup>

It is against this background of a potentially disastrous reversal of Scottish fortunes that the Bruce invasion must be viewed. At the same time that he retook Man, Mac Dubgaill captured, just north of the island on the Scottish coast, 'Moryauch Makenedy and 22 accomplices, Scottish rebels who have inflicted much damage upon the king and his subjects'.<sup>22</sup> 'Makenedy' was a Carrick chieftain whose family were, or were to become, lords of Dunure.<sup>23</sup> It looks as though he had been involved in holding the island for the Scots, and more especially for his lord, Edward Bruce. Not much more than twelve weeks later the latter took the offensive in Ireland, but hand in hand with that invasion went a crucial defensive expedition by King Robert himself to reassert his authority in the Isles in the wake of Mac Dubgaill's re-capture of Man.<sup>24</sup> The important English chronicle account which I mentioned above describes Edward Bruce as intending by his invasion to make himself 'king of Ireland and conqueror of the Isles (*regemque Hybernie & insularum conquestorem*)'.<sup>25</sup> If this chronicler knew anything, he knew the Isle of Man and its role in these wars. That is why his opinion merits consideration. Edward Bruce would make himself king in Ireland and, as part of the same process, would restore Man and the Isles to Scottish control. This would be accomplished, in part at least, by putting Eógan Bacach Mac Dubgaill out of action.

Mac Dubgaill took an ineffective part in the first Anglo-Irish campaign against Edward Bruce in the summer of 1315. While a land-army under the justiciar, Edmund le Botiller, moved northwards as far as Dundalk, and then proceeded in pursuit of the retreating Scots under the command of the earl of Ulster,<sup>26</sup> a sea-force went north under Mac Dubgaill

<sup>19</sup> CDS, III, 420; *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 153.

<sup>20</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 132.

<sup>21</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 138; money was, indeed, brought to Ireland for this purpose by July (*Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, 333).

<sup>22</sup> CDS, III, 421; *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 153; E101/237/2, m.2.

<sup>23</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, V, p. 379.

<sup>24</sup> *The Bruce*, bk xv, 267-300.

<sup>25</sup> Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet', 314.

<sup>26</sup> For the campaign, see Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', 26-8.

'admiral of a fleet of divers ships'; it included among its numbers 'knights, men-at-arms, and divers mariners...proceeding by the sea-coasts towards the parts of Ulster to reprimand the malice of the aforesaid felons in those parts'.<sup>27</sup> His lieutenants were Dungal Macdouall and Donnchad Mac Gofraid, the latter the man who had been given custody of the Isle of Man earlier in the year.<sup>28</sup> So ineffectual was Mac Dubgaill that when the Scots found themselves trapped soon afterwards on the wrong side of the Bann after the mouth of the river flooded, the Scottish naval captain Thomas Dun was able to sail up the river with four ships and carry them to safety without hindrance from Eógan Bacach.<sup>29</sup> By September Mac Dubgaill was back at Dublin, waiting for the promised fleet of the Cinque ports which had not yet arrived, and complaining that the season was passing and haste needed; he also sought pay for his men from the Irish exchequer.<sup>30</sup> At the end of the month the king ordered the government there to do what they thought best about Mac Dubgaill's request for six ships 'to remain with him in Ireland this winter to harass the enemy'.<sup>31</sup> Whether he got his wish is doubtful. Within months Mac Dubgaill had returned to London, 'impotent in body and his lands in Scotland totally destroyed', was granted a pension of 200 marks per annum, but died a broken man in 1317.<sup>32</sup>

Mac Dubgaill arrived in London on or before 28 May 1316.<sup>33</sup> His forced retirement was a significant accomplishment and probably the signal for a Scottish effort to re-take Man. The Dublin annalist reports that Thomas Randolph returned from Ireland to Scotland in the first week of March and that at about the end of the month Edward Bruce 'captured Sir Alan fitz Warin and led (*duxit*) him to Scotland'.<sup>34</sup> If true, why were both commanders of the Irish expeditionary force absent from Ireland at this point (even though the vital siege of Carrickfergus castle was still in progress)? On July 16, when Randolph witnessed one of King Robert's charters, he was described as 'lord of Man', a title he did not have on April 12.<sup>35</sup> At some point in the interval, with or without Edward Bruce's approval - there was 'clearly deep-seated rivalry' between Edward and Randolph<sup>36</sup> - Robert evidently had bestowed the Isle of Man on him. Randolph's charter for Man has not survived, but within a matter of months, on September 30, King Robert issued a confirmation of it. Professor Duncan has described this as 'an extraordinary document' and noted that it contains no explanation as to why such a confirmation was needed.<sup>37</sup> It was issued in Edward Bruce's presence, bears his seal, and

<sup>27</sup> *Historic and municipal documents of Ireland, 1172-1320*, ed. J.T. Gilbert (London, 1870), 343-50.

<sup>28</sup> *CDS*, III, 479; E.101/237/2, m.2.

<sup>29</sup> G.O. Sayles, 'The siege of Carrickfergus, 1315-16', *IHS*, 10 (1956-7), 94-100 (at p. 98).

<sup>30</sup> *CDS*, III, 447; *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 252-3.

<sup>31</sup> *CDS*, III, 450.

<sup>32</sup> *CDS*, III, 490, 912.

<sup>33</sup> *CDS*, III, 490.

<sup>34</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 349.

<sup>35</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, V, nos. 91, 99.

<sup>36</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 292.

<sup>37</sup> *Regesta regum Scottorum*, V, no. 101 (with an excellent commentary by Professor Duncan).

repeated like a refrain throughout is the assertion that it was made 'de consilio et assensu karissimi fratris nostri Edwardi Dei gracia regis Hibernie'. As its editor suggests, it appears to represent an abandonment by Edward Bruce of whatever claim he may have made to Man either at the time of his invasion of Ireland or earlier. Almost exactly twelve weeks to the day later, Robert and Randolph arrived in Ireland with a new army to advance Edward's conquest: his agreement to relinquish the Isle of Man may have been the price paid for these vital reinforcements.

Randolph remained in Ireland with King Robert until May 1317. On July 13 Edward II announced that the Scots privateer, Thomas Dun, had been captured by the Anglo-Irish sea-captain, John of Athy.<sup>38</sup> This was quite a coup for him, and regarded as an important breakthrough in the struggle against the Scottish supremacy. Athy, from that point onwards, was increasingly to shoulder the burden of conducting the English effort at sea, and, in the same month, Edward II appointed him keeper of the Isle of Man, with the task of protecting it 'against the hostile aggressions of our Scottish enemies and rebels'; to help in the task, he was to provide from the issues of the island three fully victualled and manned ships.<sup>39</sup> Professor Lydon has stressed the importance of the victory over Dun at sea in the overall campaign against the Scots.<sup>40</sup> As an indication of that one might add that within weeks of Dun's capture John of Athy had been appointed to take charge of a fleet ordered to assemble at Dublin by September 9 to take part in a planned expedition to Scotland.<sup>41</sup> That is a measure of the reverse inflicted on the Scots by that one mishap in the Irish Sea: for the time being, they lost the initiative and Edward II could contemplate going on the offensive. Where Lydon is in error, I believe, is in thinking that the overthrow of Dun proved fatal for the Scots in general and for Edward Bruce in particular.<sup>42</sup> Dun himself revealed worrying news to his captors which was duly reported to the English king, and that was that Thomas Randolph, the new lord of Man, was getting ready to attack the island.<sup>43</sup> In October, Edward II still believed that he controlled Man,<sup>44</sup> but that is the last that is heard of English rule there and Randolph seems to have invaded and conquered it soon afterwards.<sup>45</sup> It remained in Scottish control until 1333.

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<sup>38</sup> *CDS*, III, 562.

<sup>39</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 173; *Cal. fine rolls, 1307-19*, 332.

<sup>40</sup> 'The Bruce invasion', 121.

<sup>41</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 174.

<sup>42</sup> 'The Bruce invasion', 121; Lydon's statement of the case caused Otway-Ruthven to pronounce that '[Edward] Bruce's ultimate defeat was now clearly inevitable' (*History of medieval Ireland*, 233), which is far from being the case.

<sup>43</sup> *CDS*, III, 563.

<sup>44</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1317-21*, 38.

<sup>45</sup> Barbour places its recovery during King Robert's sojourn in Ireland (*The Bruce*, bk. XVI, 690) which is a little early but indicates how intimately bound together both enterprises were.

It is evident, I hope, from the foregoing that the Bruce invasion, whatever else it may have been besides, was an integral part of Robert I's efforts to secure his western frontier. As such, it was an episode in his sequential climb back from the abyss of his insular exile; and, contrary to the view expressed by Professor Duncan, I believe that it cannot be understood *unless* treated as part of the 'close or continuous inter-relationship' between Scottish and Irish politics. One may also query Duncan's suggestion that a study of inter-dynastic links between the two countries will not help us to explain the decision to invade Ireland. I believe it to be vital to the question. With this in mind, let us look at the Scottish and Irish participation in the invasion and see to what extent it can be accounted for by a 'close or continuous inter-relationship of Scottish and Irish families'. Nothing more strikingly illustrates this inter-relationship than the statement of the well-informed north of England chronicler John of Tynemouth that Edward Bruce invaded Ireland because he had been very often invited to do so 'a quodam magnate Hibernie cum quo in iuventate fuerat educatus'.<sup>46</sup> We have, of course, to take John's word for this, and we have no way of knowing who the magnate of Ireland was, whether he was Irish or Anglo-Irish, and what precisely is meant by the term *educatus*.<sup>47</sup> But it would be presumptuous to dismiss the possibility that Edward, born in the mid-to-late 1270s, was fostered in Ireland with the man who orchestrated the Irish end of his invasion, Domnall Ó Néill, king of Tír Eógain intermittently since 1283. Robert himself was fostered as a child, and maintained a devotion to St Malachy, the illustrious twelfth-century Ulsterman, his brother Thomas 'always hated the English', and another brother, Neil, bore a name cherished, for obvious reasons, by the Uí Néill.<sup>48</sup> The latter was, of course, called after his maternal grandfather, Neil earl of Carrick, who died in 1256, a son of the Duncan of Carrick brought to Ulster by John de Courcy. But I think it is not impossible that when Ó Néill referred to Edward Bruce in the 'Remonstrance' of 1317 as being 'sprung from our noblest ancestors' he had in mind some blood-relationship in the not-too-distant past, possibly one which led Duncan of Carrick to christen his heir Neil (in which case, the most likely candidate after whom Duncan called his son would be Domnall Ó Néill's own grandfather, Niall Ruad (d.1223)).

It is possible, therefore, that Edward Bruce invaded Ireland in alliance with a man he had known intimately since childhood. He also came, of course, as the recently created earl of Carrick, and struck terror into the hearts of those occupying the estate of his great-grandfather Duncan. That included the Bissets and de Mandevilles, families whose labyrinthine entanglements in the politics of the age are often difficult to unravel. Hugh Bisset was still

<sup>46</sup> Printed in Phillips, 'Documents on the early stages of the Bruce invasion', 269.

<sup>47</sup> Professor Duncan ('The Scots' invasion of Ireland', 104) doubts whether an English chronicler would use the term 'magnate' to describe an Irish king, but it may be pointed out that the 'Annals of Osney' appear to refer to Gilbert de Clare's Gaelic opponents in Ireland in 1293 as *magnates Hiberniae* (*Annales monastici*, IV, 336).

<sup>48</sup> For a fuller discussion and bibliographical references, see Duffy 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 72-3.

loyal to the English cause in October 1310 when he reported himself as awaiting orders from the king in Bute and Kintyre; in his company were Eógan Mac Suibne of Knapdale, and Áengus Óc Mac Domnaill of Islay.<sup>49</sup> Hugh seems to have been closely allied with both men. In the 1330s, Mac Domnaill's son Eógan stated that he was a cousin of both Hugh Bisset of Glenarm and John Bisset of Rathlin.<sup>50</sup> A well-known poem written for Mac Suibne refers to him as 'Mac Suibne of Sliabh Mis', which is Slemish in County Antrim and may hint at some relationship with the Bissets.<sup>51</sup> Mac Suibne sought the restoration of his lands at Knapdale in Kintyre which were occupied by John of Menteith; but when Menteith went over to Bruce's side in 1309, he was confirmed in possession of them.<sup>52</sup> He also received Arran, an island in which the Bissets had displayed an interest.<sup>53</sup> So the chances of either Mac Suibne or Bisset getting their hands on Knapdale or Arran respectively were slim while they opposed Bruce and he supported Menteith. When Edward Bruce invaded Ireland John of Menteith was one of the leaders of his army.<sup>54</sup> There could be little doubt about the stance Eógan and Hugh would take on the occasion. Mac Suibne was probably by then in refuge with his grandson Áed Ó Domnaill, the king of Tír Conaill, no doubt joined him in opposing Ó Néill and Bruce in 1315-18, and was eventually to establish a lordship for himself in north County Donegal.<sup>55</sup> Hugh Bisset, for his part, also stuck fast to his decision to oppose the Bruces: according to Barbour, he was one of the leaders of the early resistance to the invaders, and in November 1316 it was reported that he and John Logan killed 300 of Edward Bruce's Scots in Ulster.<sup>56</sup> Eventually, though, the pressure did get to Hugh: a report that he had joined the Scots reached Edward II who, in February 1319, granted his manor of Glenarm and his lands on Rathlin to John of Athy.<sup>57</sup>

Hugh's earlier opposition to the Scots may have been hardened by the decision of rival kinsmen to collaborate with them. The Dublin annalist places a John Bisset and a John de Bosco together in his list of the commanders of the invading Scots army. This John Bisset has been identified as Hugh's son,<sup>58</sup> but may have been a cousin.<sup>59</sup> John de Bosco was a son of

<sup>49</sup> *CDS*, II, 1253-5. This letter and the accompanying ones have over the years caused (and continue to cause) a great deal of confusion by their misdating to 1301. For a very plausible re-dating, see A.B.W. Mac Ewan, 'The English fleet of 1301', *Notes & Queries of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research*, 24 (1984), 3-7. My thanks to Mr Ian Fisher of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland for providing me with a copy of the paper.

<sup>50</sup> *CDS*, III, 1272, 1276.

<sup>51</sup> See *Scottish verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, ed. W.J. Watson (S.G.T.S, Edinburgh, 1927), 6-13; and Donald Meek, 'The MacSween poem in 'The Book of the Dean of Lismore'', *Notes & Queries of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research*, 25 (1984), 3-12 (for which I must again thank Mr Ian Fisher).

<sup>52</sup> Barrow, *Bruce*, 363, n. 88.

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>54</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 344.

<sup>55</sup> For this point, see Duffy, 'The Bruce brothers and the Irish Sea world', 74.

<sup>56</sup> *The Bruce*, bk xiv, 46-9; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 298.

<sup>57</sup> *CDS*, III, 632; *Cal. pat. rolls, 1317-21*, 271.

<sup>58</sup> Lydon, 'The Bruce invasion', 114; Duncan, 'The Scots' invasion of Ireland', 105.

<sup>59</sup> *CDS*, II, 1941 ('Indenture attesting that on 16th June [1307]...at Carlisle, John Biset cousin of Sir Hugh Biset, bound himself to Sir Simon de Montagu...').

Andrew de Bosco (d. 1291) who had married Elizabeth, daughter of an earlier John Bisset and had disputed the family inheritance in the Glens, probably with Hugh, the son of another marriage.<sup>60</sup> Presumably they came in Edward Bruce's following in order to take hold of these Antrim lands. Interestingly too, just two months before the start of the invasion Edward II thought that John Bisset was on his side and gave him licence to receive to the peace certain individuals he was trying to coax away from allegiance to Bruce: they included 'Dovenald de Insula' and Sir Patrick Graham.<sup>61</sup> The first is almost certainly to be identified with the Donaldus 'de ylle' whom the 'Continuator' of Nicholas Trevet has being slain with Edward Bruce at Fochart; as a member of Clann Domnaill he was a relative of Bisset and this may go part of the way to explaining his presence in Ireland.<sup>62</sup> Sir Patrick was, it seems, grandson of David Graham, married, like Andrew de Bosco, to a daughter of the earlier John Bisset, and also, therefore, claimant to lands in Antrim.

The other family most in the firing line when Bruce came to Ulster were the de Mandevilles. An even more widely ramified family in Ulster than the Bissets, it would be naïve to expect to find all men of this name on one side in the conflict. Some de Mandevilles do appear to have sided with the Scots,<sup>63</sup> but their most prominent member, Sir Thomas de Mandeville, took a firm stance in opposition. His reasons for doing so may have been connected to a long-standing dispute with the earls of Carrick over their lands in Ulster. There is surely some significance to the terse way in which the Dublin annalist lists Edward Bruce and his lieutenants, ending with the names of John de Bosco and John Bisset, and simply adding: '...[they] took Ulster and drove out Lord Thomas de Mandeville and other lieges from their rightful lands'; then later, when Thomas died fighting Bruce, the same chronicler adds, protesting too much perhaps, that he did so 'in propria patria pro jure suo'.<sup>64</sup> Kenneth Nicholls has called attention to a number of late copies of enrolments of deeds connected with Thomas which may be of relevance.<sup>65</sup> The first is a conveyance by Duncan of Carrick to Thomas of all his lands in Antrim, exactly as specified in the original grant of King John. If this charter were valid, the Bruces could have no claim on the Ulster lands, and no complaint with de Mandeville's possession of them. The problem that this deed poses, however, is that there is a gap of sixty-six years between the deaths of grantor and grantee (1250 in the case of Duncan, 1316 in Thomas's case), which makes it virtually impossible, especially as Thomas died still a fit and vibrant man in battle with the Scots.<sup>66</sup> The second charter is a grant by Robert de

<sup>60</sup> *Charters of the priory of Beauty*, ed. E.C. Batton (Grampian Club, London, 1877), 63; *CDI*, II, 1500. For further discussion, see Appendix 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 139.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of his possible identity, see Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet'; for John Bisset cousin of the first 'lord of the Isles', Eógan son of Áengus Óc Mac Domnaill, see *CDS*, III, 1276.

<sup>63</sup> See Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', 29 and n. 118.

<sup>64</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 344, 350.

<sup>65</sup> K.W. Nicholls, 'Abstracts of Mandeville deeds', *Analecta Hibernica*, 32 (1985), 3-26 (at pp. 5-6).

<sup>66</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 282, 350. Like Mr Nicholls, I have failed to locate an earlier Sir Thomas de Mandeville.

Beaumes to Sir Henry Cougan of the manor of Dunluce in Antrim, and the third is his conveyance in turn of the same property to Thomas de Mandeville. The former is dated at Carrickfergus on 10 May 1308, the latter at Dunluce on 7 April 1310; yet they are witnessed by precisely the same individuals! As Mr Nicholls has said, the charters 'in their present form do not inspire complete confidence'. He has given them the benefit of the doubt and suggested that the difficulties raised by them may be the fault of the copyist(s). However, the peculiar sensitivity of the lands in question, and the prominent role assumed by Thomas de Mandeville in opposing the earl of Carrick in Ulster in 1315-16, prompt the suspicion that he himself drew up the charters in a clumsy effort to prove his title to lands claimed by the Bruces.

We might also mention the opposition to the Scots of men like John Logan, whose wardship as a minor had been held by Alexander Mac Dubgail's sister, thereby aligning him with one faction in the region, or John Sandal and Alan fitz Warin, members of families conspicuous by their loyalty to the English cause throughout that phase of the war fought on Scottish soil, and equally or perhaps more so now that it had come closer to home.<sup>67</sup> The characteristic common to all - Bisset, de Mandeville, Logan, fitz Warin, Sandal - was that their stance against the Scots was not simply the exercise of an option, the choice of loyalty as opposed to treason; unlike other colonists elsewhere in Ireland, their position was predetermined by their own peculiar inter-relationship with the Scottish invaders.

In terms of its motivation it contrasted with, for instance, the resistance shown to Bruce by Leinster colonists such as John de Bermingham or the brothers Nicholas and Milo de Verdon. These latter's opposition to the Scots, it seems to me, was not a simple matter of loyalty either, but it had nothing to do with past experience of frontier friction such as that experienced by the Ulstermen. It was, though, I believe a response to others' affiliation with the Scots. In the summer of 1317, when ejected from their lands in Meath by their lord, Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, several members of the de Lacy family fled to Edward Bruce, his biggest success to date in recruiting colonists outside Ulster. There was a history of friction between John de Bermingham and the de Lacys: twice in 1310 the king had referred to 'divers controversies' and 'contentions' between de Bermingham on the one hand and Walter, Hugh and Richard de Lacy on the other, ordering them to appear before the king's council in order to solve the dispute.<sup>68</sup> When Roger Mortimer arrived in Ireland in 1317 the Kilkenny-based friar, John Clyn, describes what happened, as follows: 'being joined by Lord John de Bermingham and Lord Nicholas de Verdon, he [Mortimer] ejected all of the nation and surname of Lacy out of Ireland; and he forced them to flee to Scotland in the summer'.<sup>69</sup> An important and neglected set of Dublin Cistercian annals tells us that after the flight of Walter

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<sup>67</sup> Alan, however, was captured by Bruce in 1316, brought to Scotland, and evidently pressurized into swapping sides (*Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 349; *Cal. pat.rolls, 1317-21*, 313; *ibid, 1324-7*, 212; *Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 438).

<sup>68</sup> Tresham, 13; *Cal. close rolls, 1307-13*, 188.

<sup>69</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, 13.

and Hugh de Lacy 'et eorum cognaciones', Mortimer took into his hands all their lands and goods, 'and he enfeoffed Lord Nicholas de Verdon of a certain part and Lord John de Bermingham of another'; the de Lacys, he tells us, remained among the Irish of Meath until Christmas 1317, 'and immediately afterwards retreated to the castle of Carrickfergus and remained there with Edward Bruce'.<sup>70</sup> Mortimer returned to England in May 1318, and the same annalist has it that he appointed John de Bermingham as keeper of his lands and tenements in Meath.

In October, Edward Bruce left Ulster on a new offensive for the first time in nearly a year and a half, of which Professor Lydon has remarked that 'there is nothing to suggest what Bruce's motives were in thus moving south again'.<sup>71</sup> The Dublin Cistercian annalist may have the answer. He says that 'Edward Bruce came with Lord Walter de Lacy and Lord Hugh de Lacy and with a multitude of Scots and Irish towards the town of Duncalk'. This was a de Verdon town which Bruce had earlier burned, and it is interesting too that he had also burned Loughsewdy, caput of the de Verdon share of Meath,<sup>72</sup> suggesting that he had something in particular against them. To let Friar Clyn finish the story 'Lord Edward Bruce was killed with many Scots...at Dundalk, by John de Bermingham, and Milo de Verdon'. It seems from these accounts that at least part of the explanation for Bruce's last and fatal expedition was an attempt to assist the de Lacys to recover their Meath lands now that Mortimer was out of the way, or at least to wreak vengeance on those who had gained them, and that those 'loyalists' who ended the reign of King Edward Bruce were just as interested in driving away the de Lacys as in crushing the Scottish invader.

We must look for similarly inscrutable motivation on the part of the native Irish. Their relationship with particular highland and island lords seems to have been a primary factor in dictating their reaction to the invasion. Crucial to the question was the involvement of Clann Domnaill of Islay on the Bruce side. This alliance was of long standing. The very first recorded glimpse of Robert Bruce is as a witness to a document issued by Alexander Mac Domnaill.<sup>73</sup> Alexander and his father Áengus Mór were party to the Turnberry band. Alexander's brother Áengus Óc seems to have had a momentary flirtation with the English in 1310, but it is significant that he used the occasion to try to persuade Edward II to favour the 'sons of Rodric' by granting them some 'native fee'.<sup>74</sup> This indicates that a rapprochement had taken place between Clann Domnaill and Clann Ruaidrí and, when Áengus joined Bruce soon afterwards (he fought at Bannockburn), so too did Clann Ruaidrí. As a result, both Mac Ruaidrí and Mac Domnaill died fighting alongside Edward Bruce at Fochart. The Connacht

<sup>70</sup> Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'Cáipéisí ón gceathrú céad déag', *Galvia*, 5 (1958), 33-5.

<sup>71</sup> *NHI*, II, 293.

<sup>72</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 163, 174.

<sup>73</sup> *Registrum monasterii de Passelet*, New Club (Edinburgh, 1877), 128-9.

<sup>74</sup> *CDS*, II, 1254.



annalist calls Ruaidrí Mac Ruaidrí, not casually, *rí Innsi Gall*: this was the title of the lordship formerly held by his father Alan Mac Ruaidrí, to which he had now succeeded.<sup>75</sup> Mac Domnaill is likewise called *rí Oirer Gaedeal*, again a deliberate statement of title by the Irish annalist. Whoever was the head of Clann Domnaill who fell at Fochart (I have suggested elsewhere that he may have been Alexander Óc son of Áengus Mór),<sup>76</sup> he had taken the place of Mac Dubgaill as the most important power in the west highlands and islands, had succeeded to Clann Dubgaill lands in Argyll, and now bore the title 'king of Argyll'.<sup>77</sup> It is of significance too that the Irish annalist mentions only these two as dying along with Bruce, whereas, for instance, the English 'continuator' of Nicholas Trevet is able to put together a total of twenty-nine followers of Bruce whom he alleges fell in the encounter.<sup>78</sup> Since some very well-known members of the Scottish nobility were included among their ranks, I think we can take it that the Irish annalist was not ignorant of their identity; rather that, in the annalist's eyes, the real significance of Fochart was not only that Edward Bruce's reign of terror (he was no admirer) had ended, but that the recent ascendancy of Clann Domnaill and Clann Ruaidrí which his invasion brought in its wake (the same writer had no enthusiasm for the galloglass)<sup>79</sup> had been dented.

This writer's anti-Bruce sentiments are transparent. His obit of Edward Bruce is frequently quoted and may be given here also:

Edward Bruce, the destroyer of all Ireland in general, both Irish and foreigners, was killed by the foreigners of Ireland by dint of fighting and bravery at Dundalk. And Mac Ruaidrí, king of Innsi Gall, and Mac Domnaill, king of Argyll, were killed along with him and the Scots who were with them. And there had not been done since the beginning of the world, ever since the Fine Fomra were banished from Ireland, a better deed for the men of all Ireland than that. For there came falsehood and famine and loss of life during his time throughout Ireland for three and a half years and, without doubt, men used to eat each other throughout Ireland.

This obit is repeated word for word in five different sets of annals.<sup>80</sup> As a result, it has created a misleading impression of universal Irish condemnation of the invasion; one recent commentator, for instance, has concluded from this and another anti-Bruce statement which we shall deal with presently, that 'Bruce's death was greeted with remarkably unanimous approval in nearly all the Gaelic sources'.<sup>81</sup> The fact is, though, that this obit is the opinion of

<sup>75</sup> For the surrender by Alan's daughter Christina to her brother Ruaidrí Mac Ruaidrí of the islands making up the lordship of Garmoran, along with Glenelg, Knoydart and Moidart, see *Registrum magni sigilli regum Scottorum*, ed. J.M. Thomson *et al.* (Edinburgh, 1882), Appendix 1, no. 9.

<sup>76</sup> Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet', 311-12.

<sup>77</sup> For a grant by Robert I of lands in Mull to 'Alexander younger lord of the Isles', probably between 1314 and 1318, see *Reg. magni sigilli*, Appendix 2, no. 653. For grants of other former Mac Dubgaill and Comyn lands to Áengus Óc Mac Domnaill, see *ibid.*, nos. 56-8.

<sup>78</sup> Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet', 314-5.

<sup>79</sup> *AC s.a.* 1315: 'all Moylurg was beggared and bare...its cattle and corn snatched from its alters and given to galloglasses for wages'.

<sup>80</sup> *AC; ALCé; AClon, AU; AFM.*

<sup>81</sup> J.F. Lydon, in *NHI*, II, 294. Professor Duncan says of the invasion that 'when it had failed, the Irish were unanimous in presenting themselves as the hapless victims of a brutal Scottish invader' ('The Scots' invasion of Ireland', 100).

one man; it cannot be taken as universal or 'unanimous' approval for the invasion's collapse. There is another obit of Bruce in another corpus of Irish annals which, though the entry is defective, does not appear to condemn him.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, the anti-Bruce obituarist, if we can take it that he is the author of the earlier notices of the invasion in the same annals, is not consistent in his stance. Although he states that Edward Bruce had invaded Ireland with a 'slaughtering warlike host [which] stirred up and shook all Ireland in general both Irish and foreigners', he is in no doubt that Bruce 'took the hostages and lordship of all the province of Ulster *without opposition*, and they *permitted* him to be given the title 'king of Ireland', and *the Irish of Ireland agreed* to grant him his lordship and *proclaimed* him 'king of Ireland'.<sup>83</sup> And neither is he in any doubt that the purpose of Robert Bruce's expedition in support of his brother was 'to expel the foreigners from Ireland',<sup>84</sup> an aim about which he could surely have few qualms. He is critical of Bruce's Anglo-Irish opponents in 1315 when he says that 'the foreigners spared on that occasion neither saint nor shrine however holy, nor church, nor lay property, nor sanctuary, that they did not waste or ravage, throughout the full extent of Ireland from the Shannon in the south to Coleraine in the north, and in Inishowen'.<sup>85</sup> There is a possibility that his subsequent condemnation of the Scots reflects a change in political alignments in Connacht, and that he is simply voicing his patron's opposition. But it is more likely that he simply transferred to poor 'King Edward' the blame for the appalling weather and famine that these years brought (though they were conditions not by any means unique to Ireland), in precisely the same way that an Anglo-Irish annalist was later to say of the arrival of Robert d'Ufford as justiciar that 'the fair weather suddenly turned foul, and there was nothing but rainy and tempestuous weather while he lived'.<sup>86</sup>

The other Gaelic critic of the Bruces, who wrote a prose tract in praise of Eógan Ó Matadáin, petty king of Síl nAnmchada, is also, and perhaps not altogether coincidentally, a Connacht writer. It seems possible that both writers oppose Edward Bruce because of the damage his invasion caused to Richard de Burgh and to the latter's adherent, Feidlim Ó Conchobair. Feidlim was killed during the course of Edward Bruce's reign as king of Ireland but is himself described by the author of the Ó Matadáin tract as 'chief king of Ireland by rightful inheritance (*prim-righ fír-dúchasa na Fotla*)' and by the Connacht annalist as 'the makings of a king of Ireland without opposition (*adbar rig Erenn cin fresabra*)'.<sup>87</sup> The writer of

<sup>82</sup> *AI* s.a. 1318. The same writer excuses Bruce's destruction of the Irish countryside by saying that the government army which opposed him did as much damage; except, that is, for homicide. This is understandable. He was describing how the Scots killed many of the Anglo-Irish inhabitants of Dundalk, whereas it was the job of the government army to protect them.

<sup>83</sup> *AC*; *ALCé* s.a. 1315.

<sup>84</sup> *AC*; *ALCé*; *AU*; *AFM* s.a. 1317.

<sup>85</sup> *AC*; *ALCé* s.a. 1315.

<sup>86</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 385.

<sup>87</sup> *The tribes and customs of Hy-Many, commonly called O'Kelly's Country*, ed. John O'Donovan (IAS, Dublin 1843), 138; *AC* s.a. 1316.

the tract was of the view that those Irish lords who supported Bruce did so in imitation of certain unnamed leaders of Cenél nEógain, principally, of course, Domnall Ó Néill: 'it was they', he says, 'who first betrayed their lords on that occasion'. Not so Eógan Ó Matadáin, 'who sought not to violate his truth, for fear of betraying his lord [i.e., Richard de Burgh] without strong reason'.

None of this should be used as evidence for a significant lack of support in Gaelic Ireland for the Bruces; it is merely an attempt to explain Ó Matadáin's decision to stand by de Burgh. In fact, the writer describes the general Irish reaction to the Scots invasion as 'an uprising (*coimeirghí*)' and, significantly, he adds that Eógan had enemies (*eascaraid*) because he refused to join the Scots, including Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair, principal rival of Feidlim for the kingship of the province. Quite how singular Ó Matadáin was in his loyalty is emphasized by the author in noting that 'the chieftains of Ireland in general perished at this time because of their excessive pride, except for Eógan alone, whom God protected because of his good practices'. It is clear that the author's object is to exonerate Ó Matadáin from the harsh censure he received for not joining in the 'uprising'. And he does so by implying that the choice that faced him was between two sets of foreigners, the Anglo-Irish or 'Scottish foreigners less noble than our own foreigners (*allmaraigh Albancha rab anuaisli náit ár n-allmaraigh-ní*)'. He can hardly have hoped to persuade many by his claim that 'the fair kings of Ireland had prospered under those princely foreigners who were our superior lords (*ra gheinsedar finn-riga na Fotla sa fá na flath-ghallaib sin fá h-árd tighearnadha oraindi*)', though there may have been some justification for his oft-quoted comment that the Anglo-Irish 'had given up their foreignness for a pure mind, their surliness for good manners, their stubbornness for sweet mildness, and their perverseness for hospitality', if by it he implies a measure of acculturation on their part.<sup>88</sup> That not too much emphasis should be placed, however, on the anti-Scottish, pro-colonist rhetoric employed in this tract is indicated by another prose piece compiled for the same individual: this bemoans the divisions among the Irish caused by the Anglo-Norman invasion of the country in the twelfth century, saying that 'a plague arrived to bring about this disunion among [them]...namely, foreigners came over the green seas to seize upon it, and these foreigners gained one day's victory, which prepared the way for their conquest, namely, the victory of Leithridh over the heroic Ruaidrí [Ó Conchobair, king of Ireland], so that the Irish remained under the yoke of the foreigners' until Eógan Ó Matadáin rose to restore their fortunes!<sup>89</sup> It is difficult to reconcile this Eógan with the Eógan who opposed the 'uprising' of 1315-18 which had as its aim the removal of this same 'yoke'.

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<sup>88</sup> He had in mind principally the de Burghs, of whom the author of another fourteenth-century propagandist tract, *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh*, said that they were 'aboriginally English but now Irish-natured': ed. Standish Hayes O'Grady, 2 vols (I.T.S., London, 1929), II, 66.

<sup>89</sup> O'Donovan, *Tribes and customs of Hy-Many*, 134-5.

It is probably wrong, therefore, to use either the annal-obit or the Ó Matadáin tract as evidence for a significant Irish opposition to the Bruces. Though by then mixed armies of Gaelic and Anglo-Irish were becoming common it is clear that no Irish had a hand in Edward Bruce's downfall: even the unsympathetic Connacht chronicler says that he was killed 'by the foreigners of Ireland'. Though it may not always have materialized, almost every outside commentator looking in at Gaelic Ireland believed that support for the invaders was near universal among the Irish population, with only a small remnant remaining loyal. Friar Clyn's statement that '*adheserunt toto tempore suo quo fuerant in Hibernia quasi omnes Hybernici terre, paucis valde fidem et fidelitatem servantibus*' is typical, and from the pages of his chronicle one could be forgiven for thinking that support for the invaders grew as the campaign progressed; for 1316 he says that '*hoc anno omnes Hibernici fidem fedissime et fidelitatem deserentes, ut communiter se ad guerram posuerunt*'.<sup>90</sup> When the Dublin annalist finished off his account of the defeat inflicted on the earl of Ulster by Bruce at Connor in County Antrim in September 1315 by saying that '*tunc Hibernici de Connacia et de Midia insurrexerunt contra Regem et contra Comitem Ultonie*', or when the citizens of Dublin complained that the whole land is greatly troubled '*par la suruenue des Escoteys...e enement par la commune gere des Ireis*', who daily menace the suburbs of the city doing all the damage they can, it is evident just how widespread was the perception among the colonial community that the invasion had triggered revolts among the Irish, and that these were now countrywide.<sup>91</sup>

The wars earlier fought against Edward I in Wales, and the rebellion of Robert Bruce in 1306, had led to uprisings in Ireland; it would be inconceivable if the transference onto Irish soil of the war against English expansionism had not produced a similar result. The Welsh wars of the 1270s and early 1280s, and the Welsh revolt of 1294-5 had, I contend, contributed to the spirit of unrest among the Irish of Leinster, in particular in the Wicklow massif and in the lowland marches of Laois and Offaly. Here is what a Wicklow colonist said of the effects of the Scots' invasion on the former:

...The Scots enemies of the lord king arrived in this land, since whose arrival the Irish of the Leinster mountains, manifestly unable to restrain themselves, put themselves at war against the lord king, just as the other Irish in this land did, and they hostilely invaded, burned, and totally destroyed the aforesaid lands and tenements of the lord king at Bray and indeed all other lands and tenements of divers lieges of the lord king in those parts.<sup>92</sup>

It was reported by the Dublin annalist that '*Hibernici australes, Othiles et Obrynnes, cremaverunt totam patriam australem*', namely, as just seen, Bray, as well as the ports of Arklow and Wicklow and the important royal fortification at Newcastle McKynegan, '*et omnes villas adjacentes*'.<sup>93</sup> It may be, as Professor Frame concluded, that 'the disorder was little

<sup>90</sup> *Annals of Clyn*, 12.

<sup>91</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 346; Gilbert, *Hist. & mun. docs. Ire.*, 359-65.

<sup>92</sup> Gilbert, *Hist. & mun. docs. Ire*, 457.

<sup>93</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 348, 349.

different from that which had troubled the area between 1302 and 1313',<sup>94</sup> but that was not the perception that was abroad at the time. Contemporaries believed that it was the arrival of the Scots that produced the disorder. It was, after all, the deliberate intention of Edward Bruce to provoke such a reaction when he brought his armies into the valley of the river Barrow in the early days of 1316. After his victory at Skerries in County Kildare he made his way into Laois and, we are told, spent some time dwelling among the Irish there. This had the desired effect: 'Omorghes cremabant et devastabant partem de Leys in Lagenia',<sup>95</sup> and expeditions to quell these and other outbursts were necessary in that year and the next.<sup>96</sup>

I think it would be wrong to underestimate quite the effect the Scots irruption had on the Irish. Much of the comment on their reaction is reminiscent of Thomas fitz Maurice's description of the effects of the Welsh war of 1282-3 on the Irish of Desmond. During the Bruce invasion his son Maurice had to contend with a rebellion of the Uí Donnocáin, described in the following terms by a local jury:

...When the Irish of the surname of Odoneganes, who are the men and tenants of the aforesaid Maurice fitz Thomas, heard of the coming of Edward Bruce and of other Scots into the parts of Ireland, at the time when the Scots came as far as Skerries, the said Irish of the surname of Odoneganes and all the other Irish of the parts of Desmond hostilely rose up (*insurrexerunt*) against the lord king, openly making war against the said lord king and his lieges, hostilely committing arsons, homicides, robberies and very many other evils, both in the land of the said Maurice fitz Thomas and of other lieges of the lord king in the county of Limerick.<sup>97</sup>

It is clear that the jury believed this to be no ordinary rebellion, but an impassioned outburst occasioned by the Scots presence. It was in an effort to stir up just such emotions that King Robert himself came to the south of Ireland in the following year. He did so in response to an Irish request. Along with the Uí Donnocáin, the 1316 jury claimed that the Skerries campaign of Edward Bruce had caused a rebellion in Thomond by a man who was later to enjoy a long and active career along similar lines, Brian Bán Ó Briain. The great propagandist tract known as *Caithréim Thoirdhealbhaigh* preserves the information that Brian Bán's brother Donnchad then went north, met the Bruce brothers, and invited them to bring their campaign to Thomond, 'entreating them that they would come on this progress; as come they did'.<sup>98</sup> An annalist explains that it was their intention to join up 'cum toto exercitu Ybernie' near Singland in County Limerick,<sup>99</sup> and clearly their negotiations with the Uí Briain had led them to expect widespread backing for the offensive. This was not to be; just as in Connacht, the Bruces found themselves embroiled in local internecine rivalries which they were powerless to surmount.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', 21.

<sup>95</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 348.

<sup>96</sup> See Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', 21, n. 79.

<sup>97</sup> Frame, 'The Bruces in Ireland', 22.

<sup>98</sup> Ed. Hayes O'Grady, II, 83.

<sup>99</sup> *AI* s.a. 1317.

<sup>100</sup> See Katharine Simms, 'The battle of Dysert O'Dea and the Gaelic resurgence in Thomond', *Dál gCais*, 5 (1979), 59-66; Nic Ghiollamhaith, 'Dynastic warfare and historical writing in North Munster'.

That, perhaps, was only to be expected. And the Bruces - rational, well-informed observers of the Irish scene - surely did not hope for much more. Edward had cause for satisfaction that 'the Irish of Ireland agreed to grant him his lordship and proclaimed him 'king of Ireland''. He could be equally pleased that few of them appear to have gone back on their word, and that his energizing presence caused rebellion to spread 'into almost every corner of Ireland', as Robin Frame put it.<sup>101</sup> But the law of diminishing returns dictated that more was needed over time. Edward's blitzkrieg impressed at first, but the war-weary inhabitants of an already debilitated colony had seen it all before. It is open to doubt whether any amount of huffing and puffing by King Edward Bruce could bring the Anglo-Irish house down, now that its occupants contented themselves with its tumble-down dilapidation, many already seeking refuge in the downstairs rooms. If Edward's attempt to 'conquer' Ireland was to be anything more than an occupation, an occupation for its own sake, if his presence in Ireland (of which his older brother obviously approved) was ever significantly to advance Robert's cause, more was needed. The Irish were used by the Scots. Their restiveness was exploited, their discontent with English rule encouraged, for Scottish ends. But from the very moment of Edward Bruce's disembarkation in Ireland in the early summer of 1315, it is a moot point whether the Bruce brothers believed that that venture alone would be sufficient to alter the balance of power in the way that Robert I needed. That is why they came to Ireland their eyes straining to see the coasts of Wales in the distance.

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<sup>101</sup> 'The Bruces in Ireland', 24.

### *The Bruces and the 'Celtic alliance'*

I have earlier suggested that since the Scots, during the course of the war of independence, sought to enlist the support, not only of the Irish, but of the French, the Norwegians, and even the North Sea German cities, it would be preposterous to imagine that they left out of their considerations the possibility of a Welsh alliance. I have also remarked that, on the available evidence, the Scots' concentration on Wales lacked the consistency and intensity evident in their preoccupation with the Irish frontier. Nevertheless, it would be quite wrong to think that Wales did not fit into the picture. At one level, the Scottish effort to control the Isle of Man and Ireland, and the naval war in the Irish Sea which the conflict produced, had day-to-day implications for Wales, especially for its coastal inhabitants. At another level, however, the Bruce invasion of Ireland is inseparable from longer-term Scottish plans to enlist the backing of all friendly powers able, and willing, to assist their war of resistance to English dominance. Just as the expedition to Ireland followed in a natural progression from earlier events, so success (or partial success) in Ireland led to an effort to exploit the potential of Wales.

The story of the Scottish entanglement with Wales that coincided with Edward Bruce's reign in Ireland has been elucidated by the work of Professor J. Beverley Smith, and what follows inevitably owes a great deal to it.<sup>1</sup> The 'continuator' of Nicholas Trevet has Edward Bruce, prior to his invasion of Ireland, 'litteras eiusdem terre [i.e. Ireland] incolis magni odii alterni seminarium premittens', firmly proposing that he be king of that land in the near future, bear its crown, and throughout all the world for all time he and his successors would be called 'king of Ireland and conqueror of the Isles'.<sup>2</sup> The emphasis placed by the chronicler on Bruce's epistolary diplomacy suggests that it was regarded by contemporaries as one of the more unusual and significant aspects of the affair, and I see no reason to doubt what he has to say on the matter. There is even a possibility that he himself saw one of these letters and that, as Professor Duncan has suggested to me, the rather more flowery language employed by him in the portion of his account which describes the proposal may be something close to a quotation from the letter itself. Be that as it may, the full text of none of these letters seems to survive today. But we do have a letter said to have been sent to Wales by Edward Bruce, though it is preserved only in a printed transcript of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup> The letter does not mention Edward Bruce, and it does not mention Ireland, let alone his installation as king

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<sup>1</sup> J. Beverley Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', *WHR*, 8 (1976), 139-71; idem, 'Gruffydd Llwyd and the Celtic alliance, 1315-18', *BBCS*, 26 (1976), 463-78.

<sup>2</sup> Duffy, 'The 'continuation' of Nicholas Trevet', 314.

<sup>3</sup> It has been printed twice in recent years, by Professor Smith in 'Gruffydd Llwyd', 478, and by Professor Duncan, with minor changes and some suggested improvements to the slightly problematic text, in *Regesta regum Scottorum*,

there, so that the possibility remains that it was sent prior to, or simultaneously with, his Irish invasion. It is, however, prefaced by a note in French, of uncertain date, saying that it was sent from Ireland by him, and brought to Bardsey, the small island at the tip of the Lleyn peninsula, by Thomas Dun 'felon le Roi un marium de Scote'. Bruce's letter has come down to us accompanied by what may be a response to it, addressed by the Welsh nobleman Sir Gruffydd Llwyd (in a phrase that echoes the claim of Trevet's 'continuator' that Edward would assume the title 'rex Hybernie et insularum conquestor') to 'Nobili in Christo conquestori domino Edwardo illustrissimo Regi Hiberniae'.<sup>4</sup> Professor Smith sees Gruffydd Llwyd's brief flirtation with the Scots, after a lengthy period of loyalty to the English, as indicative of animosity between him and Roger Mortimer of Chirk, and as either a response to or the reason for the latter's re-appointment as justice of North Wales on 23 November 1316. Mortimer took up his duties just prior to Christmas of that year and Gruffydd very probably began an eighteen-month term of imprisonment soon afterwards: November or December 1316 seems, therefore, the most likely date for his letter to Bruce.

Assuming Gruffydd's letter was a response to a recent approach from Edward Bruce, the latter's important letter to Wales may date from the weeks immediately preceding, as both Professors Smith and Duncan conclude. Edward was still in Scotland on 30 September 1316, when he accepted the confirmation by his brother of Thomas Randolph's claim to the Isle of Man, and it is possible that one of the favours granted in return was a licence to begin drilling the Welsh well. Having said that, it would be fortuitous indeed for Gruffydd Llwyd if Bruce's offer of assistance arrived just at the moment when his erstwhile loyalties were coming under strain. There is no hint in Gruffydd's missive that he had recently received such an offer. In fact, he opens his remarks by stating just why he selected Edward Bruce: 'We, hearing in our parts the extraordinary news of your conquest of lands'. I prefer to see Bruce's letter to 'omnibus desiderantibus a servitute liberari' as an overture only indirectly related to Gruffydd's 'reply'; Gruffydd may have seen some of Edward's propaganda, may have read the very text from Bruce that has come down to us, but his own letter does not appear to be a direct or immediate response. This means that the date of Edward's letter to Wales remains to be established. It may be a piece of general propaganda issued some considerable time earlier, possibly along very similar lines to his Irish correspondence of which Trevet's 'continuator' spoke, and possibly issued at the same time.

It shares with the latter a specific proposal. According to the 'continuator', Edward proposed in advance to the Irish that he would be king over them. In his letter to Wales he makes a similar offer. His address is to those desiring to raise themselves up and liberate themselves from anguish at the opportune time, and he seeks sanction for his proposal by explaining it as the duty of christians everywhere to aid their fellow man. This is especially

<sup>4</sup> Printed in Smith 'Gruffydd Llwyd', 477-8.



true, he says, in the case of those who 'ex una radice originis sive parentelae et patriae primatus processerunt', a phrase strikingly resonant of Robert's reminder to the Irish that 'ab vno processimus germine nacionis'. Robert's letter to Ireland was coy about the task in hand; it stated only that the Scots and Irish had been free since ancient times, expressing the hope that by strengthening their bond of friendship they might, God willing, recover their ancient freedom. Edward's letter is altogether more graphic about the nature of the problem and more specific as to the solution. The English are the problem. The Welsh are oppressed by the 'jugum Anglicanum', in the same way that it had recently pressed down upon the Scottish people. Edward takes pity on the Welsh for the servitude and anguish they suffer at English hands and offers 'to counter your oppression and to expel the unnatural and barbaric servitude of Englishmen from your borders'. As a result, in a phrase that clearly indicates the use the Bruces were continuing to make of prophecies (such as that reported in 1307 to the effect that 'the Scottish people and Welsh shall league together...and live together in accord till the end of the world'),<sup>5</sup> Edward says that 'Albanicus et Britannicus populus expulsis hostibus in perpetuum fiat unus'. He warns them that no enemy is easily overcome, but that by Welsh endeavour and his aid ('ex vestro concordi conamine et nostro superveniente juvamine'), they might be able to recover their law and justice and peacefully possess their property and inheritances. The widespread contemporary insistence by English writers that Edward Bruce in particular was motivated by acquisitiveness and power-lust may have been his reason for making the following resounding declaration of good intent:

...it is not out of presumption or ambition for such unjust rule that we act, but out of sheer compassion for the spilling of your innocent blood and for your intolerable subjection, and as a sign of this we wish to repress the men of your and our enemies, who desire not peace or concord, but rather the final destruction of both you and us, as they have attempted incessantly by day and night to do since their first coming into Britain.

Bruce adds that he does not wish to deceive anyone, or to be deceived by anyone, and declares his intention to seek to know their will: whether they are prepared to commit to him the prosecution of their cause, adding, most remarkably of all, 'nec non capitale dominium vestri prout alius hactenus Princeps vester liberius habere consuevit'. In return, he undertakes to restore to all, of whatever condition, fully and freely, their pristine inheritances, lands, liberties, possessions, and customs. He closes his letter by asking them to send a reply 'cautiously and hastily'.

The extraordinarily ambitious nature of Edward Bruce's proposal to the Welsh is one of my reasons for suggesting that it may have been made before his attempt to gain similar power in Ireland had begun to get bogged down. Thus, the view taken here is that Edward's letter may have been sent at about the same time that he launched his invasion of Ireland. This would accord with the opinions of contemporaries who saw from the start of the Irish invasion a plan to cross to Wales and raise rebellion there too:

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<sup>5</sup> CDS, II, 1926.

[Robert Bruce] sent his brother Edward to Ireland with a picked force of knights, to stir up that people against the king of England, and subject the country if he could to his authority. And there was a rumour that if he achieved his wish there, he would at once cross to Wales, and raise the Welsh likewise against our king. For these two races are easily roused to rebellion; they bear hardly the yoke of slavery, and curse the lordship of the English.<sup>6</sup>

Within a matter of weeks of the arrival of Edward Bruce in Ireland the king ordered the Welsh castles to be surveyed, victualled, munitioned, properly garrisoned and guarded; measures were to be taken too 'for the defence of the coasts...and to suppress tumults, as the king understands that certain Scotch rebels have arrived in Ireland to commit outrages there *and elsewhere*'.<sup>7</sup> A letter dating from late July or early August of that year provides for the appointment of someone to survey the state of Anglesey in particular, 'and speak and treat with the people, so that if the Scottish enemies come thither they may have no power to land'; defensive measures were to be put in hand 'without stirring the Welsh'.<sup>8</sup> Further such measures were taken by the king's officials in Wales later in the summer and autumn, and by October a programme of measures was being initiated 'for the defence of Wales against the threatened invasion of the Scotch enemies who lately attacked Ireland'.<sup>9</sup> Hand in hand with the efforts to ensure the security of the principality went an attempt to coax back into the fold those Welsh who were wavering in their loyalty. In July 1315 a royal commission was appointed to enquire into allegations of oppressive behaviour on the part of the king's officials in both North and South Wales.<sup>10</sup> In late October another three-man commission was sent to Wales with power to initiate defence expenditure and to discuss 'confidential matters' with the Welsh;<sup>11</sup> and the outcome of these and other negotiations was the passing of ordinances in February 1316 'for the greater quietude and advantage of the people of the principality', in which Edward II sought to reinforce his claim on Welsh loyalties by reminding them of his birth among them.<sup>12</sup> One of the concessions made was the right of the Welsh, for a period of three years, to buy and sell land without restriction, and Professor Smith has rightly compared this to the licence given later that year to Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, the king's lieutenant in Ireland, to grant to the Irish the right to use English law, also an attempt to kill unrest with kindness.<sup>13</sup>

By this time rebellion had, however, broken out in Wales, in Glamorgan under the leadership of Llywelyn Bren.<sup>14</sup> This may have been only indirectly related to the Anglo-

<sup>6</sup> *Vita Edwardi secundi*, ed. N. Denholm-Young (London, 1957), 61.

<sup>7</sup> *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 186.

<sup>8</sup> *Cal. ancient correspondence concerning Wales*, 253-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, 354; *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 240-1, 245, 253.

<sup>10</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, 406.

<sup>11</sup> *Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 253.

<sup>12</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, 433.

<sup>13</sup> 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', 151, n. 56.

<sup>14</sup> For the rebellion, see R.A. Griffiths, 'The revolt of Llywelyn Bren', *Glamorgan Historian*, 2 (1965), 186-96 (Dr David Dumville kindly sent me a copy of this article which was not available in the Dublin libraries); J.B. Smith, 'The rebellion of Llywelyn Bren', *Glamorgan county history*, III, ed. T.B. Pugh (Cardiff, 1971), 72-86.

Scottish conflict, in the sense that it was probably prompted by the death of the earl of Gloucester, Gilbert de Clare, at Bannockburn; as frequently occurred elsewhere, the subsequent return to royal custody of his considerable inheritance in the march led to disaffection among the community. As a reminder, though, of the extraordinary way in which the fates of men in the Irish Sea region were interwoven, it is worth pointing out that the commander of the royal cavalry responsible for securing Llywelyn's surrender was none other than William de Montacute, the Bruces' rival for control of the Isle of Man.<sup>15</sup> And I think it would be disingenuous to deny that this, the first Welsh revolt in twenty years, whatever the local circumstances that sparked it, was enkindled by the atmosphere which the Bruce wars produced. Those who lived through the rebellion certainly thought that this was the case: John de Trokelowe has the Welsh rebels 'audaciam resistendi a victoria Scotorum sibi assumentes', and adds, interestingly, 'foedusque et fiduciam cum eis ineuntes'.<sup>16</sup> One would be rash to conclude from this evidence alone that Llywelyn Bren and the Glamorgan rebels had formed a league with the Scots. But the very sentiments to which Edward Bruce appealed in his letter to Wales were given by another author as the explanation for the rebellion:

...if you wish to trace the roots of this rebellious habit, this may be given as a reason. The Welsh, formerly called the Britons, were once noble and owned the whole realm of England; but they were expelled by the oncoming Saxons and lost both name and kingdom. The fertile plains went to the Saxons; the sterile and mountainous districts remained to the Welsh. Moreover from the sayings of the prophet Merlin they still hope to recover England. Hence it is that the Welsh frequently rebel, hoping to give effect to the prophecy.<sup>17</sup>

And it is interesting that one English chronicler immediately follows his account of the death of Edward Bruce in 1318 by reporting the sentence of drawing and quartering carried out on Llywelyn Bren, 'prout meruit...sicut traditor',<sup>18</sup> thereby implicitly linking both events.

Coincident with the Glamorgan revolt there was trouble in Powys, and in early March 1316 the worry was expressed that 'if this riot be not hastily quenched much greater evil may come in other parts of Wales'.<sup>19</sup> In August, when substantial numbers of Welsh soldiery were preparing to take part in a planned expedition against the Scots (including 1,500 men from North Wales led by the still loyal Gruffydd Llwyd), they were turned back at Chester, apparently after the North Welsh themselves revealed disquieting news; this necessitated them returning home to protect those parts from Scottish attack.<sup>20</sup> Later in the month, hostages were demanded from the men of North Wales and were kept in custody at Chester for nearly a year.<sup>21</sup> It was at this period, as Professor Smith suggests, that the English were at their most vigilant and anxious in anticipation of an invasion. Men were appointed specifically to watch

<sup>15</sup> *Vita Edwardi secundi*, 68.

<sup>16</sup> John de Trokelowe, *Annales*, ed. H.T. Riley (RS, London, 1866), 92.

<sup>17</sup> *Vita Edwardi secundi*, 68-9.

<sup>18</sup> *Flores historiarum*, ed. Luard (RS, London, 1890), III, 343.

<sup>19</sup> *Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 436-7.

<sup>20</sup> *Rotuli Scotiae*, I, 159.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', 152.

the coasts. Others had the task of spying among the Welsh for rumours of a Scots landing. Thomas Dun was patrolling in the vicinity of Anglesey, led at least one raid on the port of Holyhead (in the company of, among others, 'William de Casshemary of Ireland'), and some of its inhabitants were suspected of refusing to warn of his presence.<sup>22</sup>

If the superscription attached to Edward Bruce's Welsh letter is to be relied upon, it was Dun who brought it to Wales. Supposing this is true (and it may simply be that, because Dun's notoriety lived on after him, a later writer assumed it was he who must have done so), he may also have transported its bearer; in the same summer, the arrest took place in North Wales of a certain messenger of the bishop of 'Enadens' in Ireland, travelling 'cum litteris suspectis'.<sup>23</sup> If this is Annaghdown (Enach Dúin, Enachdunensis), its bishop was an Irish Franciscan, Gilbertus Ó Tigernaig. In 1315, he was suffragan in the diocese of Hereford and was thus ideally placed should the new king of Ireland need an intermediary in his dealings with the Welsh.<sup>24</sup> During the course of the Bruce invasion Edward II condemned the treasonable activity of certain unnamed Irish bishops who, he claimed, were trying to destroy his power in Ireland, promoting the Scots' cause, and preaching sermons designed to stir the Irish to rebellion, and he sought to prevent native Irishmen from being promoted to episcopal sees while the invasion lasted.<sup>25</sup> Particular disquiet was felt at the role of the mendicant orders in publicly encouraging support for the Bruces, and in infiltrating the colonists.<sup>26</sup> Special envoys were sent on the king's behalf to the minister-general of the Franciscans complaining that members of that order in particular were aiding Bruce.<sup>27</sup> When Domnall Ó Néill and Bruce's other Irish allies petitioned the pope in 1317, they claimed to have the support of 'at least twelve bishops and many other prelates'.<sup>28</sup> It has now been plausibly suggested that the important document which they sent to Rome on the occasion, known as the 'Remonstrance of the Irish Princes', was composed by an Irish Franciscan, himself a candidate for the episcopacy.<sup>29</sup>

It is, therefore, not in the least surprising to find a messenger from an Irish Franciscan bishop carrying suspect documentation in Wales in the summer of 1316. *If* he was carrying letters from Edward Bruce for distribution in Wales, and if the perception was abroad that

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<sup>22</sup> *Cal. pat. rolls, 1313-17*, 421; *Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 426.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, 'Edward II and the allegiance of Wales', 152.

<sup>24</sup> *NHI*, IX, 323. It is possible that he was driven into the Bruces' arms for personal reasons. In August 1314, the king sent the keepers of the privy seal a 'petition of the bishop of Enachdune' and ordered them to 'ordain a reasonable remedy on the thing contained in it' (*Cal. chancery warrants*, I, 406; cf. *ibid*, I, 524). Perhaps he did not meet with a favourable response.

<sup>25</sup> See J.A. Watt, 'Negotiations between Edward II and John XXII concerning Ireland', *IHS*, 10 (1956), 1-20.

<sup>26</sup> In September 1315 the justiciar was ordered to inquire into 'the stay of Irish friars and clerks amongst the English in Ireland, whereby danger may arise to the cities, boroughs, and towns' (*Cal. close rolls, 1313-18*, 307-8).

<sup>27</sup> J.A. Watt, *The church and the two nations in medieval Ireland* (Cambridge, 1970), 185.

<sup>28</sup> *Scotichronicon*, VI, 401.

<sup>29</sup> J.R.S. Phillips, 'The Remonstrance revisited: England and Ireland in the early fourteenth century', forthcoming (I am grateful to Professor Phillips for making his paper available to me in advance of publication).

Wales was within his sights, one can readily understand why the papal envoys appointed in March 1317 to seek a settlement between King Robert of Scotland and Edward II were described as being sent 'ad Anglie et Scotie regna, et Hibernie ac Wallie partes, pro magnis et arduis negociis'.<sup>30</sup> Later that same month the pope stated that Robert Bruce and his abettors 'hostilely invaded the kingdom of England and the lands of Wales and Ireland', they were warned to desist from doing so, and the archbishops of Dublin and Cashel and the dean of Dublin were mandated that 'all combinations and confederations made in favour of the said Robert are to be dissolved'.<sup>31</sup> We may assume from this that the papacy had come to believe, rightly or wrongly, that Wales had now been drawn into the conflict.

As it happens, Edward Bruce did not come to Wales. He had trouble enough, needless to say, making good his claim to Ireland. The pragmatic difficulties standing in the way of a Welsh campaign by Edward were recognised by Gruffydd Llwyd in his letter. Claiming to speak 'ex parte Wallensium nobilium' he first raised the possibility of Bruce and his men coming to Wales ('si ad Walliam cum hominibus vestris dignemini venire'), but made an alternative proposal if it did not prove possible for Bruce to come there in person. His proposal was that the expeditionary force might be led by 'aliquem nobilem Albanen' comitem, baronem vel militem'. Not alone that, but Gruffydd realized that Edward might not be able to spare many men, in which case his lieutenant despatched to Wales need only come 'with a few, if many are unable to come to our parts'. These are plans on a small scale indeed. And yet Gruffydd was in no doubt what the grand object of the enterprise was. Both the Welsh and the Scots had suffered destruction at the hands of the English, who had undertaken to efface their name and memory from the land. The Welsh, he told Edward, were all ready everywhere to honour his name so that the 'Saxons' would be subdued, confused, and scattered by the efforts of Robert in 'Albania', of Edward lately in Ireland, and of Edward and the Welsh in Wales, so that 'Britannia juxta discretam vestre dominationis ordinationem inter Britones et Albaneos imposterum divisa cohaereditabitur'.

The use of an antiquated nomenclature is common to both Gruffydd's and Edward's letter, and again demonstrates the immense interest taken in messianic and vaticinal lore by the Scottish and Welsh of the age. One hesitates to suggest an antiquarian revival inspired by recent events, but it is clear that both sides either found consolation in the prospect of delivery from their plight which such materials offered, or made deliberate use of ethereal rhetoric (of which they themselves may have been coldly sceptical) to score practical political points. We may suspect a certain degree of the latter where the Bruces are concerned: Robert in writing to the Irish was very definitely a 'Scotus', a product of that Irish conquest of northern Britain that to some extent overlapped with the Anglo-Saxon invasion; as this would cut little ice with the Welsh, Edward wrote to the latter in the guise of an 'Albanicus'!

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<sup>30</sup> *Foedera*, II, i, 317-18.

<sup>31</sup> *Cal. papal letters, 1305-42*, 138.

We can hardly blame the Bruces for adopting such poses when circumstances called for them. It was not entirely cynical: mixed ancestry caused split personalities. More than a 'pose' was involved in the efforts of the Bruces to appeal to the mutual self-interest of the Irish and Welsh, so that, together, the Celtic allies might do what had failed them apart. The Bruce family preoccupation with the Irish Sea frontier is not an *ignis fatuus* unworthy of serious consideration. It was an issue that consumed their attention and which Robert paid for in the lives of his brothers. Their expectations have been dismissed as naïvety. They would have been a great deal more naïve had they failed to recognize the potential to be tapped in the kindred grievances of Irish and Welsh, and been decried for their myopia as they have been for their folly.

## CONCLUSION

An Irish king who died in 1072 was described by a contemporary obituarist as king of Wales and of the Western Isles; we have some reason for thinking that the titles, if hopelessly exaggerated, were not entirely meaningless. Nearly two and a half centuries later, it was said of a Scottish prince that he wished to make himself not just king of Ireland but conqueror of the Isles, while we know from some of his own correspondence that he had hopes of gaining power in Wales. Separated by such a gulf in time, and the products of such different sets of circumstances, it may be doubted whether any useful purpose can be served by bringing the ambitions and achievements of both these men within the compass of a single study. Since that is what has been attempted above, some justification for doing so should perhaps be given.

The careers of Diarmait mac Máel na mBó and Edward Bruce are similar only to the extent that their ambitions were not limited to the confines of the countries whence they came. They were not altogether exceptional, though perhaps somewhat more successful than others with similar aspirations. Yet they have been made to *appear* exceptional. It would be unkind to say that other individuals with like ambitions have been written out of history, but the transmarine careers of such men have all too often been reduced to the level of curious anecdote. It has been the intention of this study to demonstrate that to do so is a mistake, as a result of which our image of the Irish Sea region in this epoch has been distorted, and our understanding blurred.

There are, needless to say, good reasons for the neglect which these inter-regional contacts have suffered. Hindsight is a whipping-boy ever at hand. In the middle years of the thirteenth century, the formerly powerful kingdom of Man and the Isles was abolished and incorporated within the kingdom of the Scots, though its richest island, the Isle of Man, was later attached to the crown of England. It has never regained its lost status and with the benefit of this hindsight has become an historiographic also-ran. On the other hand, the survival, to a greater or lesser extent, as geopolitical units, of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales has meant that, though their histories continue to be written, they have been carved up, historiographically speaking, along national lines. For historians, *the* great issue has been their relationship with England, and their respective interactions have usually been lost sight of in the urgent business of analysing the Anglo-Irish, Anglo-Scottish, and Anglo-Welsh nexus.

In fairness, though, it should be said that for the countries concerned this relationship was of more immediate impact and clearly took precedence over the others. It is true too that in the course of time the relationship between, for instance, Ireland and Wales probably did

decline from the intensity witnessed, say, at the opening of the period under discussion here. I have detailed above the evidence that in the eleventh century an Irish dynast, a claimant to the kingship of Tara, sought to rule South Wales, that Irish armies habitually saw service there, making or breaking the power of Welsh kings as they pleased, that the Hiberno-Scandinavian rulers of Dublin appear for a time to have gained a bridgehead in North Wales, and that the founding father of Gwynedd's greatness, Gruffudd ap Cyнан, was born and raised in Dublin. It is remarkable how our openness to this level of intercourse hardens to cold scepticism when it is rumoured of a late thirteenth-century Welsh princeling that he intends to emulate his grandfather's grandfather and seek refuge in Ireland, or that Edward Bruce will send a Scots army from Ireland to Wales to rouse the Welsh to rebellion. Yet, in the normal course of events, such scepticism seems justified.

It has to be admitted too that the task of reconstructing the connexions between Ireland, Scotland, and Wales is made doubly difficult by the reluctance or incapacity of chroniclers to comment on cross-channel happenings and by anglocentric government records which cut across our diagonal of interest. Nevertheless, that task is, I believe, worthwhile and necessary. Its findings will not serve to invalidate the 'nation-centred' historiographical approach, with its inevitable anglocentric bias;<sup>1</sup> it will, though, I hope, enrich it. At the least, crumbs have fallen between the various historiographic stools. Where they concern, for example, the activities of Irishmen in Scotland, historians of the latter country have left them for their Irish counterparts to unravel, but this has rarely happened. The classic illustration of this phenomenon occurred in the first third of the thirteenth century when, on at least three occasions, Irish armies were the backbone of rebellions against royal power in Scotland, two of which were led by men who were described as sons of Irish kings. To my knowledge, these remarkable and potentially decisive military interventions by Irishmen in Scottish affairs have never before been studied. The events remain shrouded in obscurity and are, as a result, relegated to the status of inconsequential minutiae, or the exception that proves the rule. The problem is that the cumulative effect of ignoring or underestimating such episodes over a long period of time is to distort significantly the overview. The same sort of thing happens in reverse, so that Scottish involvement in Irish affairs becomes understated (one might cite here the level of tenorial and familial contact between Scotland, including Anglo-Norman Scotland, and Ulster in the late thirteenth century), and the process is repeated then in the case of Wales.

This starts off as a legitimate enough exercise. Morsels of information are omitted for fear of cluttering with digressions what the historian perceives as being the *real* story: in the graphic phrase of one recent commentator, they fall into 'a convenient oubliette'.<sup>2</sup> Even taken

<sup>1</sup> For a statement of the arguments for and against the latter approach, see Davies, 'In praise of British history', in *The British Isles*, ed. idem, 10 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Frame, 'Aristocracies and the political configuration of the British Isles', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 144.



together, these morsels may never amount to a meal in themselves, and are unlikely to dull our appetite for the main course, but they should not be wasted. To sweep up and reclaim some of the crumbs which have, rather extravagantly, fallen between the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh stools has been one of the pleasant chores of this dissertation.

The loss through omission of seemingly incongruous details of the overall picture is one of the limitations of the nation-centred approach. Of more serious consequence, perhaps, is the pressure it exerts in forcing square pegs into round holes. It seems to me that a good instance of this is John de Courcy's invasion of Ulster. The perception of this development as just another episode in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland has allowed the manner in which it differed from the progress of that conquest elsewhere to go unexplored. The decision to settle Antrim and Down before Louth, for example, and the success of the colonists in maintaining a maritime foothold there, the strong whiff of Manx glee at this body-blow to their ancient enemies, the involvement of the men of Cumbria in the affair, and the possibility of a connexion between de Courcy himself and an Ulster-based dynasty linked to the Scottish province of Moray and with a claim to the kingship of Scotland - all of these things suggest that to try to explain the colonization of Ulster in the context of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland alone is to do little justice to the complexities of the matter.

In examining this and similar such transnational phenomena, one is reminded of Robin Frame's advice on the subject of breaking down the sometimes artificial barriers of nationally based historiography that 'As well as looking over the partition-walls, we need to do some thinking about the design of the building itself'.<sup>3</sup> In his essay from which this quotation is taken, Professor Frame has shown how widening the perspective adds new colour to the picture of Hugh de Lacy's war in 1223-4, and I have also had something to say on the matter above; the same could be said for Gilbert Marshal's war in Wales in the next decade which spilled over into Ireland, or the not unconnected fall of the de Mariscos soon afterwards which had implications even for Scotland. The examples could be multiplied many times and much work needs to be done, but they serve to demonstrate that some new light can be thrown on the dim corners of the room if occasionally removed from the shade of nation-centred historiography.

There is one further drawback in the tendency to compartmentalize the histories of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The exclusivity dictated by the professional study of each discourages comparative work by an expert in any one; such work risks being dismissed as dabbling, its author a dilettante. The irony is that the three separate subject-matters have much in common, and that the observations of the 'outsider' on phenomena with which he is familiar from his own area of study are sometimes more penetrating than the stale

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

pronouncements of the experts, so-called.<sup>4</sup> On the rare occasions when the comparative approach has been put through its paces, it has looked impressive.<sup>5</sup> What has not been done to any great extent, and I have attempted to begin the process above, is to correlate periods of warfare or rebellion in Ireland and Wales or outbreaks of hostility between the kings of Scotland and England. It is my contention that, the unremitting petty warfare of the marches aside, the correlation between major crises or outbreaks of hostilities in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland is such as could almost be plotted on a graph, and certainly should not be underestimated in the way that it very understandably has been by many experts in the individual subject-areas.

There are, of course, both obstacles in the way of and obvious objections to such an approach. The one certainty in comparative work is that doubts will be raised over whether one is comparing like with like. It has been a complaint of historians of the Celtic countries that others have perpetuated an overly simplistic impression of their affairs, in particular, a tendency to view society there as static and immutable.<sup>6</sup> One must guard against the same vice in the political arena. The individual interrelationships fluctuate with the times and are recast in the light of developments internal to any one, or stimuli external to all three. I have attempted to take account of these inflections in my account. It is noticeable, for instance, that in the late eleventh century, the experiences of both Scots and Welsh of Anglo-Norman aggression were mirrored to such an extent that, as we have seen, in similar circumstances in the same year, the leaders of both fell in conflict with the invaders; yet the Irish, by comparison, could look on rather nonchalantly at these developments from which the Irish Sea acted as yet as a barrier. We get the occasional hint that Irish kings may have been alive to the significance of cross-channel developments - Toirrdelbach ua Briain may have had entanglements in Wales that put him at odds with William the Conqueror, his son Muirchertach certainly antagonized Henry Beauclerc - but the Irish Sea barrier was solid, and we can rightly afford to treat the involvement of the Normans with Scotland and Wales in this era as qualitatively different from the Irish experience.

A century later, after that barrier had been breached, it was the Irish and Welsh situations that seemed increasingly to mirror each other, the voluntary normanization on which the Scottish kings had embarked erasing the impression that thereafter often tends to emerge from Ireland and Wales of perpetual conflict between native and newcomer. In this situation, there is much work for the historian seeking to reassemble the pieces. Let us look at

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<sup>4</sup> For a good example of this in the case of Ireland, see R.R. Davies, 'Lordship or colony?', in *The English in medieval Ireland*, ed. Lydon, 142-60.

<sup>5</sup> For two recent demonstrations, see Huw Pryce, 'Church and society in Wales, 1150-1250: an Irish perspective', in *The British Isles*, ed. Davies, 27-47; and James Lydon, 'Lordship and crown: Llywelyn of Wales and O'Connor of Connacht', in *ibid*, 48-63.

<sup>6</sup> See Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', in *Nationality and the pursuit of national independence*, Historical Studies 11, ed. T.W. Moody (Belfast, 1978), 1-35.

the Scottish situation first. As individuals of Anglo-Norman background came more and more to dominate Scottish society, their sympathies naturally lay with those attempting, in difficult circumstances, to plant and propagate a colony in Ireland. Some of them undertook their share of the burden, either settling in Ireland, principally in Ulster as in the case of the Bissets, or acquiring lands there and throughout Ireland with which to supplement their Scottish holdings, as with the Stewarts and Comyns, and perhaps also Balliol and Bruce. Anglo-Scottish lords within Scotland itself were pushing westwards, dislodging native rivals, so that - as in the case of the conflict between the Stewart Menteiths and Clann Suibne of Knapdale - Ireland became both a refuge for dissidents and a headquarters for invading armies. The north of Ireland ended up as a region with two distinct, but sometimes overlapping, maritime frontiers. If the traditional relations between east Ulster and south-west Scotland changed complexion because of the Anglo-Norman penetration of both areas, there is little evidence of a fading in the immemorial familiarity which those in Scotland's north-west had with the waters of Ireland's coast from Lough Foyle to Galway Bay. Hence, if anything, as the period under discussion here unfolds, we see two partly complimentary developments, a swelling in the Irish concerns of Anglo-Scottish settlers in greater Galloway and Lothian and likewise of the input into Irish affairs of the men of the west highlands and islands.

As Ulster and Connacht looked north to Scotland, the orientation of Leinster and Munster was towards Wales. The weighty evidence for the activities in Wales of men from this part of Ireland in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries dries up thereafter, and, clearly, the heavy concentration of Anglo-Norman settlement in the south-east of the island was in the main responsible. It is probably the case too that the absence of Hiberno-Scandinavian towns in the north and west of Ireland may have forced the local kings to develop their own naval resources, and thus seafaring communication with Scotland and the Isles was a feature of life in the region for centuries to come; but by comparison, in the south and east, naval capacity was concentrated in the hands of the Ostmen, and with the capture of their towns by the Anglo-Normans their fleets were no longer available. This may have put paid to their former habits of interfering in Welsh wars: in the radically altered circumstances of the thirteenth century, there is little or no evidence for an Irish military presence in Wales, except as an occasional and very much subordinate part of the armies sent against the native Welsh by their royal and baronial opponents.

The other main development to dominate the age arose from the fact that many of those spearheading the conquest of Ireland were familiar faces to the Welsh, and far from friendly ones at that. This surely had important consequences, although, in the normal course of events, rather well concealed. If, in war and politics, one's enemy's enemy is one's friend, then whatever the past tensions and dislikes between them, ironically, as the Anglo-Norman settlement of south-east Ireland drove a physical wedge *between* native Ireland and Wales, in so doing it may have managed to drive them *together* empathetically. Certainly, the conquest of

Wales in the late thirteenth century accentuated at least the superficial resemblance between the Welsh and Irish experience. Ireland, formerly a kingdom, had long been but a 'land'. Irish spectators of the Welsh cataclysm could perhaps appreciate its implications more so than those in Wales who lived through it, and from this point on Irish writers begin to bemoan its consequences. Presumably, as I argue above, the occasional comments of the annalists reflect a much broader range of opinion: if so, the Edwardian conquest produced a heightening in the empathetic bond between the Irish and Welsh.

At that precise juncture, in the early 1280s, there seem to be few points of convergence between Scotland's experience on the one hand and that of Ireland and Wales on the other. Anglo-Scottish relations had long since become focussed on the question of the relationship between two individuals, the kings of England and Scotland. Even so, the Scottish and Welsh parallel is not entirely lost, as the ascendancy which the princes of Gwynedd attained in the thirteenth century led to similar efforts at defining their relationship with the English king, and the same periodic crises when the resultant tension boiled over. It is noteworthy that a crisis in one often coincided with a crisis in the other. However, it was only when a full-scale Scottish war with England erupted at the end of the century that at least an outwardly apparent sense of shared destiny emerged between the Scots, Welsh, and Irish - and a common enemy.

For the first time, Scots of Anglo-Norman extraction began to see the native Irish as their natural allies. This was particularly the case after the seizure of the Scottish kingship by Robert Bruce, who had strong links with both the west highland and island region and, partly as a result, with Ireland. For the first time too, a rather more sustained effort was made to try to unite Scots, Welsh, and Irish in a military alliance that would bring mutual benefits to all three. From the start of his reign, it is argued here, Bruce and his energetic brothers exploited the remote common origin of the Scots and Irish for political ends, urging the formation of a military alliance. Simultaneously, they courted the Welsh, reminding them of their shared experience of English belligerence, in the hope of rousing them to rebellion. This culminated in Edward Bruce's invasion of Ireland in 1315, in alliance with certain native Irish lords, and plans for intervention in Wales, again with indigenous support.

From the eleventh to the early fourteenth century, therefore, just as enormous changes took place within Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, so too did their respective interrelationships change. It would be dangerous indeed to try to minimize the extent of the divergence in their interests, or, by romanticizing the 'Celtic alliance' against the Saxon goliath, to seek to deny the extent to which their actions were dominated by self-interest. That said, the ambitious schemes of the Bruces were neither entirely delusory nor cynical. If in the past they have appeared so, it is partly because they were not placed in context. Viewed in the wider geographical context of the 'Irish Sea region' and in the light of the long-term relations between the Celtic countries, the Bruces no longer appear unparalleled or their 'Celtic alliance' without precedent. Provided due sensitivity is displayed to both the shifting sands of

individual experiences of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and the *realpolitik* of the later medieval period, useful insight may be obtained from the cross-examination of the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh witnesses. Individually, their testimony may amount to an admission of complicity; questioned together, they may reveal their comrades-in-arms.

## APPENDIX 1

IRISH MATERIAL IN  
*HISTORIA GRUFFUD VAB KENAN*

The well-known biography of the prince of Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Cynan (d.1137), has much to say on Hiberno-Welsh relations in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Its historicity has, however, over the years been the subject of much scepticism but perhaps insufficient scrutiny. Dr K.L. Maund in particular has been trenchant in her criticisms: she speaks of 'the general inaccuracy of this text's information about Ireland', claiming that 'the general reliability of this text is not beyond question: its knowledge of Irish matters is thin'.<sup>2</sup> While there may be grounds for querying some aspects of the general historicity of the work, I believe that Dr Maund is unfairly dismissive of its Irish content. I propose below to look again at the information on Ireland which the biography contains and comment on its reliability or otherwise.

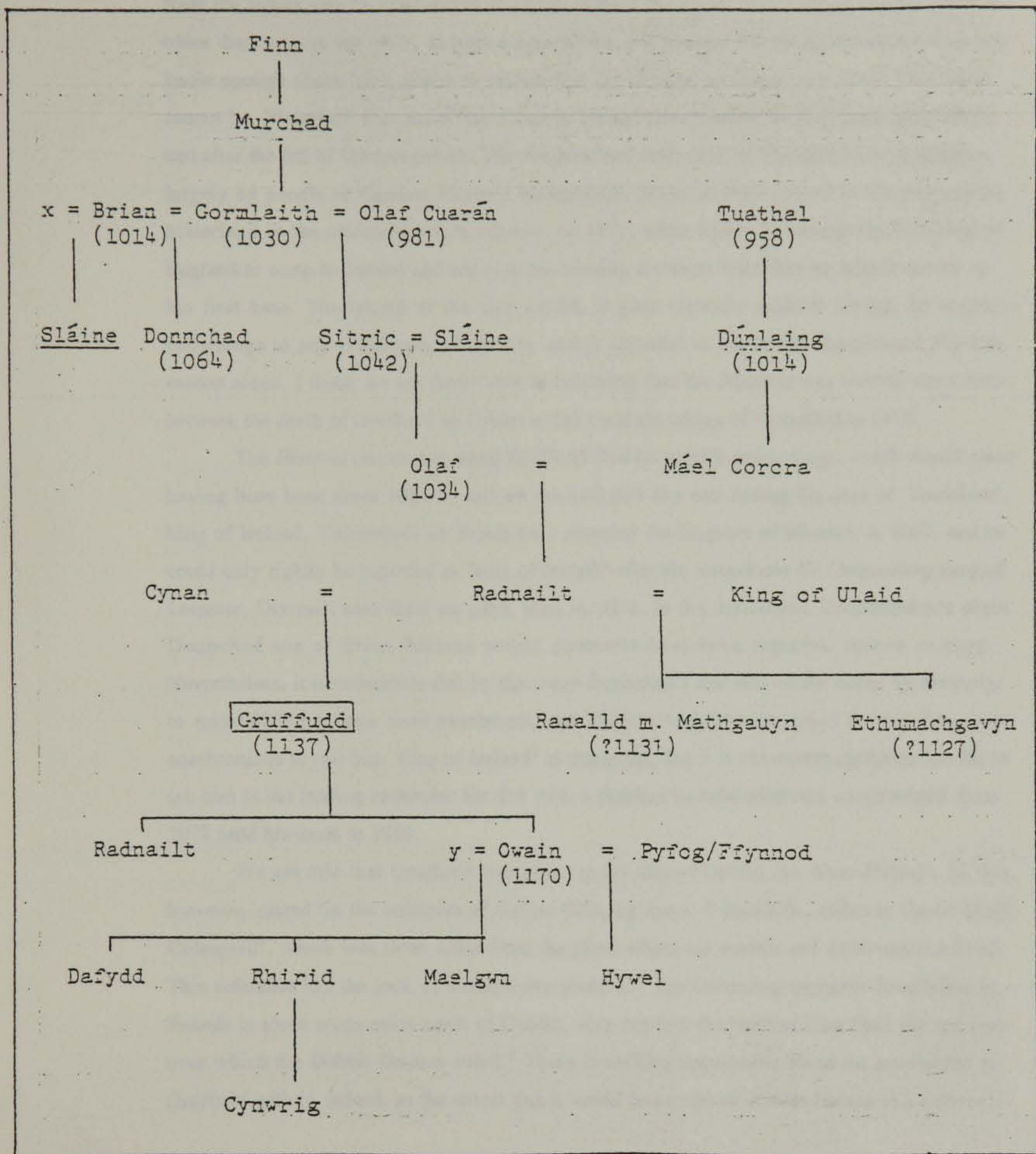
One may begin with the question of the date of the text. A suggested date has long since been offered by Arthur Jones, in the introduction to his edition and translation published in 1910.<sup>3</sup> Jones noted the statement in the *Historia* to the effect that the descendants of the Viking leader who founded Waterford 'have been kings in that city since then till today (*a'e etived enteu a vuant vrenhined y dinas hvnnv er henne hyt hediv*)' and concluded that the text in its present form must antedate the capture of Waterford by Strongbow in August 1170. Because of her doubts as to the reliability of the work, however, Dr Maund believes that 'an

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<sup>1</sup> Page-references given here are to the edition by D. Simon Evans, *A medieval prince of Wales. The life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Lampeter, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> K.L. Maund, 'Trahaearn ap Caradog: legitimate usurper?', *WHR*, 13 (1986-7), 468-76 (at p.468). In her recent book, she asserts that 'the Irish material in the *Historia* is of a highly dubious character on the whole': *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 174. See also, P.C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh genealogical tracts* (Cardiff, 1966), 34, 134-6.

<sup>3</sup> *The history of Gruffydd ap Cynan* (University of Manchester, Historical Series IX, Manchester, 1910).



APPENDIX 1: Irish material in Historia Gruffud vab Kenan

argument of this sort is not very convincing'.<sup>4</sup> She doubts Jones' proposition, not because she fears the author may be deliberately trying to mislead the reader into thinking that his work is older than it is (in my view, at least a possibility), but because she thinks the author does not know enough about Irish affairs to realize that the Ostmen no longer rule there! This surely cannot be. Waterford was one of the points in Ireland most familiar to Welshmen both before and after the fall of Ostman power. The conquest and settlement of Waterford was undertaken largely by people of Cambro-Norman background. Many of them settled in the city and its hinterland in the aftermath of its capture. In 1171, when Henry II became the first king of England to come to Ireland and add it to his domain, it was at Waterford he landed and set up his first base. The taking of the city would, it goes virtually without saying, be common knowledge to any Welshman of the age, and is reported in the Welsh chronicles.<sup>5</sup> For this reason alone, I think we are fairly safe in believing that the *Historia* was written some time between the death of Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1137 and the taking of Waterford in 1170.

The *Historia* claims that when Gruffudd died he was 82 years of age, which would mean having been born about 1054-5, and we are told that this was during the days of 'Terdelach', king of Ireland. Toirrdelach ua Briain only assumed the kingship of Munster in 1063, and he could only rightly be regarded as 'king of Ireland' after the remarkable Uí Chennselaig king of Leinster, Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, died in 1072. In the mid-1050s, Toirrdelbach's uncle Donnchad son of Brian Bóruma would doubtless have been regarded abroad as king. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that by this stage Donnchad's star was on the wane; by the early- to mid-1050s his days were numbered, and Toirrdelbach had the upper hand.<sup>6</sup> Yes, it is anachronistic to call him 'king of Ireland' at this point, but it is not stretching things too far to see him as the leading contender for that role, a position he held relatively unchallenged from 1072 until his death in 1086.

We are told that Gruffudd was born 'in the city of Dublin (*en dinas Dulyñ*)'; he was, however, reared 'in the commote of Colum Cille (*yg kymvt Colomcell*)...called in Gaelic Svrth Colomcell', which was three miles from the place where his mother and foster-mother lived. This reference has the look of authenticity about it.<sup>7</sup> The Columban monastic foundation at Swords is about seven miles north of Dublin, very much in the heart of *Fine Gall*, the territory over which the Dublin Ostmen ruled.<sup>8</sup> There is nothing improbable about the association of Gruffudd with it, indeed, to the extent that it would be perceived outside Ireland as a relatively

<sup>4</sup> Maund, 'Trahaearn ap Caradog', 468.

<sup>5</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Annales Cambriae* s.a. 1171.

<sup>6</sup> Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans*, 134-5.

<sup>7</sup> For a recent study of fosterage in medieval Wales, including a brief consideration of Gruffudd's Dublin experience, see Llinos Beverley Smith, 'Fosterage, adoption and God-parenthood: ritual and fictive kinship in medieval Wales', *WHR*, 16 (1992), 1-35.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *AU* s.a. 1035: 'Ard mBrecáin [in Mide] was plundered by Sitriuc son of Amlaíb [king of Dublin]. Sord Coluim Chille was burned by Conchobar ua Máel Sechnaill [king of Mide] in revenge for it.'



unimportant location, its inclusion here seems very plausible: a writer inventing an Irish birthplace for his hero might have been expected to choose a more readily recognisable place.

Is there any confirmation of the link? Gruffudd was succeeded by his son Owain (d.1170), who had at least eight sons: of one of these, Rhirid, the Welsh genealogy known as *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru* says: 'Rhirid ab Owain, who owned Cloghran, the town which was given to the old Gruffudd ap Cynan, which is between the city of Dublin and Sord Cholmcille (*Ririd ap Ywain, y gwr pieivu Klochran, y dref a rodded i hen Ruffydd ap Kynan hon y sydd y rwng Dinas Dulyn a Swrth Kolomkilli*)'.<sup>9</sup> Cloghran is in the barony of Coolock, in Fine Gall, about a mile and a half south of Swords, where Gruffudd ap Cynan was reputedly reared. Thus, we have a source other than the *Historia* linking Gruffudd's family with the area.

As both may not be independent, however, it is important to find some non-Welsh corroboration for the putative association with Dublin. What of this link with Cloghran? In a paper published some seventy years ago which has not come to the attention of Welsh historians, Edmund Curtis provided the answer to that question, and what follows owes a great deal to his labours.<sup>10</sup> Gruffudd's grandson, Rhirid ab Owain, did indeed hold lands in north Dublin. The register of the see of Dublin, compiled by Archbishop Alen in the sixteenth century from early records now lost, includes the *terram Regredi alias Riredi* among those lands in north County Dublin annexed to the English crown in 1170.<sup>11</sup> The old register of the archdiocese, known as *Crede Mihi*, refers to lands in the same place as the *terra Richerid Machanan*,<sup>12</sup> where the latter is clearly the patronymic *Mac Cynan*, which has by now become a surname (Rhirid was a son of Owain, son of Gruffudd 'Mac Cynan'). When Rhirid died, he was succeeded at Cloghran by his son Cynwrig: he was described as 'Kenewrek Fitz Rigeric', when his first cousin, the prince of Gwynedd, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth ab Owain, petitioned on his behalf in 1218 to gain remission of the fine imposed earlier by King John on obtaining entry into the Dublin lands at his father's death.<sup>13</sup> We also have a record of a grant of lands by Cynwrig to St Mary's abbey, Dublin, witnessed by no less a man than the justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco.<sup>14</sup>

It is, therefore, an incontrovertible fact that Gruffudd ap Cynan's grandson Rhirid had tenure of lands in north Dublin, some at least of which were lost as a direct result of the Anglo-Norman invasion, so that the lands were obtained by the family when the area was under Ostman rule. We cannot prove just when they gained possession, but I do not see much

<sup>9</sup> Bartrum, *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*, 97.

<sup>10</sup> E. Curtis, 'The Fitz Rerys, Welsh lords of Cloghran, Co. Dublin', *Louth Arch. & Hist. Soc. Journ.*, 5 (1921-4), 13-17.

<sup>11</sup> *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's register, c.1172-1534*, ed. Charles McNeill (Dublin, 1950), 15, 54.

<sup>12</sup> *Crede Mihi: the most ancient register book of the archbishop of Dublin before the reformation*, ed. J.T. Gilbert (Dublin, 1897), 58.

<sup>13</sup> *CDI*, I, 673, 830.

<sup>14</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 75.

reason for doubting the *Historia*'s claim that the links extended back a generation or two, having been established during Gruffudd's early years there or during the exile of Gruffudd's father, Cynan. Indeed, the very fact that Gruffudd ap Cynan's descendants were still known in Ireland as *Machanan* ('Cynan's son'),<sup>15</sup> almost two centuries after his Irish exile had ended, is a strong indication that the association with Ireland originates at this point.

If anything, the *Historia* underrates the extent of the family's associations with the area. Gruffudd ap Cynan's son Owain Gwynedd had an Irish wife, whom the Welsh genealogist calls *Ffynnod Wyddeles*; she was mother of the poet Hywel.<sup>16</sup> In addition to his lands at Cloghran, Owain's son Rhirid also held lands in the city of Dublin itself, where a record to be dated to 1281 refers to lands in the *villa Ostmannorum* (the Ostman suburb) as those which 'Dominus Rericus Makaanan aliquando tenuit'.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, another brother of Rhirid, Maelgwn, held lands in Dublin: his possession too seems to be dated to the period before the establishment of the English lordship of Ireland, because an inquisition was held in 1218 to determine if seisin should be granted to his nephew and heir, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, or to Adam le Savonier, probably a new Anglo-Norman citizen who had disseised him.<sup>18</sup> And we know from the *Brut* texts that Maelgwn took refuge in Ireland in 1173 when exiled by his brother Dafydd.<sup>19</sup> The royal house of Gwynedd, therefore, had considerable territorial interests in Dublin and its hinterland, and were not averse to falling back on their Dublin refuge when they found themselves in deep water at home.

This may have been true too of another member of the family. *Alen's register* states that Rhirid ab Owain's lands were within the territory of Ó Cathasaig (*Ocadesi*). The latter was lord of Saithne, a territory on the borders of Fine Gall and Mide that probably corresponds closely to the modern barony of Balrothery West.<sup>20</sup> Ímar Ó Cathasaig's lands were taken into the king's hands because he joined Ruaidrí Ó Conchobair's coalition to oppose the English annexation of Dublin in 1170, though they were soon alienated by the new lord of Meath, Hugh de Lacy.<sup>21</sup> Ecclesiastical rights in the area were granted to, among others, the priory of Kilbixy in Westmeath, and papal confirmations of their possessions dated 1219 and 1221 include those at 'Baliroderi'.<sup>22</sup> These are the earliest surviving references to what is still nowadays Balrothery.<sup>23</sup> It may be *Baile Ruaidrí* but is much closer to the Welsh forename *Rhodri*. Rhirid ab Owain had a brother Rhodri. About 1190, Rhodri was expelled from Anglesey like his brother Maelgwn before him; when he returned three years later to reclaim

<sup>15</sup> *Crede mihi*, 58; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 486; cf. *C.D.I.*, I, 1625.

<sup>16</sup> Bartrum, *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*, 97.

<sup>17</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 486.

<sup>18</sup> *CDI*, I, 830.

<sup>19</sup> *Brut*; *Brut (RBH)*; *Brenhinedd y Saesson* s.a. 1173.

<sup>20</sup> Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 92, note 1; O'Donovan, *AFM*, II, 791, note o; III, 51, note c.

<sup>21</sup> Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 184, 198.

<sup>22</sup> *Register of the priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Tristernagh*, ed. M.V. Clarke (I.M.S., Dublin, 1941), 109.

<sup>23</sup> They have been called to my attention by Dr Nollaig Ó Muraíle of An Oifig Logainmneacha.

his position, the campaign that followed was dubbed by a Welsh chronicler 'the summer of the Irish (*haf y gwydyl*)'.<sup>24</sup> The 'Baliroderi' which makes its first appearance on record in 1219 may be the lands in Saithne in the north-west of County Dublin held by Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd.

The cumulative evidence for Venedotian links with Dublin city and the north Dublin area of Fine Gall is extensive and convincing. But the *Historia* does more than claim landed connexions with the area. It tries to fit Gruffudd ap Cynan out with a star-studded Irish ancestry. So let us examine the Irish genealogical matter which the text contains. It is true that there are inaccuracies in the detail here, but they are by no means outlandish, and can in fact be regarded as minor slips. Above all else, it contains one piece of very revealing information. In 1030, Brian Bóruma's widow, Gormlaith, died. Her death-notice in the Annals of the Four Masters<sup>25</sup> reads as follows: 'Obit Gormlaith daughter of Murchad son of Find, the mother of Sitriuc, king of the foreigners, and of Donnchad mac Briain, king of Munster, and of Conchobar son of Máel Sechlainn'. Compare this with the following sentence in the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*: 'Gurmlach was the mother of King Sutric. She was the daughter of Mwrchath, king of Leinster (*Laine*). And she had three renowned sons, Dunchath, king of Munster (*Muen*), Sutric king of Dublin, and Moelchelen, king of Meath (*Midif*)'. Whatever about the accuracy of these statements,<sup>26</sup> the fact is that their similarity is proof that the author of the *Historia* has got hold of an Irish source of at least some degree of trustworthiness. Now, we can never prove that he does not simply graft Gruffudd's pedigree onto this Irish tree. What we can say, though, is that he had access to Irish information, and reasonably reliable information at that.

The *Historia* claims that Gruffudd ap Cynan's mother was 'Radnalt' daughter of Amlaíb (or Olafr), king of Dublin. We know from another source that Gruffudd himself had a daughter bearing the same Scandinavian forename, which lends some weight to the suggestion.<sup>27</sup> But her father cannot be Amlaíb Cuarán who died in 980, though the latter did have a daughter of that name, the mother of a man who died in 994.<sup>28</sup> This would be much too early for our Gruffudd, and one must assume that the biographer is either wrong, or is referring to a later Amlaíb and Radnalt. There was an Amlaíb son of Sitriuc killed in 1012, who is taken by Charles, by Maund and by Bartrum to be Radnalt's father, but this individual

<sup>24</sup> *The text of the Bruts from the Red Book of Hergest*, edd. John Rhys and J.G. Evans (Oxford, 1890), 405.

<sup>25</sup> And it appears verbatim elsewhere, for instance, in the genealogical tract known as 'Senchas Síil Bhriain', *Caithréim Thoirdealbhaigh*, ed. Standish Hayes O'Grady, 2 vols (I.T.S., London, 1929), I, 174.

<sup>26</sup> Both the claim of *AFM* that Gormlaith was mother to Máel Sechlainn's son Conchobar and that of the *Historia* that she was the mother of Máel Sechlainn are possibly wrong: the *Banshenchas* only credits her with Donnchad and Sitriuc (ed. M.C. Dobbs, *Revue Celtique*, 47 (1930), 314, 338). See also, Paul Walsh, 'The Ua Maelechlainn kings of Meath', *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 57 (1941), 165-83 (at p.167).

<sup>27</sup> Bartrum, *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*, 98, 104.

<sup>28</sup> 'The ban-shenchus', *Revue Celtique*, 48 (1931), 227.

was never king of Dublin and I think may be reasonably excluded from the investigation.<sup>29</sup> Another Amlaíb son of Sitriuc was killed by 'the Saxons' in 1034 on his way to Rome.<sup>30</sup> The latter is described as 'king of the foreigners [of Dublin] (*rí Gall*)' in 1029,<sup>31</sup> and is therefore most probably the father of Gruffudd's mother Radnalt. Incidentally, in that same year Amlaíb was able to hand over 120 Welsh horses as part of a ransom, solid evidence of his Welsh connexions,<sup>32</sup> and seven years later his brother was killed in Wales.<sup>33</sup>

If Gruffudd's maternal grandfather was Amlaíb, his maternal grandmother, Amlaíb's wife, was, according to the *Historia*, 'Maylcorcre daughter of Dunlug son of Tethel, king of Laine'. Dúnlung son of Tuathal, king of Leinster, died in 1014.<sup>34</sup> He was never a figure of enormous stature such as a fake genealogist, writing perhaps about one and a half centuries later, might select. He was, however, a member of a dynasty, the Uí Muiredaig, with whom the Ostmen of Dublin had close relations. We know nothing of his daughter Máel Corcre, but there is nothing at all improbable about her alleged marriage to Sitriuc Silkenbeard's son Amlaíb. Amlaíb's own mother, according to the *Historia*, was 'Slani... daughter of Brien, king of Muen'. Dr Maund has described this as 'the most suspicious link' in Gruffudd's supposed Irish pedigree,<sup>35</sup> presumably on the assumption that this is a blatant attempt to link the up-and-coming Gruffudd ap Cynan with the illustrious Brian Bóruma. However, we are told in no uncertain terms by the author of the early twelfth-century Munster propagandist text known as *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* that Sitriuc Silkenbeard's wife was a daughter of Brian Bóruma.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, although we do not know her name from any other source, the name given in the *Historia*, Sláine, is rare and found almost exclusively among Brian's Dál Cais dynasty.<sup>37</sup> It would be quite remarkable indeed if the Welsh author had conjured up the name out of thin air.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup> B.G. Charles, *Old Norse relations with Wales* (Cardiff, 1934), 57; Maund, *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 178; Bartrum, *Early Welsh genealogical tracts*, 136.

<sup>30</sup> *AU*; *AFM*; *CS*; *AClon* s.a. 1034.

<sup>31</sup> *AU*; *ATig* s.a. 1029.

<sup>32</sup> *ALCé*; *ATig*; *AU*; *AFM*; *CS* s.a. 1029.

<sup>33</sup> *ATig* s.a. 1036.

<sup>34</sup> *AU*; *Book of Leinster*, I, 5474.

<sup>35</sup> *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 179.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. J.H. Todd (R.S., London, 1867), 192, 256.

<sup>37</sup> The famous thirteenth-century head, Donnchad Cairbrech Ó Briain, had a daughter of the name (d.1259) (*AI*); his great-grandson, Toirrdelbach son of Tadc of Cael Uisce, also had a daughter called Sláine (*AU* s.aa. 1339, 1343; cf. Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, IV, 83). The same is true of Conchobar Ó Briain, who died as king of Thomond in 1496: his daughter Sláine was famed for her patronage of the bards of Ireland and Scotland (*AU* s.a. 1481). As an indication of how long the name remained current in the family we may note that the sixteenth-century Sir Torlach O'Brien of Duach had a daughter called Slaney who married Conor O'Brien, third earl of Thomond circa 1594 (Máire Mac Neill, *Máire Rua. Lady of Leamaneh* (Whitegate, Co. Clare, 1990), 18); a later Conor O'Brien (d.1651), head of the line of Leamaneh, and his wife, the famous Máire Rua, also called one of their daughters Slaney (*ibid*, 22, 47, 49; a reference first called to my attention by Mrs Sheila Harbison). See also, Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Fidelma Maguire, *Gaelic personal names* (Dublin, 1981), 166.

<sup>38</sup> Where the *Historia* does make a slight blunder, though, is in claiming that 'Maelmorda' was a son of Gormlaith 'by Mwrchath, king of Laine': Murchad (d.972), king of Leinster (*AU*), was Gormlaith's father, not her husband, so Máel Mórda (d.1014) was her brother, not her son.

The last extraordinary piece of the Irish genealogical puzzle is the assertion that Gruffudd ap Cynan had two uterine brothers who were kings of Ulster (*Wltw*). They are named as 'Ranalld m. Mathgauyn' and 'Ethumachgavyn'. Far from being a cause of suspicion this reinforces the impression one gets that the author of the *Historia* had some fairly reputable Irish source of information. An uninformed Welsh author of the mid-twelfth century would be unlikely to link his hero with the east Ulster kingdom of Ulaid. Only someone with a knowledge of the political links of the Ostman kingdom of Dublin in an earlier age would pick such a connexion. This is because Ulaid, lying almost directly parallel with the Isle of Man, had very real links with Dublin while the kings of that city dominated the affairs of Man: this link was substantially severed, though perhaps not entirely removed, by the early twelfth century. If Gruffudd ap Cynan's mother was a daughter of the king of Dublin and she flourished in the mid-eleventh century, she lived at a point when her family's involvement with Man put them into close, and often violent, contact with Ulaid: one might mention the naval battle between them in 1022 in which the Dubliners were defeated or the slaughter by the Dublin fleet of 300 of the Ulaid, including their king, in Rathlin in 1045.<sup>39</sup> A healing marriage alliance looks like a distinct possibility. Interestingly too, there is a strong tendency in this period for families in the north-east Ulster area to adopt names prevalent in the Dublin Ostman families or which suggest Scandinavian influence: Dubgall (925, 1054); Ragnall (1045, 1131, 1138); Bródur (1065); Lochlainn (1071); Sitriuc (1102); Ímar (1138); Magnus (1171) and an Áed Méréanach who flourished in Ulaid at the same time as the Ostman king Gofraid Méréanach did in Dublin. Gruffudd ap Cynan's father is an obscure figure about whom little is known. The probability is that he died young: even the author of the *Historia* says that Gruffudd was reared three miles from where his *mother* lived, not his parents, so that he may even have been a posthumous child. In which case, it is very possible that his mother was then married off to a member of the reigning Ulaid dynasty.

This leaves us still, however, with the task of identifying these two uterine brothers of Gruffudd. First, 'Ranalld m. Mathgauyn'. Three Ulster kings of the same forename have just been mentioned. The first, Ragnall Ua hEochada of Ulaid, was killed in 1045 and is undoubtedly a little early for our purposes. The last, Ragnall mac Ímair Uí Chatháin (d.1138), was king of Craebh, Fir Lí and Ciannachta, was not therefore of the Ulaid, and was probably not intended by our author. This leaves the final Ragnall: he died six years before Gruffudd ap Cynan, in 1131, when he is described as Ragnall Ua hEochada, king of Ulaid.<sup>40</sup> We do not know his father's name, which may well have been, as the *Historia* claims, Mathgamain. On the other hand, 'Ua Mathgamna' and 'Ua hEochada' are *surnames* found in the Ulaid nobility of this era. Áed Ua Mathgamna, king of Ulaid, was killed in 1127,<sup>41</sup> ten years before the death of

<sup>39</sup> For a brief discussion, see Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

<sup>40</sup> *AFM* s.a. 1131.

<sup>41</sup> *AFM*; *CS* s.a. 1123; cf. *AFM* s.a. 1124 for the death of an 'Aodh Ua Mathghamhna, rieghdhamhna Uladh'.

Gruffudd ap Cynan. He must surely be the 'Ethumachgavyn' said in the *Historia* to be Ragnall's other brother. As the Ulaid genealogies are in something of a mess at this point, we are not in a position to say if Gruffudd's biographer is correct in claiming that these two kings of Ulaid, Ragnall (d.1131) and Áed (d.1127), were brothers of each other, let alone of Gruffudd ap Cynan (d.1137).<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless, they are real historical characters, they *were* kings of Ulaid, they were contemporaneous with Gruffudd ap Cynan, and their dynasty had close relations with that claimed for Gruffudd's mother. The connexion posited is plausible, and at least demonstrates, once more, the author's knowledge of Irish affairs.

This Irish genealogical matter is, therefore, flawed but it is not unfounded. It patently comes from an Irish root and there seems little reason to doubt that some part, at least, of the other Irish matter in the *Historia* did likewise. In any event, I can see no justification for the contention of Dr Maund that 'there is very little information about Ireland in *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, and almost nothing that could not have been found from the Welsh chronicles'.<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, I believe that its author was well informed about Ireland, that a case can be made for accepting his chronology of Irish affairs as sound, and that his allusions to named Irish kings deserve to be taken seriously.

The first such episode, which the *Historia*'s editors agree in assigning to c. 1075, is of Gruffudd ap Cynan's attendance at the court of King 'Murchath', where he complains to him and the other kings of Ireland that 'foreign peoples' are ruling over his paternal kingdom of Gwynedd, seeks and obtains their assistance and, temporarily at least, recovers the rule of North Wales. When eventually put to flight, those captured in Gruffudd's company include his foster-father 'Cerit' and an individual called 'Varudri', leader of the Irish fighting with him, who is described as lord of 'Cruc Brenan' ('the very high mountain of Saint Brendan, a wondrous hermit, surrounded by nine cantrefs'). Undoubtedly, there is a possibility that the 'Murchath' here is a random choice of name for an Irish king. It may represent Murchad, or it may represent Muirchertach, which most non-Irish writers have difficulty in reproducing: incidentally, the latter is clearly meant, as we shall see, by a 'King Mwrchath' who appears further on in the *Historia*'s account. On the possibility of 'Murchad', Diarmait mac Máel na mBó's son of this name ruled Dublin prior to his death in 1070; he may well be intended. But the other possible candidate is Toirrdelbach ua Briain's son Muirchertach. According to the *Annals of Inisfallen*, in 1075 'the kingship of Dublin was assumed by Muirchertach, son of

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<sup>42</sup> According to the *Banshenchas*, an Áed son of Donn Sléibe Ua hEochada was the product of a union between his father and Sadb daughter of Cennétig Ua Briain (*Revue Celtique*, 48, 194), which, if accurate, would rule out sharing a mother with Gruffudd. But according to *ATig* and *SC*, this Áed son of Donn Sléibe Ua hEochada was killed in 1122 and was succeeded by a different Áed, the Áed Ua Mathgamna of the *Historia*. The problem is that if Ragnall and Áed are brothers, one is 'Ua hEochada' and the other 'Ua Mathgamna'. Professor Byrne has examined the matter and concluded: 'If these data are correct, they would show that the names Ua Mathgamna and Ua hEochada were interchangeable' (F.J. Byrne, 'Clann Ollaman Uaisle Emna', *Studia Hibernica*, 4 (1964), 93).

<sup>43</sup> *Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 179.

Toirrdelbach ua Briain'. Since this is the date to which the *Historia* implicitly assigns this meeting between Gruffudd and King 'Murchath', we may perhaps accept the statement at face value.<sup>44</sup>

One of the causes of the scepticism over identifying King Murchath with Muirchertach Ua Briain has been the second allusion to Irish affairs. This, by common assent, must be dated to c. 1081: Gruffudd has long since escaped his discomfiture in Wales; disembarking at Wexford (*Llwch Garmaun*), he spends a year in Ireland as a guest of King 'Diermit' and the other leading men, before at last assembling a royal fleet from Waterford (*Porthlarc*), full of Ostmen, Irish, and Welsh, and sailing to Wales where the famous battle of Mynydd Carn (1081) follows, at which Gruffudd's rival Trahaearn ap Caradog is slain by an Irishman, 'Gucharki'. Now, if this King Diermit is Diarmait mac Máel na mBó, king of Leinster, as must be a possibility, then it is true that the author's Irish chronology is very far off the mark (Diarmait died nine years earlier in 1072), in which case the King Murchath of the first episode may sensibly be equated with Diarmait's son, Murchad (d.1070) - on the assumption that if the author did not know that Diarmait was long dead in 1081, he may not have known that Murchad was long dead in 1075!

However, an alternative proposal may be made. According to the Annals of Inisfallen, in 1080 an Irish fleet sailed to Wales and took away great spoil. It was led by a son of the then 'king of Ireland', Toirrdelbach ua Briain; this son's name was Diarmait. It is difficult to believe that there is no link between this and Gruffudd's expedition soon afterwards; indeed, if both Diarmait's expedition and the Mynydd Carn campaign occurred in the winter of 1080-81, we may be speaking of the same event. The fleet that accompanied Gruffudd ap Cynan on his successful campaign of re-conquest came, the *Historia* claims, from Waterford; we have some evidence that this Diarmait Ua Briain was acting as governor of the city in the late eleventh century.<sup>45</sup> Sceptics may remain unimpressed. But, to repeat: the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* says that its hero was at the court of King Murchath, implicitly at Dublin, in the very year in which Muirchertach Ua Briain assumed control there; later, that he spent the year 1080-81 with King Diermit, returning then to Wales with the Waterford fleet, at the very point when, it seems, Muirchertach's brother Diarmait governed that city and was raiding Wales. It may be coincidence, but I find it convincing.

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<sup>44</sup> Dr Maund was unaware of the *AI* reference when she stated that 'there is no reason to allow that Muirchertach was active in or near Dublin in 1075' ('Trahaern ap Caradog', 469). In her book she alludes to the *AI* reference to Muirchertach's rule (without correcting her earlier statement) but says that 'it is not clear that this was in anything other than name' (*Ireland, Wales, and England in the eleventh century*, 181; I argue otherwise in 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man', 9-14). For this reason, she is reluctant to accept that Muirchertach might have been intended.

<sup>45</sup> We have the evidence of a letter from the people of Waterford to Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, circa 1095-6, which is co-signed by 'Dermeth Dux': James Ussher, *Veterum epistolarum Hibernicarum sylloge* (Dublin, 1632), no. XXXIII.

In both these episodes I have mentioned minor Irish characters who are difficult, perhaps impossible, to identify. The first is 'Cerit', captured in Gruffudd's host c. 1075, described as his foster-father. Gruffudd's foster-mother, we saw earlier, was said to have lived three miles from his birthplace at Swords near Dublin. This perhaps makes Cerit an Ostman, but the name is obscure. But just as, for example, the *c* in the Irish or Hiberno-Scandinavian surname *mac Ottair* transferred by attraction to give *Cotter*, our Cerit may perhaps be [*ma*]c *Eric*: the final *c* would be quite easily confused in manuscript for a *t*. According to the Annals of Inisfallen 'the two sons of Eric Finn of the people of Dublin (da *mc. Éricc* Inn do muintir Atha Cliath)' fell at the battle of Mag Cóba in 1103; the main corpus of Irish annals only has one of them, called Thorstan *mc. Eric*.<sup>46</sup> That both sets of Irish annals mention them is proof that the Meic Eric were important members of the ruling Ostman oligarchy in Dublin, and just the sort of family to which the young heir to Gwynedd might be sent for fosterage.

With this Cerit was taken 'Varudri', lord of 'Cruc Brenan'. Cnoc Brénainn, or Mount Brandon, lies in the territory of Corcu Duibne in the Dingle peninsula in West Kerry. Because of its association with St Brendan, it was a well-known topographical location,<sup>47</sup> and as it was regarded as marking the southernmost extremity of Ireland it may owe its mention to this fact alone. On the other hand, I have suggested above that the forces which accompanied Gruffudd on this expedition were supplied by the then ruler of Dublin, Muirchertach Ua Briain, son of the king of Munster. Prominent among the admirals of the Munster fleet were the petty rulers of Corcu Duibne, the Uí Shegda and the Uí Fhailbe.<sup>48</sup> Who Varudri was, however, is a different matter. If the initial *v* is a lenited *m*, it may possibly be *ma*[*c*] *Ruaidrí*; if it is the letter *u*, we may have *ua Ruaidrí*, but I cannot say who he may be. And the final Irishman mentioned in connexion with these events is 'Gucharki' who is said to have 'made bacon' of Gruffudd's rival, Trahaearn, 'as of a pig'. But again the name is obscure and it may never be possible to rediscover his identity.<sup>49</sup>

The third episode in which individuals are named who have Irish connexions is generally assigned to the early- to mid-1090s: Gruffudd escapes from a lengthy imprisonment at Chester and, after a third attempt, makes it to Ireland, taking advice there, before sailing to the Isles to his ally, King 'Gothrei', to seek ships and supplies. He returns with 60 vessels, Gothrei enduring many perils with him, until Gruffudd eventually defeats his enemies and takes Gwynedd for himself. Again, the author seems to be accurate in both chronology and identification. This must be Godred Crovan, founder of a famous line of Manx kings, whose *floruit* is in the last quarter of the eleventh century, and who is probably to be equated with the

<sup>46</sup> *AU*; *AICé*; *AFM* s.a. 1103.

<sup>47</sup> Gerald of Wales calls the sea off Ireland's south-western tip the 'Brendanican sea': *The history and topography of Ireland*, translated by J.J. O'Meara (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1982), 37.

<sup>48</sup> F.J. Byrne in *NHI*, II, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Several leading experts on Irish linguistics have shared their thoughts on the matter with me, but to date no likely identification has been forthcoming.



Gofraid Méranach mentioned above, 'king of the Foreigners of Dublin and of the Isles' who, according to Irish sources, died of pestilence in 1095.<sup>50</sup>

The final Irishman named in the *Historia* is 'Mwrchath', king of Ireland, with whom, we are told, Gruffudd ap Cynan enjoyed neighbourly relations for the many years in which he ruled Gwynedd successfully and peaceably, the same being true of his relations with Henry, king of England. Muirchertach Ua Briain is obviously intended here and I see no reason to quibble with the claim, though the author implies that the relationship persisted to the end of Gruffudd's life (1137) whereas Muirchertach died in 1119. The writer's insistence on associating the two men is excusable, though. Muirchertach Ua Briain towered like a colossus over the Irish polity for a period of thirty years or so. With his passing ended the almost uninterrupted domination of Irish affairs wielded by the Dál Cais dynasty of Munster since the days of Brian. After him, Munster slumped into fissure, and Connacht - arguably the Irish province least likely to commune with Wales - began to rule the roost. A mid-twelfth century Welsh biographer, looking back at the 'good old days' of Gruffudd's reign, could hardly fail to juxtapose his hero's name with those of his pre-eminent royal contemporaries to east and west, Henry I of England and Muirchertach Ua Briain of Ireland.

On the whole, therefore, there are grounds for thinking that the author of the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* knew what he was talking about in dealing with Irish matters, and made use of materials such as Irish genealogies and possibly king-lists. His knowledge of Irish geography is sound, and, since the *Historia* may have been composed by someone attached to the family of the prince of Gwynedd, bearing in mind that family's land-holdings in the Dublin area, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the author acquired some of his materials personally in Ireland. One should not be too hasty in dismissing it as late, garbled, and unreliable. Romantic it may be, propagandist it certainly is; but as such texts go it may come closer than most in contemporaneity. Its potential usefulness to the Irish historian has hitherto been sadly ignored, a situation which, one hopes, will in the future be remedied.

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<sup>50</sup> For his career, see Duffy, 'Irishmen and Islesmen in Dublin and Man'.

## APPENDIX 2

**DÚNGAL MAC CINAÉDA AND  
GILLA CÁEMGEIN MAC CINAÉDA:  
SONS OF SCOTTISH KINGS OR LEINSTER DYNASTS?**

More than one recent survey of the history of Scotland has a genealogical table which fits two individuals called, respectively, Dúngal mac Cinaéda and Gilla Cáemgein mac Cinaéda into the Scottish royal line. It has been assumed that they were sons of the Scots kings Cináed II (d.995) and his nephew Cináed III (d.1005) - Dúngal perhaps a son of the former and Gilla Cáemgein son of the latter.<sup>51</sup> I believe that this is an error. If it is, its origin can be traced to a rare slip on the part of the remarkable Scottish scholar Alan Orr Anderson.<sup>52</sup> He obtained the mention of these two putative sons of Scottish kings from an entry in *AFM* for AD 998 (=999): 'Dúngal mac Cinaéda was slain by Gilla Cáemgein mac Cinaéda (*Dungal mac Cionaeda do marbad la Giolla Caoimgin mac Cionaedha*). In fairness to Anderson, he admitted that his identification was 'by no means certain'. It was, though, quite a reasonable assumption. Cináed is not a terribly common forename but it is one intimately associated with the Scottish royal house. Furthermore, since the Irish annals are one of our few sources of information about Scottish royal affairs in this period, and are very interested in their activities, it would be by no means surprising if this reference did turn out to refer to them.

But there are reasons for doubting it. The very name Gilla Cáemgein suggests an association with St Cáemgein of Glendalough (and should not be confused with Gilla Comgáin, a name that does occur among Scottish royalty at this point).<sup>53</sup> Also, it is interesting that many of the other entries in *AFM* for this year are to do with events in the hinterland of

<sup>51</sup> A.A.M. Duncan, *Scotland. The making of the kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), genealogical table 1 (pp.628-9); A.P. Smyth, *Warlords and holy men. Scotland AD 80-1000* (London, 1984), 226, and the genealogical table on p. 220.

<sup>52</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, I, 520.

<sup>53</sup> *AU* s.a. 1032. Ailbhe MacShamhráin informs me that the name Gilla Cáemgein, with one explicable exception, is confined to the following four local septs: Uí Briúin Cualann, Uí Muiredaig, Uí Enachglais, and Uí Garrchon.

Dublin and appear to be drawn from an original compilation put together in those parts. This suggests that we should perhaps look first in this area for Dúngal and Gilla Cáemgein.

The territory occupied by the dynasty known as Uí Briúin Cualann comprised of the coastal area bordering Counties Dublin and Wicklow.<sup>54</sup> In their genealogies recorded in the *Book of Lecan* are the names of the three sons of a man called Dúngal mac Cinaéda meic Maíl Sinchill, and the three sons of a man called Gilla Cáemgein mac Cinaéda meic Maíl Sinchill.<sup>55</sup> We can date these individuals because of a mention in the annals of one of the latter's sons, Gilla Usaille: the death of Gilla Usaille mac Gilla Cáemgein is recorded in *AFM* for 1027, where he is described as lord of Uí Briúin Cualann. The Dúngal and Gilla Cáemgein recorded in this pedigree are surely the two men mentioned in *AFM* for AD 999, not Scottish princes but Leinster dynasts.

One other point. Anderson also noted with interest a reference in *AFM* and *AU* to the death of a daughter of 'the son of Gilla Cáemgein' in 1034/5.<sup>56</sup> This is presumably the same Gilla Cáemgein mentioned in 999. The lady in question is described as the wife of the lord of Uí Cellaig Cualann (a neighbouring dynasty to Uí Briúin Cualann located just to the west of them in the foothills of the Wicklow mountains).<sup>57</sup> If Anderson were right in thinking that Gilla Cáemgein was a Scottish prince, this notice of his granddaughter's death would be of some significance: it would be evidence for an early eleventh-century marriage-alliance between a branch of the royal house of Scotland and a second-rank dynasty in the north Leinster area. It would complement the statement in the so-called 'Prophecy of Berchán' to the effect that King Máel Coluim II (d.1034) son of Cináed II (d.995) was also 'son of a woman of Leinster...son of the cow that grazes upon the countryside of the Liffey'.<sup>58</sup>

But, unfortunately, if such a link did exist, this is not evidence for it. Since the lady in question was a daughter of a son of Gilla Cáemgein mac Cinaéda, her father was probably the Gilla Usaille who died as ruler of Uí Briúin Cualann in 1027. And she was wife of their next-door-neighbour, the ruler of Uí Cellaig Cualann. She was murdered along with her husband and the ruler of Déisi of Brega, a territory located on the other side of the Liffey to the north-west. The culprits were first-cousins of her husband (also, therefore, of the Uí Cellaig Cualann) and the son of the lord of Uí Dúinchada, the important west County Dublin dynasty that separated Uí Cellaig Cualann from Déisi of Brega. This was purely a quarrel among neighbours. It had no implications for events further afield, and none of those involved seems to have had allies abroad. The Scottish connexion unfortunately appears to be a red herring.

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<sup>54</sup> A. P. Smyth, *Celtic Leinster. Towards an historical geography of early Irish civilization AD 500-1600*, 52-3.

<sup>55</sup> *The Book of Lecan. Leabhar Mór Mhic Fhir Bhisigh Leacain*. Facsimile edn (I.M.S., Dublin, 1937), fol. 91v.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, *Early sources*, I, 520, n. 5.

<sup>57</sup> For whom, see Kenneth Nicholls, 'Three topographical notes', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 409-13.

<sup>58</sup> A.O. Anderson, 'The prophecy of Berchan', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 18 (1930), 1-56, stt. 181-2; see also, idem, *Early sources*, I, 574. This, of course, is several generations removed from our supposed 'daughter of the son of Gilla Cáemgein son of Cináed [III]' (d.1005) - the latter was a nephew of Cináed II - but it does at least indicate that these alliances may have been taking place in the period.

## APPENDIX 3

THE FAMILY BACKGROUND OF  
JOHN DE COURCY

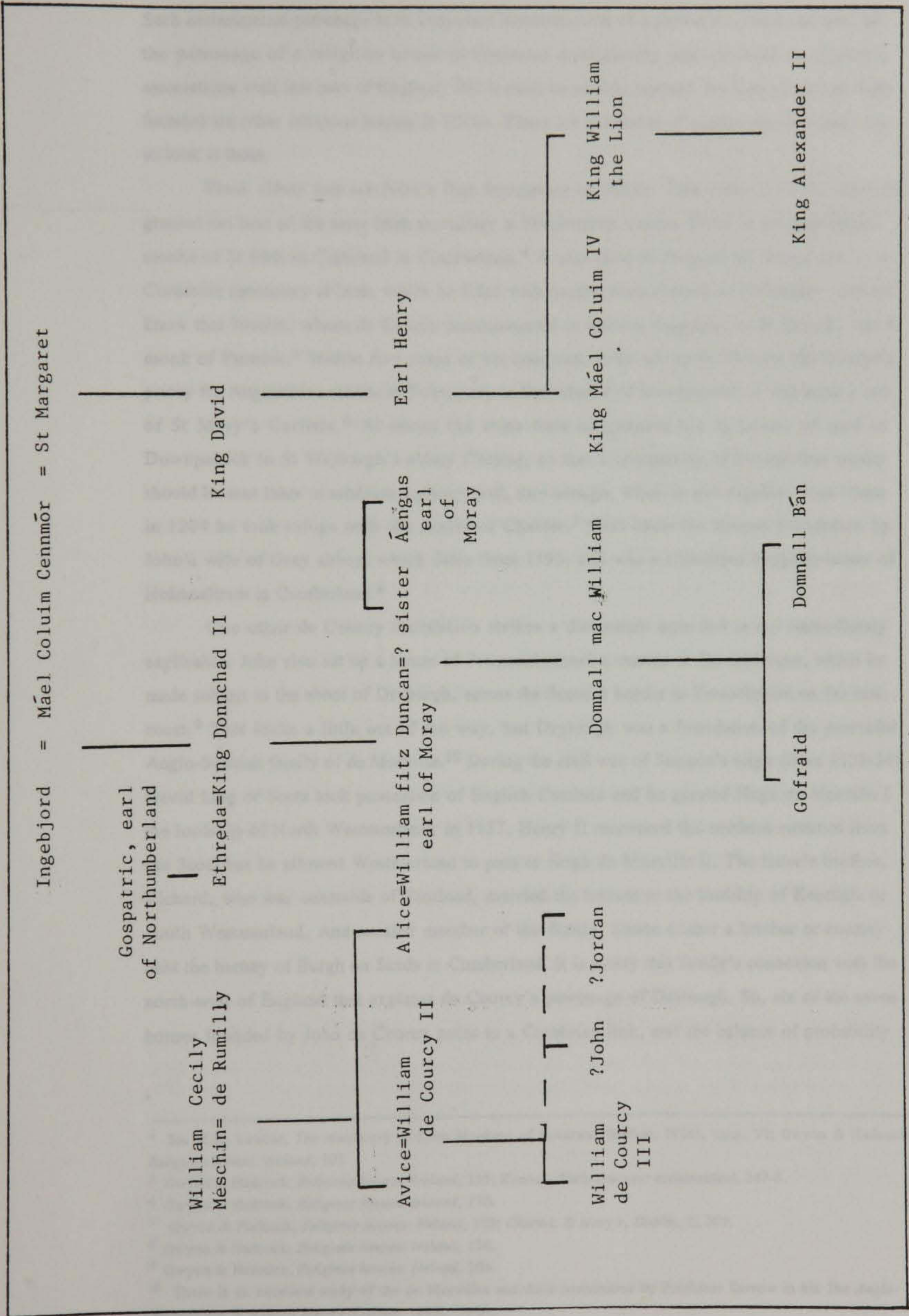
Almost without exception, every Irish historian who, in the last hundred years or so, has commented on John de Courcy's career has described him as a Somerset knight, landless or nearly so, a younger son, probably illegitimate. His first contact with Ireland was, we are told, in the early 1170s when he came to the country as part of the new Anglo-Norman garrison in charge of Dublin. In the winter of 1176-7, having grown restless waiting around doing nothing, he gathered together a small contingent of knights and other similarly discontented men and together they set off on their adventure. For some reason or other - never satisfactorily explained - they marched straight through the as yet unconquered territory that is now County Louth, and headed instead for Down, capital of the kingdom of Ulaid, which, after a march of three days and nights they reached, overcame, and conquered.<sup>1</sup>

But *was* John de Courcy a landless Somerset knight who arrived in Ulster out of the blue and somehow won himself a kingdom? The question is a rather more important one than might at first sight appear, because de Courcy's place of origin can, I believe, go a long way towards explaining why he chose east Ulster as his target. It is true that the de Courcy family did have strong links with Somerset, and held extensive lands there.<sup>2</sup> And John helped to reinforce these links when, some time after 1183, he established a religious house in the Ards peninsula in County Down, the priory of St Andrew (or Black abbey), which he made a dependent house of the family foundation at Stoke Courcy (nowadays Stogursey) in Somerset.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The best accounts of his Irish career are in Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 5-23; and James Lydon, 'John de Courcy (circa 1150-1219)', in *Worsted in the game. Losers in Irish history*, ed. Ciarán Brady (Dublin, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> See Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte, 'Curci', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 66 (1920), 98-126; and the notice by J.H. Round in *DNB*, XII, 330-33.

<sup>3</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 108; *Stogursey charters. Charters and other documents relating to the property of the alien priory of Stogursey*, ed. T.D. Tremlett and Noel Blakiston, Somerset Record Society, LXI (Frome, 1949), xvi.



APPENDIX 3: The family background of John de Courcy

Such ecclesiastical patronage is an important demonstration of a person's loyalties and ties. So, the patronage of a religious house in Somerset does clearly indicate John de Courcy's associations with that part of England. But it must be seen in context. De Courcy and his wife founded six other religious houses in Ulster. These are indicative of another regional pull. Let us look at them.

Black abbey was not John's first foundation in Ulster. That came in 1179, when he granted the land of the early Irish monastery at Nendrum in County Down to the Benedictine monks of St Bees in Copeland in Cumberland.<sup>4</sup> A year later he founded his second house, a Cistercian monastery at Inch, which he filled with monks from Furness in Lancashire; and we know that Jocelin, whom de Courcy commissioned to write a biography of St Patrick, was a monk of Furness.<sup>5</sup> Within five years of his conquest, John set up St Thomas the Martyr's priory for Augustinian canons at Toberglory in the suburbs of Downpatrick: it was made a cell of St Mary's Carlisle.<sup>6</sup> At about the same time he granted ten carucates of land in Downpatrick to St Werburgh's abbey Chester, so that a community of Benedictine monks should be sent there to establish a priory; and, sure enough, when he was expelled from Ulster in 1204 he took refuge with the monks of Chester.<sup>7</sup> Next came the famous foundation by John's wife of Grey abbey, which dates from 1193, and was a Cistercian daughter-house of Holmcultram in Cumberland.<sup>8</sup>

One other de Courcy foundation strikes a discordant note and is not immediately explicable. John also set up a house of Premonstratensian canons at Carrickfergus, which he made subject to the abbot of Dryburgh, across the Scottish border in Berwickshire on the east coast.<sup>9</sup> This looks a little out of the way, but Dryburgh was a foundation of the powerful Anglo-Scottish family of de Morville.<sup>10</sup> During the civil war of Stephen's reign (from 1135-54), David king of Scots took possession of English Cumbria and he granted Hugh de Morville I the lordship of North Westmorland; in 1157, Henry II recovered the northern counties from the Scots but he allowed Westmorland to pass to Hugh de Morville II. The latter's brother, Richard, who was constable of Scotland, married the heiress to the lordship of Kentdale or South Westmorland. And another member of the family, Simon (either a brother or cousin) held the barony of Burgh on Sands in Cumberland. It is surely this family's connexion with the north-west of England that explains de Courcy's patronage of Dryburgh. So, six of the seven houses founded by John de Courcy point to a Cumbrian link, and the balance of probability

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<sup>4</sup> See H.C. Lawlor, *The monastery of Saint Mochaoi of Nendrum* (Belfast, 1925), chap. VI; Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 107.

<sup>5</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 135; Kenney, *Early sources: ecclesiastical*, 347-8.

<sup>6</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 170.

<sup>7</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 105; *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 309.

<sup>8</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 134.

<sup>9</sup> Gwynn & Hadcock, *Religious houses: Ireland*, 204.

<sup>10</sup> There is an excellent study of the de Morvilles and their connexions by Professor Barrow in his *The Anglo-Norman era in Scottish history* (Oxford, 1980), 70-84.

must be that the favour he showed to the churches of the north-west of England after his conquest of Ulster is to be accounted for by earlier links with the region.

The foundation charters for several of these houses still survive, as do some other legal deeds which John drew up during his time in Ireland. Witnesses whose names are appended to these documents were usually de Courcy men, men who came to Ulster with him and owed their position there to his influence. Of those whose place of origin can be identified, most appear to come from an area of England between Chester and the Scottish border. We hear that John's constable was Roger of Chester; we also hear of Elias, Arnold, Philip and Hugh, all of Chester.<sup>11</sup> John's earliest surviving legal act in Ulster is witnessed by Richard son of Trouce.<sup>12</sup> His brother Robert was sheriff of Cumberland from 1158 to at least 1173.<sup>13</sup> In 1207 Richard regained possession of his lands in the bailiwick of the sheriff of Cumberland, having been disseised by the King's order because he went in Ireland with de Courcy (presumably shortly beforehand when the latter was in rebellion).<sup>14</sup> This early charter is also witnessed by a man from Rydal in Westmorland and a full quarter of a century later in 1204 when de Courcy handed over some of his most trusted men as hostages to King John, they included an Augustine de Rydal.<sup>15</sup> Several of John's charters from the early years of his conquest have among the witnesses William and Henry Copeland, obviously of the barony of that name in Cumberland.<sup>16</sup> A charter issued by Tomaltach Ó Conchobair, archbishop of Armagh (d. 1201), is witnessed by men undoubtedly brought to Ulster in de Courcy's wake, including Brian of Scales, again in Cumberland, and Gilbert of Furness in Lancashire.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that nearly all his followers whose place of origin can be located came from the north-west of England surely indicates that John himself was closely connected with that part of the world. But what precisely was that family link? I mentioned earlier the undoubted significance that attaches to the choices a man makes in patronising religious houses. Although John set up seven houses, it is reasonable to suppose that his first foundation held special importance. That was in 1179, when, as earlier mentioned, he granted the church lands at Nendrum to the monks of St Bees in Copeland in Cumberland. St Bees was founded after

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<sup>11</sup> See the charters of de Courcy edited by Gearóid Mac Niocaill in 'Cartae Dunenses XII-XIII céad', *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, 5 (1969-70), 418-28, nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7; Roger also witnessed John's grant of lands to St Thomas's Dublin (*Register of the abbey of St Thomas, Dublin*, ed. J.T. Gilbert (RS, London, 1889), 221), a deed not included in the list of de Courcy's charters printed by Professor Otway-Ruthven in 'Dower charter of John de Courcy's wife', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 3rd Ser., 12 (1949), 77-81.

<sup>12</sup> *The register of the priory of St Bees*, ed. James Wilson (Surtees Society, CXXVI, 1915), 520-21.

<sup>13</sup> *VCH Cumberland*, I, 338; F.W. Ragg, 'Five Strathclyde and Galloway charters - four concerning Cardew and one the Westmorland Newbigging', *Cumberland and Westmorland Antiq. & Arch. Soc. Trans.*, 17 (1916-17), 198-234 (at pp. 223-4).

<sup>14</sup> For de Courcy's rebellion, see Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 136-44.

<sup>15</sup> *CDI*, I, 259.

<sup>16</sup> See Mac Niocaill, 'Cartae Dunenses', nos. 4, 5, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Printed in Reeves, *Ecclesiastical antiquities*, 193. We also have one of Brian of Scales's own charters: see Lawlor, *The Monastery of Nendrum*, 77.

1120 by William Meschin (d. c. 1135), who had been granted Copeland by Henry I, and who had established his caput at Egremont near St Bees, and died around 1135.<sup>18</sup> William Meschin held lands at Middleton Cheney in Northamptonshire.<sup>19</sup> When John de Courcy married, the dower set aside for his wife included an estate at Middleton Cheney.<sup>20</sup> If it passed to de Courcy, William Meschin was probably an antecedent of his. But how exactly were they related?<sup>21</sup> This William Meschin was married to Cecily de Rumilly, heiress to the honour of Skipton in Yorkshire.<sup>22</sup> After the death of their heir, the estate was divided between daughters. Two of these daughters, rather confusingly called Avice (or Amice) and Alice, are of interest to us. Let us deal with Avice first.

Avice (who took her mother's name, de Rumilly) was married to William de Courcy II. Their son, William III, inherited her share of the estate.<sup>23</sup> Now, one of the very few things we know for certain about John de Courcy's family ties is that he had a brother Jordan: Jordan was killed in Ulster in 1197.<sup>24</sup> Some charters of William de Courcy III survive, and one of them is witnessed by a Jordan de Courcy, who is specifically described as William III's brother; another of them is witnessed by both Jordan and a John de Courcy (though in this case it does not mention that they were William's brothers).<sup>25</sup> However, if John and Jordan were brothers and Jordan and William were brothers - assuming that we are talking about the same Jordan - then so too were John and William brothers: John de Courcy was, therefore, a son (possibly illegitimate) of William de Courcy II.<sup>26</sup>

Now let us leave Avice and look at her younger sister, Alice. She succeeded to the lands of her father, William Meschin, in Copeland and those of her mother in the honour of Skipton.<sup>27</sup> Alice was married to a man called William fitz Duncan. His father was Donnchad II

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<sup>18</sup> See *Early Yorkshire charters*, ed. C.T. Clay, VII (Yorkshire Arch. Soc. Record Series, 1947), 5; *Register of St Bees*, pp.xi-xiv.

<sup>19</sup> *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 36 and chap. II.

<sup>20</sup> Otway-Ruthven, 'Dower charter of de Courcy's wife', 79.

<sup>21</sup> For what follows, see *Early Yorkshire Charters*, VII, Appendix B, 'The parentage of John de Curcy', 36-7 and the works cited in note 2 above.

<sup>22</sup> For whom, see *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 4-9.

<sup>23</sup> For details of the lands held by Avice, see *Early Yorkshire charters*, III, ed. William Farrer, 468-9, 474; VII, chap. II.

<sup>24</sup> *AU* s.a. 1197.

<sup>25</sup> *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 36.

<sup>26</sup> C.T. Clay doubts whether John de Courcy could have been a son of Avice de Rumilly and William de Courcy II, since it has been suggested that the latter died in or before 1130, whereas John was still alive in 1205 and possibly for more than a decade afterwards. He suggests that we add a generation: instead of being a brother of William III (d. 1171), John may have been an illegitimate son or nephew (*Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, Appendix B, pp. 36-7). However, a few points may be noted. First, the date of William II's death has not been proven, and may have been considerably later than 1130. Second, his wife Avice only died in 1176 (*ibid*, 7), and as John de Courcy was a man of mature years by that stage, it seems more plausible to regard her as his mother rather than grandmother. Third, by the same token, when William III died in 1171 he left only an infant heir who did not come of age until 1189 (*ibid*, III, 471); the age difference between the heir and John is such as to make it more likely that John was an uncle rather than an illegitimate older brother.

<sup>27</sup> *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 9-19.



who held the kingship of Scotland briefly in 1094, being a son of the former king Máel Coluim Cennmór. During the wars of King Stephen's reign, much of the north of England was controlled by the Scots, including Northumberland, Cumbria (that is, Cumberland and Westmorland), and at least part of Lancashire.<sup>28</sup> William fitz Duncan, 'a man of high spirit and the chief provoker of war', had played a large part in achieving this state of affairs, leading the Scottish invasion of England in 1138, and defeating the English at the battle of Clitheroe.<sup>29</sup> In 1151, King David of Scotland confirmed William in possession of Skipton and Craven, which had come to Alice as part of her share of her father's inheritance.<sup>30</sup> Several of William's charters survive, including two addressed to 'all his men of Copeland', granting and confirming privileges there to the priory of St Bees,<sup>31</sup> and another granting Calder in Copeland to Furness abbey,<sup>32</sup> which are clear evidence that he had tenure of Copeland in his wife's right. In addition, William fitz Duncan's own mother was a daughter of Gospatric I, earl of Northumberland, and it seems to have been by this means that William succeeded to the barony of Allerdale in Cumberland.<sup>33</sup> So, William fitz Duncan during his lifetime controlled a considerable estate in north-west England.

Alice and William had one son whose early death meant that the estate was divided between their daughters and the daughters' husbands. Incidentally, one of these heiresses was married to Gilbert Pipard,<sup>34</sup> whose family were soon to become neighbours of John de Courcy in County Louth. William fitz Duncan had a strong claim to the throne of Scotland when King David died in 1153. David had been predeceased by his sons and so the kingship went to his infant grandson, Máel Coluim IV, even though William, as a nephew of King David and grandson of Máel Coluim Cennmór, was closer in line. Nevertheless, we hear of no attempt on William's part to dispute the succession. That comes later.

William fitz Duncan, seen only in the light of his marriage to the prosperous English heiress Alice de Rumilly, appears to be a conventual member of the Anglo-Scottish baronial classes, a perfect illustration of the way in which the native Scottish nobility came to terms with, embraced, and adapted themselves to the 'Anglo-French era' (to borrow the title of Geoffrey Barrow's excellent book on the subject). But the image is, not wholly, but significantly inaccurate. Almost by chance we become aware that there was an entirely

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<sup>28</sup> There are two recent and valuable papers on the subject by Judith Green: 'Anglo-Scottish relations, 1066-1174' in *England and her neighbours*, ed. Jones & Vale, 53-72; and 'Aristocratic loyalties on the northern frontier, c. 1110-1174', in *England in the twelfth century*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge, 1992), 83-100.

<sup>29</sup> The quotation is from Ailred of Rievaulx's 'De Standardo', translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 195; see also, 178, 179, 182, 186-7.

<sup>30</sup> So says John of Hexham, translated in Anderson, *Scottish annals*, 227.

<sup>31</sup> *Register of St Bees*, nos. 16, 40; we also have a confirmation of the first grant made after William's death by his widow Alice (ibid, no. 15).

<sup>32</sup> *The Coucher book of Furness abbey*, ed. J.C. Atkinson, 2 vols in 6, Chetham Society, Manchester, 1886-1919), I, 593.

<sup>33</sup> *Register of St Bees*, no. 498; see also, *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Early Yorkshire charters*, VII, 16-17.

different side to William fitz Duncan's life. It is as if he had two families: one, the conventional, Anglo-Scottish aristocratic union with the de Rumilly family, the other an altogether more obscure arrangement, the progeny of which were steeped in the Gaelic world, up to their necks in the politics of the far north and west of Scotland, actively pursuing William's inherited claim to the throne, and backed by forces in Ireland.

How William got mixed up in all of this is unclear. Professor Barrow has called it 'one of the larger unsolved mysteries of twelfth-century Scottish politics' and what follows is an attempt at a solution to the problem, which has benefited greatly from his work on the matter.<sup>35</sup> A thirteenth-century genealogical source describes William as earl of Moray.<sup>36</sup> For a full half-century after King David's victory over Áengus, the earl of Moray, in 1130, Moray was silent. When its men were roused to rebellion again it was under the banner of William fitz Duncan's son, a man known even in non-Gaelic sources as Domnall mac William. Now, an explanation has to be offered as to why William fitz Duncan's son turns up heading the men of Moray to war against the Scots king, and the probability must be that William himself, perhaps prior to his marriage to Alice de Rumilly, had married into the Moray dynasty - Professor Barrow suggests possibly to a sister of earl Áengus - and that the children of that marriage inherited the Moray claim to Scotland.

All this is a long way removed from Ireland and from John de Courcy. But it seems likely, as earlier described, that William fitz Duncan was married to John de Courcy's aunt; in which case, Domnall mac William was a first-cousin of de Courcy. When de Courcy invaded Ulster, he did so in the company of men drawn largely from the area in north-west England over which William fitz Duncan had been lord. Strictly speaking Domnall mac William had no claim to that inheritance: those were de Rumilly lands which passed to William's heiresses by his marriage to Alice, and were dissipated when divided between their Anglo-Norman husbands. But Domnall more than likely pressed a claim to the inheritance. The Scottish claim to the entire region of northern England was one of the great issues in diplomatic relations between the two countries in the period. The Scots invaded England in 1173 with the undisguised aim of recovering possession of the lost northern English provinces and the area that had been in William fitz Duncan's possession was one of the prime targets of the assault. But the failure of the invasion may have convinced Domnall mac William that his most likely avenue of advancement lay in pressing his claim to Moray. If the new lord of Ulster was Domnall's first-cousin, this may explain why a half-century of quiescence on the part of the men of Moray ended within two years of the conquest of Ulster.

<sup>35</sup> In *Regesta regum Scottorum*, II, 8, 11-13.

<sup>36</sup> *Register of St Bees*, 532; *CDS*, II, 64.

## APPENDIX 4

THE ARRIVAL OF  
THE BISSET FAMILY IN IRELAND

One of the few families of Anglo-Norman origin to transplant successfully from Scotland to Ireland in the aftermath of the invasion were the Bissets. They made their first appearance in Scotland during the reign of William the Lion.<sup>1</sup> For much of his reign William was beset by rebellion in the troubled province of Moray and he granted the barony of Aird there to a John Bisset.<sup>2</sup> When in 1226 John was granted rights of patronage to the church of Kiltarlity by the bishop of Ross, the witnesses included Ferchar Maccintsacairt, earl of Ross,<sup>3</sup> the man who had recently vanquished the Meic William rebels in Moray, receiving his earldom in return;<sup>4</sup> his association with John Bisset suggests that the latter's fortunes in Scotland were being built on the shattered remains of Mac William power.

As the Meic William were almost certainly backed by elements in the north of Ireland, the Bissets may, even at this stage, have been aligning themselves with friendly parties there. From an early stage they carefully combined their landholding status in Scotland with service to the English crown. This brought them the opportunity for expansion into Ireland. Walter

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<sup>1</sup> He brought a certain 'Biseys' back in his company having concluded the treaty of Falaise with Henry II in 1174 (Sir Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1836), 41). Prior to 1198 a Henry Bisset witnessed one of William's charters (*Liber Sancte Marie de Melros*, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1837), 123).

<sup>2</sup> The first mention of John is as a witness to a charter of Henry de Graham in 1204 (*Registrum Sancte Marie de Neubotle*, ed. Cosmo Innes, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1849), 7); he is first styled lord of the Aird in a deed confirmed by Alexander II in 1221 (James M. Scouler, *Handlist of the acts of Alexander II* (Edinburgh, 1959), 16; for a discussion of this and other early notices of the Bisset family, see *The charters of the priory of Beaully*, ed. E.C. Batten, Grampian Club (London, 1877), introduction).

<sup>3</sup> *Registrum episcopatus Moraviensis*, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1837), 333.

<sup>4</sup> Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 520, 529.

Bisset granted the chapel of Mullaghmast in County Kildare to the nunnery of Timolin;<sup>5</sup> the grant which has been dated c. 1200-20, but how or when he acquired lands in the area is unknown.<sup>6</sup> Even he was not the first of the family in Ireland. On 12 November 1204 King John wrote to the bishops of Ireland telling them to rely on what David bishop-elect of Waterford and several others, including Henry Bisset, would expound to them regarding the king's Irish affairs.<sup>7</sup> During his mission to Ireland Henry witnessed a charter of the archbishop of Armagh to St Mary's abbey Dublin.<sup>8</sup> The witnesses include a number of Meath barons including Hugh de Lacy and his brother Walter, William le Petit, Richard Tyrel, Richard de Feypo and Geoffrey de Costentin. If this early association with Hugh de Lacy is anything to go by,<sup>9</sup> one may perhaps infer that the later Bisset involvement in Ulster followed in his wake, but if so it seems to have occurred only during Hugh's second period as earl of Ulster, 1227-42. Perhaps it was during this mission to Ireland that Henry was granted the manor of Gormanston in County Meath;<sup>10</sup> he also held 'two carucates of land in Fingal' and other lands in the Dublin area.<sup>11</sup>

If the Bissets were in the pay of the king of England they knew which side their bread was buttered on in Scotland. Walter, John, and Peter witnessed a charter of Alexander II in 1222.<sup>12</sup> Walter was lord of Aboyne and resided probably at Coull castle in Aberdeenshire.<sup>13</sup> Although he served Henry III on several occasions and was with him, for instance, in 1233,<sup>14</sup> he also witnessed another Scottish royal charter to Cambuskenneth in 1226.<sup>15</sup> Walter's brother John Bisset (the elder) held, as mentioned, the Aird and resided at either Lovat or Beaufort in Invernessshire.<sup>16</sup> He is included on the testator-list to a royal act of 1236,<sup>17</sup> and it may be

<sup>5</sup> Newport B. White, 'The Reportorium Viride of John Alen, archbishop of Dublin, 1533', *Analecta Hibernica*, 10 (1941), 173-222 (at p. 209).

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Nicholls, 'Anglo-French Ireland and after', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 370-403 (at p. 388, n. 2).

<sup>7</sup> *CDI*, I, 237; see also, *ibid*, 240, 309.

<sup>8</sup> *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, I, 146.

<sup>9</sup> Henry and Hugh were also on the testator-list to a charter of Robert Ruffus for Ballymadon, Co. Dublin, dated c. 1204 (*Calendar of the Gormanston register*, ed. James Mills and M.J. Mc Enery (Dublin, 1916), 178); in 1206-7 another Hugh, son of Robert de Lacy, was a hostage in the custody of Henry Bisset, another early sign of a Bisset-de Lacy association (*CDI*, I, 309).

<sup>10</sup> Robin Frame, 'King Henry III and Ireland: the shaping of a peripheral lordship', in *Thirteenth century England IV. Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1991* (Woodbridge, 1992), 187. My thanks are due to Professor Frame for sending me a draft of his paper in advance of publication.

<sup>11</sup> *CDI*, I, 813; see also, *ibid*, 493, 642, 764, 813.

<sup>12</sup> *Collections for a history of the shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, ed. Joseph Robertson, Spalding Club (Aberdeen, 1843), I, 561.

<sup>13</sup> *Scotichronicon by Walter Bower in Latin and English*, general editor D.E.R. Watt, vol 5, bks IX and X, eds. S. Taylor, D.E.R. Watt, B. Scott (Aberdeen, 1990), 179, l. 5 and n., p. 278.

<sup>14</sup> *CDS*, I, 1200.

<sup>15</sup> *Registrum monasterii Sancte Marie de Cambuskenneth*, ed. William Fraser, Grampian Club (Edinburgh, 1872), 176.

<sup>16</sup> There were at least two John Bissets, father and son, who flourished in the mid-thirteenth century, and it is often difficult to distinguish between them. The Melrose chronicler, s.a. 1243, refers to 'John Bisset...along with his uncle, Walter' (Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 533). A document of 1245 refers to 'Walter Bisset and John his brother' (*CDS*, II, 1674).

<sup>17</sup> *Chartulary of the abbey of Lindores*, ed. John Dowden (Scott. Hist. Soc., 1st ser., vol. XLII, Edinburgh, 1903), 25.

pointed out that when he founded a leper house at Ruthven a decade or more earlier it was 'for the soul of King William and the health of King Alexander'.<sup>18</sup>

The Bissets, therefore, tried to cultivate royal favour but we should not forget that there were what amounted to semi-independent powers in the region also, and the Bissets did their best to profit from association with them. When King Alexander introduced the rather rare Valliscaulian order into Scotland, c. 1230-1, by founding the priory of Pluscarden, it is noticeable that two men followed suit in patronizing the same order at about the same time: John Bisset, who set up Beaully, and Donnchad mac Dubgaill mic Somurli, who founded Ardchattan.<sup>19</sup> The establishment of the three houses in rapid succession suggests a certain co-ordination and we may suspect that John and Donnchad were partners in others areas of activity also. When the Scottish earls and barons wrote to the pope in 1237,<sup>20</sup> included among their ranks were John Bisset the younger and Donnchad mac Dubgaill. The traditional historian of Clann Domnaill, Hugh McDonald of Sleat, may be an unreliable authority for this early period, but he tells a story to the effect that Somerled of Argyll had a son, Gilla Ísu, by a woman of the Bissets and that this son succeeded to Kintyre;<sup>21</sup> we can safely discard the Somerled connexion (he died a full decade before the first Bisset set foot in Scotland), but a seventeenth-century historian would have few grounds for inventing such an early link with the long-downfallen Bissets, and perhaps therefore there is a germ of truth in the memory of a marriage-alliance between a Bisset female and a member of Somerled's family, say, Donnchad mac Dubgaill. Such a connexion would account for the temporary emergence of Bisset power in Kintyre shortly afterwards, as we shall see.

Another untamed power in the region was the ruling family of Galloway. The Mac William revolt in 1214-5 was partly put down by Thomas of Galloway, earl of Atholl, and John and Peter Bisset witnessed one of his charters.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in 1233 Alan of Galloway gave his sister in marriage to John's brother Walter.<sup>23</sup> But a row was simmering between the Bisset and de Galloway families. The origins of the dispute are anything but clear and may have originated in an attempt by the Bissets to profit from the death of Thomas of Galloway in 1231 and of his brother Alan, without legitimate male issue, three years later. It culminated in the murder in 1242 in extraordinary circumstances of Thomas of Galloway's son Patrick, an atrocity which caused an outcry in Scotland.<sup>24</sup> Though it was never proven, rumour had it that

<sup>18</sup> *Aberdeen and Banff collections*, II, 142-3.

<sup>19</sup> Ian B. Cowan and David E. Easson, *Medieval religious houses: Scotland*, 2nd ed. (London and New York, 1976), 83-5.

<sup>20</sup> The letter was originally assigned to 1244, but has been re-dated by D.E.R. Watt, in 'The minority of Alexander III of Scotland', *Trans. Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 21 (1971), 1-23 (at p.3, n. 11).

<sup>21</sup> Hugh Macdonald of Sleat, 'History of the Macdonalds', in *Highland papers*, I, ed. J.R.N. Macphail (Scott. Hist. Soc., 2nd ser., Vol. V, Edinburgh, 1914), 11-12.

<sup>22</sup> *Registrum de Dunfermelyn*, Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1842), 86.

<sup>23</sup> 'Chronicle of Melrose', in Anderson, *Early sources*, II, 489.

<sup>24</sup> Numerous accounts of the event are available in secondary works, perhaps the best that in Duncan, *Making of the kingdom*, 543-6.

Walter Bisset and his nephew John Bisset the younger were the culprits, and they were outlawed. According to Walter Bower, the motive for the murder had to do with 'long-standing hostility between their predecessors',<sup>25</sup> but the Lanercost chronicler is more specific; he took the view that Patrick was murdered 'because he was expected to become lord of a certain inheritance which descended to him, although he had been warned on that day by a letter from the wife of his murderer'.<sup>26</sup> If this is right, Walter or John Bisset killed Patrick of Atholl in a dispute over part or all of the estate of his father, Thomas of Galloway, possibly the Galloway lands in Ulster. The story about the murderer's wife warning the victim seems a little far-fetched but then Walter Bisset's wife was, as we have seen, Alan of Galloway's sister and it would not be unreasonable for her to warn her nephew of the danger awaiting him.

The possibility that the Ulster lands were the subject of the dispute is enhanced by the fact that both Walter and at least one John Bisset turn up almost immediately afterwards in Ireland.<sup>27</sup> We do not know when they gained possession of their lands there, but three possible occasions suggest themselves. One is that Walter acquired Alan of Galloway's Antrim lands as a *maritagium* when he took his sister to wife in 1233. The trouble with this hypothesis is, however, that the Bissets only ever acquired part of Alan's Ulster estate, but, more importantly, the estate which they did obtain included the bulk of Duncan of Carrick's Antrim lands. They are unlikely to have been on friendly terms with both the Galloway and Carrick families, traditional rivals, and for this reason one imagines that they must have come to Ulster only after Alan and Duncan had ceased to have an effective claim to their lands there.

This points to a second possibility: that Hugh de Lacy, the earl of Ulster, took the Galloway and Carrick lands into his own hands and himself established the Bissets in Ulster; in which case, the likely date would have been some point between the death of Alan of Galloway in 1235 and that of de Lacy himself in 1242. Alan's wife since 1229 was, of course, de Lacy's daughter.<sup>28</sup> Alan presumably married her with a view to softening Earl Hugh's hostile attitude to the Gallovidian presence in Ulster, but to little avail. It is possible that de Lacy used Alan's death as a pretext to interfere in the matter, claiming the Ulster lands as dower for his widowed daughter. Be that as it may, by 1237 Galloway had been partitioned between Alan's coheiresses, but it looks certain that the Galloway lands in Ulster did not descend upon the three daughters;<sup>29</sup> so, either Alan had already granted them away or, more likely, de Lacy had overrun them. He had, of course, no legal right to do so, as the Ulster lands were held in chief

<sup>25</sup> *Scotichronicon*, 5, 179.

<sup>26</sup> *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1839), 49-50.

<sup>27</sup> Numerous royal instructions survive for the mid-1240s, ordering payment of the passage to Ireland of either Walter or John, or both: see *CDI*, I, 2732, 2749, 2750-2, 2754-5, 2775, 2799.

<sup>28</sup> *Chron. Lanercost*, 40; see also, Keith Stringer, 'A new wife for Alan of Galloway', *Trans. Dumfries & Galloway Nat. Hist. & Antiq. Soc.*, 49 (1972), 49-55.

<sup>29</sup> For the division of Alan's inheritance, see *Wigtownshire charters*, ed. R.C. Reid, Scottish Record Society (Edinburgh, 1960), p. xxxix.

of the crown, but the fact is that, as we shall see, the Bisset family are later found holding of the *earldom* lands clearly included in King John's grants to the Carrick and Galloway families. One thing which may point to the mid-1230s for the Bisset move to Ulster is the fact that the younger John Bisset alone was a signatory to the barons' letter to the pope in 1237, possibly indicating that the elder John was already in Ireland at that stage.

A third possibility is that the Bissets received a royal grant of lands in Ulster soon after the earldom reverted to the crown upon de Lacy's death. In the very year of the murder of Patrick of Atholl, on 17 December 1242, Henry III ordered the justiciar of Ireland to give John Bisset (whether father or son is unclear) a fief in Ireland if he were willing to come on his service abroad, probably to Gascony.<sup>30</sup> Hugh de Lacy died at this precise point, and the earldom of Ulster came into the king's hands. If the Galloway and Carrick families had been effectively disseised, it may have been the justiciar himself who set John Bisset up in Ulster, on former Gallovidian lands now regarded as part of the escheated earldom. One way or another, about 1247 John joined with the Ulster baron Henry de Mandeville, with Hugh Tyrel, seneschal of Ulster, and several other Ulster landholders in witnessing a charter of Alan fitz Warin, also Ulster-based;<sup>31</sup> this almost certainly means that he himself was by that point the holder of lands within the former earldom.

Walter too was frequently in Ireland at this point. In 1245, when Henry III was planning his Welsh expedition, he ordered the justiciar to pay Walter's expenses in going to Ireland on royal business and to have galleys from Ireland well equipped for the king in Wales, this to be done 'by the advice of Walter Bisset and John his brother'.<sup>32</sup> However, in 1248 Walter returned to Scotland and seized and began to fortify Dunaverty castle at the southernmost tip of Kintyre. This place is far removed from the Bissets' former sphere of activity in Moray and may well have been dictated by its proximity to the Antrim coast: we may surmise that Walter's assault was launched from a base in Ulster. In this same year he applied for a licence to buy corn in Ulster to provision Dunaverty,<sup>33</sup> which points to the existence of contacts there upon which to fall back. Those contacts were presumably with his brother John who, when given letters of protection in this year to travel abroad on the king's business, was styled 'John Bisset of Ireland'.<sup>34</sup> If, too, one is right to speculate on a Bisset link with the family of Dubgall mac Somurli, the latter may have had something to gain from assisting Walter Bisset in snatching part of Kintyre from the hands of rivals. Dunaverty was probably at that point in the possession of the family of Domnall mac Ragnaill mic Somurli.<sup>35</sup> He was perhaps the *Mac*

<sup>30</sup> *CDI*, I, 2590.

<sup>31</sup> *Cal. Gormanston register*, 160.

<sup>32</sup> *CDS*, I, 1666, 1672-4, 1678, 1691, 1700, 1703. See also note 22 above. For Walter's involvement in naval activity during the Welsh campaign, see Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, IV, 483.

<sup>33</sup> *CDI*, I, 2925.

<sup>34</sup> *CDI*, I, 2939.

<sup>35</sup> Between 1241 and 1249, Domnall's son Áengus made a grant to Paisley abbey of a church 'in my land which is called Kintyre' (Duncan and Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the early Middle Ages', 200).

*Somurli rí airir Gáidil* killed fighting in Ireland in the previous year,<sup>36</sup> so the time may have been ripe for a joint effort at dislodging his family from Kintyre.

In any case, it seems clear that John Bisset was then in the process of establishing himself in Ulster, and, as it transpires, he did so on lands some of which were formerly the possession of the de Galloways. Although, therefore, it has been stated that the complicity of the Bissets in the murder of Patrick of Atholl in 1242 is 'improbable',<sup>37</sup> they, the Bissets, were nevertheless the ones benefiting from the decline in Gallovidian fortunes. Furthermore, whatever about any doubts as to the involvement of the Bissets in the murder, the fact is that we can before long trace a marked hostility between the two families. At some stage during 1248, after Walter Bisset had dug himself in at Dunaverty, Patrick of Atholl's brother Alan launched a siege of the castle; some time later he was pardoned 'for taking six hogsheads of wine and some wheat from the merchants of Ireland' during the course of the siege.<sup>38</sup> That was one episode in Alan's campaign against the Bissets, but interestingly too, although Dunaverty was in *Walter Bisset's* hands, the text of the same pardon excuses Alan for killing some of *John Bisset's* men *in Ireland* 'in a conflict between them'. In the face of this evidence it is surely unreasonable to doubt that the Bissets did indeed murder Patrick of Atholl, were attempting to take the place of the de Galloway family in Ulster, and that the latter, under the leadership of Alan of Atholl, were now struggling to prevent the Bissets from creating a patrimony linking Kintyre with the Glens of Antrim.

When the Bisset aggrandizement campaign began to falter it was not through the efforts of the de Galloways. Walter Bisset died in 1251. He died on the island of Arran which lies immediately east of Kintyre and which he presumably took at the same time that he seized Dunaverty.<sup>39</sup> With Walter's death the family seem to have lost both Dunaverty and Arran. Walter left no sons. He held the manor of Ovington in the North Riding of Yorkshire, and we find from an inquisition held after his death that he had attempted to secure his nephew Thomas in possession of the manor.<sup>40</sup> Thomas was perhaps a son of John Bisset the elder, and what little we know of his career also points to an Irish connexion. In 1256, he was listed among those sent to Ireland on the service of its new lord, Prince Edward.<sup>41</sup> As far as I am aware, he then disappears entirely from sight, only to reappear (if it is the same Thomas) a full forty-two years later, again in Arran, having landed there from Ireland to claim the island as his.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *AC* s.a. 1247.

<sup>37</sup> Watt, 'The minority of Alexander III', 2.

<sup>38</sup> *CDI*, II, 2.

<sup>39</sup> *CDS*, I, 1836.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*; see also, Barrow, *Anglo-Norman era*, 16-17.

<sup>41</sup> *CDI*, II, 496.

<sup>42</sup> *The chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. Harry Rothwell (London 1957), 329.



Not long after Walter's death, in 1257 according to the B version of the Annals of Ulster, John Bisset senior died, probably in Ireland. John junior inherited the lands in both Ireland and Scotland but he too died in 1259x60, leaving three daughters.<sup>43</sup> Before his death, however, he attempted to endow his stepmother Agatha Bisset of all the Irish lands and rents. The later Bissets in Ulster were perhaps the children of this marriage of John Bisset senior to Agatha. The daughters of the younger John do not seem to have gained access to the Ulster lands but their husbands did prosecute their claim to the inheritance. Also, a son of one of them accompanied Edward Bruce to Ireland in 1315, presumably hoping to make good his claim.<sup>44</sup>

It was in the attempt by the family of the younger John to gain seisin of the lands of his father that we learn the exact extent of the Bisset acquisitions in Ulster. On the day of his death, John junior held, of the earldom, the townlands of Droagh, Ballytober, Ballyhackett, Carncastle, and Corkermain, all of which are located in the parish of Carncastle, in the barony of Upper Glenarm.<sup>45</sup> This barony stretches along the coast from Glenarm to Larne and formed the bulk of Duncan of Carrick's Ulster estate. John Bisset also held two carucates in the vill of Glenarm, which again had been part of Duncan's grant. The question is, how did the Bissets get their hands on them? Duncan did not die until 1250, at an advanced age, and it is possible that the Bissets were originally his tenants, and that the lands (since they were held by John Bisset *of the earldom*) escheated at some point to the earldom, perhaps at the death of Duncan's son and successor Neil, without male heirs, in 1256. But the enmity between Duncan and Hugh de Lacy (traceable as far back as 1210, still alive fifteen years later) was such that repeated calls on de Lacy to allow Duncan seisin of his Ulster lands were flagrantly ignored:<sup>46</sup> therefore, rather than see the Bisset foothold in Glenarm as the product of a tenancy arrangement with Duncan of Carrick, it seems more likely that they were among those who helped de Lacy displace him.

John Bisset also held, this time of the bishop of Connor, two-thirds of the lands of Solar, again in the parish of Carncastle, along with the castle of Glenarm and two-thirds of a carucate in Glenarm. These too were almost certainly Carrick lands, perhaps granted to the diocese by de Lacy, a time-honoured stratagem which in this case may have helped Hugh win church approval for his actions in denying the lands to Duncan.

In addition, John held, of the earldom, another two of the Glens: Glencloy, which flows to the sea at Carnlough, not far north of Glenarm, and Glenariff, which runs in a south-

<sup>43</sup> This and the details which follow emerge from the proceedings of an inquisition held in Ulster in 1279 (CDI, II, 1500).

<sup>44</sup> John de Bosco, whose name precedes that of a John Bisset in the list of Bruce's followers given by the Dublin annalist: *Chartul. St Mary's, Dublin*, II, 344.

<sup>45</sup> CDI, II, 1500: in attempting to identify the placenames, Bishop Reeves's *Ecclesiastical antiquities of Down, Connor, and Dromore* has been, as ever, an invaluable aid (see p. 325).

<sup>46</sup> For which, see Chapter 3.

westerly direction from Red Bay (both of them in the barony of Lower Glenarm). He also held Rathlin island and Cary, the barony (or, more likely, part of the barony) of the same name which lies directly on-shore from Rathlin. These lands were part, a relatively small part, of the estate of Alan of Galloway, but, as already noted, never at any stage passed to his heiresses. The explanation for their transference to the Bissets may perhaps be found by glancing at Alan's other Ulster lands, those stretching westwards towards the Bann, and beyond it into the modern baronies of Coleraine, Keenaght and Tirkeeran. When, in 1263, the earldom was restored, and granted to the de Burgh family, these lands were part of it, and no attempt seems to have been made to dispute the fact,<sup>47</sup> which again strongly suggests that de Lacy had dislodged the Scottish tenants during his lifetime.

It looks, therefore, as though the remarkable experiment of planting settlers from Galloway in the far north-eastern corner of Ireland failed because of the jealous opposition of the earl of Ulster, Hugh de Lacy. The price paid for removing these Scottish families, people of native Celtic stock, was the importation of another Scottish family, the Bissets, this time of Anglo-Norman origin, but - as time was to tell - of strong assimilative tendencies.

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<sup>47</sup> Richard de Burgh, the third earl, for instance, granted lands there to James the Steward of Scotland in 1296: see G.H.Orpen, 'The earldom of Ulster', *JRSAI*, 43 (1913), 30-46 (at p.43).

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