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Kingship, lordship, and resistance: a
study of power in eleventh- and
twelfth-century Ireland

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Philosophy (2020)

Declaration

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Summary

This thesis starts from the premise that historians of medieval Ireland have interpreted ‘power’ in a very narrow way. As chapter one illustrates, through a review of the historiography of Irish kingship, the discussion of ‘power’ has, hitherto, amounted to a conversation about the ways in which the power of the greater Irish kings grew over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (at the expense of the lesser kings). Engaging with the rich corpus of international literature on power, as is done in chapter one, reveals the sheer complexity and vicissitudes of ‘power’ as a concept. Many writers and thinkers on the subject have identified resistance as a means through which to view power relations, and it is along these lines that the rest of the thesis runs.

Chapters three and four are concerned with the subject of resistance; with regicide and revolt, respectively. Both mine the Irish annals. Quantitative research carried out strongly suggests that regicides were declining in Ireland between the battle of Clontarf and the arrival of the English a century and a half later. The number of individual regicides in six annal collections – *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of Inisfallen*, *Mac Carthaigh’s Book*, the *Annals of Loch Cé*, and the *Cottonian Annals* were totaled and tabulated. Controls were used: homicides; instances of dearth, disease and supernatural occurrences; weather-related events; and non-obit ecclesiastical events (following Colmán Etchingham’s methodology in *Viking raids on Irish church settlement in the ninth century*). This apparent decline was then discussed in the context of the burgeoning international literature on the subject of violence in history.

Connected was the position of non-royal lordship. It is commonly argued that the petty kings, over time, came to be downgraded to mere ‘lords’ (denoted by *dux* or *toísech* and the like). In theory, this might therefore account for the declining regicides – there are simply less kings to kill.

Chapter two, some of which also revolves around quantitative research based on the Irish annals, concludes that there is no sound evidential basis for this oft-propounded trope. This has been acknowledged, to varying degrees, by at least two other authors – Katharine Megan McGowan and Paul Mac Cotter. Nevertheless, issue is taken with some of their conclusions. Chapter two further argues that the reason we see an increase in references to non-royal lordships in the annals is because of changes taking place at the level of lordship, probably connected with a change in settlement patterns. It looks to analogous changes taking place elsewhere in Europe, particularly in France and Germany. This chapter also suggests that a better way of understanding the centralising processes of the late-tenth through to the late-twelfth centuries is offered by seeing Ireland’s high-kingship as evolving along imperial lines. There is some strong evidence to suggest that the most powerful overkings at this time were thinking about their power in terms of *imperium*, and this evidence is proffered in chapter two.

Though revolt is a feature of life in pre-invasion Ireland, there has been little in the way of systematic study thereof. Chapter four seeks to redress this imbalance. It engages with the phenomenon of revolt at two levels – revolts against the rule of an individual king and what we might term ‘popular’ revolts. As regards the first level, much of the discussion revolves around revolts denoted in the annals by the verbal-noun *impúd*. It argues that the adoption of a new term, coupled with the decline in regicides over time suggests two things: that patterns of resistance were changing in the century and a half between Clontarf and the invasion, and that the ways in which resistance were being thought about was also evolving. As regards social antagonisms and the like, chapter four concludes that patterns of popular unrest in pre-invasion Ireland bore remarkable similarity to elsewhere in Europe in this period.

This thesis concludes with a discussion of the ways in which kingship was legitimized in medieval Ireland. Any suggestions *vis-à-vis* avenues

for further research are dotted throughout the main body of the text, as and where relevant.

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Conventions

AClon. = Murphy, Denis (ed.), *The annals of Clonmacnoise being annals of Ireland from the earliest period to A.D. 1408* (Dublin, 1896)

A. Conn. = Freeman, A. Martin (ed. & trans.), *Annála Connacht. The annals of Connacht (A.D. 1224 – 1544)* (Dublin, 1970)

AFM = O'Donovan, John (ed. & trans.), Nicholls, Kenneth (intro.), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616, volume II* (Dublin, 1990)

AI = Mac Airt, Seán (ed. & trans.), *The annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1944)

AL = Hancock, W.N., T. O'Mahony, A. Richey, and R. Atkinson (eds and trans.), *Ancient laws of Ireland, volumes I – VI* (Dublin, 1865-1901)

ALC = Hennessy, William (ed. & trans.), *The annals of Loch Cé. A chronicle of Irish affairs from A.D. 1014 to A.D. 1590* (London, 1871)

An. Camb. = Williams, John (ed.), *Annales Cambriae* (London, 1860)

AT = Mac Niocaill, Gearóid (ed. & trans.), *Annals of Tigernach*, available online at www.ucc.ie/celt; Stokes, Whitley (ed. & trans.), *Annals of Tigernach* (Felinfach, 1993)

AU = Mac Airt, Seán, and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (eds & trans.), *The annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* (Dublin, 2004) (to 1131); Mac Carthy, B. (ed. & trans.), *Annala Uladh. Annals of Ulster, volume II* (Dublin, 1893) (to 1200)

BMDR = *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*. See Thurneysen, Rudolf (ed.), 'Morands Fürstenspiegel', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 11 (1917), pp 56-106.

CCC = Bugge, Alexander (ed. & trans.), *Caithreim Cellachain Caisil. The victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel* (Oslo, 1905)

CGRG = Todd, James Henthorn (ed. & trans.), *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: the war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (London, 1867)

CIH = Binchy, Daniel A. (ed.), *Corpus iuris Hibernici: ad fidem manuscriptorum recognovit* (Dublin, 1978)

CMT = Gray, Elizabeth A. (ed. & trans.), *Cath Maige Tuired. The second battle of Mag Tuired* (Naas, 1982)

Cotton. = Freeman, A. Martin (ed. & trans.), ‘The annals in Cotton MS Titus A. XXV’, *Revue Celtique* 41 (1924), pp 301-30; 42 (1925), pp 283-305; 43 (1926), pp 258-84; 44 (1927), pp 336-61.

CS = Hennessy, William (ed. & trans.), *Chronicum Scotorum. A chronicle of Irish affairs from the earliest times to A.D. 1135* (London, 1866)

DIB = Clarke, Aidan, et. al. (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography, vol. 1-9* (Dublin, 2009)

DIL = Quinn, E.G (ed.), *Dictionary of the Irish language* (Dublin, 1990)

FA = Radner, Joan Newlon (ed. & trans.), *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin, 1978)

IBTN = Ó Corráin, Donnchadh, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972)

IKHK = Byrne, F.J., *Irish kings and high-kings* (Dublin, 1973, reprinted 2001)

ITS = *Irish Texts Society*

MCB = ‘Mac Carthaig’s Book’. Ó hInnse, Séamus (ed. & trans.), *Miscellaneous Irish annals (A.D. 1114-1437)* (Dublin, 1947)

MGH SRG = *Monumenta Germaniae Historia Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*

PRV = Lukes, Steven, *Power: a radical view* (Basingstoke, 2005; second edn.)

NOTE: A full citation is given for each source the first time it appears in each chapter.

Introduction

This is, as the title suggests, a study of Irish kingship in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As will be discussed more fully in chapter one, the view of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland propounded in the secondary literature is one of bloody warfare driven by the insatiable desires of increasingly powerful provincial kings, as they vied with one another for rulership over the entire island. This thesis takes many of the essential tenets of this grand narrative, and subjects them to some scrutiny. There are, it is argued throughout, more vicissitudes to the story of the growth of royal power than has hitherto been acknowledged in some quarters.

Indeed, this thesis quibbles even with the very concept of ‘power’. One of the approaches adopted here is to employ the works of sociological and anthropological scholars. Such an approach is by no means a novel one in respect of twenty-first century history writing more generally, but there has been at least a partial failure on the part of historians of medieval Ireland to subject that very phenomenon which they seek to examine to any genuine analysis. This is done in chapter one, where it is argued that greater engagement with the concept of ‘power’ itself would enrich the study and our understanding of pre-invasion Ireland. ‘Power’ is a complex phenomenon in and of itself, and it is hardly surprising that the sociological literature produced on the subject is extensive. This thesis engages with those writings in an effort to highlight the ways in which the discussion of power in the context of medieval Ireland has been deficient to this point. But the concept of power, as will be discussed at length in chapter one, is intimately bound up with the question of value-dependency: whether or not one deems power to be ‘essentially contested’ or not (see chapter one, section 2(b.), below). It is not the case therefore, that this thesis argues that there is a ‘correct’ way to explore power in medieval Ireland; rather it advocates a more wide-reaching approach to the study of power in pre-invasion Ireland than has hitherto been adopted.

From this discussion of power emerges a concern for resistance. Influential here, to varying degrees, were the works of Michel Foucault and James Scott, both of whom were possessed of a preoccupation with resistance. Both men used resistance as a lens through which power relations might be brought to light. Again, it must be repeated that an emphasis on resistance is but one way in which to study power relations; it is not the only, nor indeed the ‘correct’ way. This approach was adopted as a necessary corrective to what was perceived by the current writer to be a narrowly conceived interpretation of ‘power’ in the context of medieval Ireland. Much of the discussion of the power of kings in the pre-invasion period has been concerned with the question of centralisation: Donnchadh Ó Corráin’s claim that ‘the development of a central monarchy and of many of the institutions associated with it was in its infancy at the time of the Norman invasion’ is, it is suggested, representative of such a view.¹ Processes of centralisation have been seen in every facet of life in the pre-invasion polity: one common trope has been that the petty kings were being steadily ‘downgraded’ to non-royal lordships as the greater kingdoms expanded. That is, a man formerly termed *rex* might now be styled *dux* in the sources. Such a view has been challenged in more recent times – in an unpublished PhD thesis by Katherine Megan McGowan and in Paul MacCotter’s 2008 publication, *Medieval Ireland* (the present thesis explores this trope at length in chapter two and concludes that there is little evidence to commend it). Even so, this view was repeated as recently as 2014 in an issue of *History Ireland* which marked the millennial commemorations of the battle of Clontarf.² Even those works that did challenge this older (but persistent) view, like MacCotter’s monograph, in arguing contrariwise posited the development of what appears to be an increasingly centralised system of taxation (this is discussed at length in chapter two, section 2).

¹ Donncha Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), p. 173.

² Charles Doherty, ‘Ireland in the Viking age’, *History Ireland* 22(2) (2014), p. 17.

The present author determined to discover the ways in which power was being resisted in the century and a half after Clontarf and before the English invasion. But ‘power’ here would mean more than just the struggle for the high-kingship or the processes of centralisation. The aim was to interpret power in the wider sense of the term – power, following on from the works of sociologists and political scientists, was held to have an ideological or esoteric dimension. People like Steven Lukes and Pierre Bourdieu were taken with the ways in which power could be used to shape perceptions, desires, wants – the very cognitive instruments of the dominated were wrought by the dominant, they argued (the works of both are discussed more fully in chapter one, section 2(a), below). Of course, such broad interpretations of power by historians of the Middle Ages are by no means new, at least in the context of medieval Europe. Historians of medieval *Ireland*, however, have often treated the more ‘practical’ aspects of power and the esoteric as opposed, as separate (see chapter one, section 1). The goal of this thesis was to explore the esoteric aspects of power, though not treat them in opposition to the more ‘practical’ (tax collection, land grants, and so forth), in the context of medieval Ireland and to answer the question asked in rather colloquial terms by Timothy Reuter: ‘how did they get away with it?’³ That is, the aim was to take a step back, so to speak, from exploring the development of something like the high-kingship to exploring a system of domination and the ways in which this was resisted.

It soon became apparent that answers would be found wanting in the context of the early Middle Ages ‘where Montaigne’s are few’.⁴ Accessing the transcripts of resistance in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland was an altogether more difficult thing to do than in, say, nineteenth century Ireland or twentieth century Haiti.⁵ This is not to say

³ Timothy Reuter, ‘Nobles and others: the social and cultural expression of power relations in the Middle Ages’, in Janet Nelson (ed.), *Medieval politics and modern mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), p 113.

⁴ Chris Wickham, ‘Gossip and resistance among the medieval peasantry’, *Past and Present* 160 (1998), p. 23.

⁵ Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian valley* (London, 1937)

that references to social antagonisms were entirely absent from our sources – they were present, just not abundant. The question of how ‘they [the elites] got away with it?’ thus moved from one of central to peripheral importance (see chapter four, section 3(a), below). The picture that emerges from our sources is one of low-level, atomised resistance; the large-scale revolts that we see flare up in the later Middle Ages are, in Ireland as in most of the rest of Europe, virtually non-existent in the earlier centuries (though there is a curious reference to one such revolt in the *Fragmentary Annals*, c. 910). To what extent the dominated thought systematically about power relations in medieval Ireland we will never know, but an interesting line in a twelfth century ‘Poem of prophecies’ is, in so many ways, quite telling: ‘Neither slave-woman nor lively slave will be obedient, humble, / if one looks into his mind, to the powerful, to lords’ (*Ni bia cumal ná modh mer / go humal, go hiríseal, / gé fédadh neach na menmain / do thrénaib, do thigernaibh*).⁶ The learned and ruling elites of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were aware that their ability to shape cognitions and preferences was only ever partially effective.⁷

What is clear is that the social unrest and conflict just mentioned have not received due scholarly attention. Most, perhaps, have adopted the outlook of Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, that is, that ‘harmony – not disharmony – is the striking trait that emerges from the later historical sources.’⁸ This is not to suggest that those centuries immediately preceding the arrival of the English were characterised by social turmoil, but it would be a remarkable thing indeed if harmony was to rule unassailably over the course of some two hundred years. Although the writing of social history in the earlier medieval period is quite difficult, it is hoped that the exploration of social tensions in this thesis will go some way towards filling a lacuna; it is hoped that the discussion herein does enough to show that the topic is worthy of more attention than it has perhaps

⁶ Eleanor Knott, ‘A poem of prophecies’, *Ériu* 18 (1958), s. 63, pp 73, 72.

⁷ Steven Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (Basingstoke, 2005), Second edition, pp 150-1.

⁸ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (Harlow, 1995), p. 109.

received thus far, and that any discussion of ‘power’ in the context of the eleventh and twelfth centuries must entail more than the story of the pursuit of the high-kingship.

The writer’s interest with resistance lingered, however, and from this sprung a concern with the subjects of regicide and revolt. In a country possessed of medieval annals littered with references to the slaying of kings, and, occasionally, the deposition of kings, it seems surprising that there has been no systematic study of the phenomenon of revolt. This thesis, at the very least, makes a start in this respect: chapter three takes a close look at the subject of regicide, while chapter four identifies shifts in terminology relating to revolt and the increase in the prevalence of particular terms in the annals in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Regicide in an Irish context has been studied before, by Nicholas B. Aitchison.⁹ His article, though it made several salient observations, is now some twenty years old. The subject of regicide in the present thesis was set in the context of the burgeoning international literature on the decline of violence through history which has emerged in the last thirty years or so. It was found, through a quantitative study of the annals, that the number of recorded regicides actually declines from the eleventh century to the twelfth (the methodology employed is set out in full in chapter three, section 3(a)). This, on its own, is a significant finding and it undoubtedly adds complexity to the narrative propounded up to this point, namely, that we see the levels of violence actually increase in the two centuries after the battle of Clontarf, so that Ireland became a ‘trembling sod’.¹⁰ There is still much to recommend the orthodox view, but it is suggested that the findings of this thesis provide us with a more nuanced picture of the use of violence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Beyond adding to a richer understanding of medieval Ireland though, these findings will reverberate further afield. Multiple studies undertaken since the 1980s increasingly point towards a decline in

⁹ N.B. Aitchison, ‘Regicide in early medieval Ireland’, in Guy Halsall (ed.), *Violence and society in the early medieval West* (Suffolk, 1998), pp 108-25.

¹⁰ AFM 1145: ‘Coccadh mór isin m-bliadhain-si co m-boí Ere ina fód crithaigh’.

the levels of violence over time. The findings of this thesis corroborate much of that work that has been done in the field of historical violence.

As just noted, revolt is an understudied phenomenon in the historiography of medieval Ireland. Revolts against kings were something of a commonplace in the pre-invasion centuries; perhaps this is no surprise, given the sheer number of kings operating in Ireland at any given time. Chapter four looks at the terminology used in the sources to indicate uprisings against royal power. It acknowledges that myriad terms might be used – *cath*, *cocad*, *asaid*, *frihtuidecht* and so forth. Particular attention is paid to the increased use of the verbal-noun *impúd* / *impodh* to label a revolt from the late eleventh century onwards. It is argued in chapter four that, even if the specific implications of that term are hard to pinpoint, the shift in terminology is, nevertheless, significant in itself. It is surely noteworthy that we see an approximation in time between the use of *impúd* and the use of other phrases in the annals for the first time (terms like *do dul co tech* and *tuarastal*; see chapter four, section 2(j)(ii)). While annalistic entries are far less detailed in the earlier centuries – and this might, in theory, account for the scarceness of the use of a term like *impúd* prior to 1093, but this is surely too simplistic an explanation – it is undoubtedly equally significant that the century of *impúd* is also the century of declining regicides. This suggests, it is argued, that patterns of resistance were changing but so too were the ways in which resistance was being conceptualised; this itself might indicate that kingship was being thought about in new and varied ways.

A recurrent theme throughout is the impact of continental developments on Irish life in this period, and a concern with placing Irish political, social, and economic developments within their European context. Such an approach is very much *au courante*, and the idea of Ireland as a cultural backwater, isolated in the dreary north-west, charting its own idiosyncratic course through history is, by now, positively ‘medieval’. What this thesis does do is offer insights in this regard that have not been advanced before. Social trends, like the perceived increase or decrease of violence, and hitherto unnoticed successes of the twelfth-

century church reform movement are discussed in chapter four, for example. Changes in the sphere of non-royal lordship are discussed in the context of comparable changes in France and Germany. The concept of resistance as discussed in native literature is also explored in the context of its continental counterparts. So too are patterns of popular revolt. Such an approach is not novel, of course. We must, nevertheless, be aware of the point made by Dauvit Broun (echoing Susan Reynolds) about wearing the distorting lens of the familiar – about not simply using continental comparisons to make sense of regions where sources are few.¹¹ The present writer must plead *mea culpa*, to an extent, in this regard. For, often, continental analogies are highlighted when discussing Irish developments. One might draw a distinction between using continental comparisons to make sense of Irish developments and using them to contextualise; it is hoped that, where non-Irish examples are raised they serve to do the latter more than the former. For while we must not blind ourselves to the ‘dazzling oddities and varieties of medieval creatures’, it is also the case that those same creatures look a little less exotic when we understand the context in which they appear.¹² If anything, failure to contextualise can lead us astray: noticing the occasional individual once termed *rex*, now styled *dux*, if understood in the context of medieval Ireland alone, has led historians to the erroneous view that the petty kings were ceasing to hold royal status. When we widen our view, we see that changes were taking place at the level of non-royal lordship all across Europe in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Again, while the decline in regicides from the eleventh century to the twelfth must, of course, be understood in the context of developments taking place in medieval Ireland, it would be a mistake to shun the works of others, all of which

¹¹ Dauvit Broun, ‘Re-examining *cáin* in Scotland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Princes, prelates and poets in medieval Ireland. Essays in honour of Katharine Simms* (Dublin, 2013), pp 46-7.

¹² Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals: the medieval evidence reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), p. 11.

posit a decline in violence – and a decline in regicides – beginning in the Middle Ages and continuing down to the present day.

As the reader will have observed from the forgoing discussion, the position of non-royal lordship is closely tied to much of what has been written about kingship between c. 1000 and c. 1200. A posited increase in their numbers has been made to correlate with a posited decline in the number of petty kings. Of course, were this simply the case, it would have an impact on this writers' observed decline in regicides – surely fewer kings would account for less regicides? For this reason it was held necessary to devote some space to the discussion of non-royal lordship, and this will be done in chapter two. The key question this chapter sought to answer was twofold – firstly, was the number of petty kings declining and did this account for an increase in the number of references we have to 'lords' in the sources and, secondly, if this was not the case, how should we explain the increased references to non-royal lordships in our sources? Some work had been done in this respect already, all of which is discussed in chapter two, section 2, below.

Finally, a brief note on sources and methodologies. There is little that must be said at this juncture – sources and methodologies are discussed in the body of this thesis as and when problems arise. So, for example, in chapter three, sections 3(a.) and 3(b.) the sources and methodologies involved in determining whether there was a decline in regicides over time are discussed at length. A few general comments might be made here, though. Much use has been made of the rich corpus of annalistic material, particularly in regard to the number of petty kingships and fluctuations in species of violence over time. Much of the research done in this respect was of the quantitative kind. There are problems, of course, in using the Irish annals as a basis from which to conduct quantitative research – many of these are discussed at length in chapter three, but, broadly speaking, most relate to the existence of lacunae and the fact that the length and detail of annal entries can vary from time to time. Indeed, relevant here is the fact that entries for the twelfth century tend to be longer and more detailed than entries for the

eleventh. For this reason, various controls were used when attempting to total the number of regicides – homicides, weather-related events and non-obit ecclesiastical events were also tabulated. The full findings are, as has already been said, found in chapter three. The problem of changes in annal recording is more pressing when one turns to look at the increase in references to non-royal lordships; in theory this could be explained solely by reference to the more detailed annal entries of the twelfth century. Developments recorded in other, non-annal sources suggest that there was indeed change afoot at this level in Irish society, and it is this change that is being reflected in the upsurge in references to non-royal lords in the annals. These other developments relate to *bailte* (which has been variously translated as ‘place’, ‘settlement’, ‘farm’, ‘village’, and ‘town’), a term we see first used in a non-annalistic source, the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, about the year 1100. Other twelfth-century sources like charters and saints’ lives, which make frequent mention of *bailte*, suggests that the references to *bailte* in the twelfth-century annals are not simply the result of longer annal entries; so too does the lack of references to *bailte* in eleventh-century non-annalistic material. It is argued below, in chapter two, that these references to *bailte* are connected to changes taking place at the level of non-royal lordship and, therefore, there is more to the upsurge in references to *duces* (and *toisig* in Irish) in the twelfth century annals than it simply reflecting more verbose entries.

When one turns to examine the phenomenon of popular revolt or popular resistance, though, the annals are of little use. The annals are concerned with the lives (and deaths) of social elites and one would be hard pressed to find many references in them to those lower down the social ladder. For this reason, the use of other sources was necessitated. Of particular use were hagiographies and saga literature. The immediate problem here is apparent: we have no contemporary accounts of actual instances of popular unrest or subversive activity (unless one counts the bizarre reference to revolt of the *aitheachuibh* in c. 910 in the *Fragmentary Annals*, discussed in chapter four, section 3(a), below), and we lack sources like manor rolls or court records for this period, sources

which have been used to gain an insight into social antagonisms in a later period. The hagiographies and saga literature are works of fiction, the details of which were dreamed up by ecclesiastical writers. Yet, ‘literature is not created in a vacuum’, and it is argued that these tales reveal very real elite anxieties about social antagonisms and subversion.¹³ Indeed, references to lazy *scolóca* (low-ranking tenants on ecclesiastically-owned lands) in the *Life* of St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise or to poor women harvesting nettles in the *Life* of Berach might well reflect the everyday, real-world experiences of ecclesiastical writers. Occasionally, insight into words or phrases used in the saga literature (for example, *fodord* in *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*; see chapter five, section 3(a)(iii)) can be gained through widening our scope to look at continental sources. Here, Broun’s complaint of using European comparisons to ‘fill in the gaps’, as it were, where sources are few, rings true, but the similarities with what is found in other European sources is fascinating in its own right. Theoretical frameworks allowed sense to be made of a limited bounty too. No theory is without its faults, of course, but bearing their shortcomings in mind, they can provide the historian with a tool with which to crack a tough nut. The use of theory here has, it is submitted, highlighted the ways in which the discussion of power in eleventh- and twelfth-century has been blinkered. Each theory brings with it its own world view. Chris Lorenz, in his essay on ‘History and theory’, identified three functions of theory in history writing. Firstly, he held, theory ‘legitimizes’ a specific historical practice. So, Eric Hobsbawm’s reflection on ‘history of society’ in the 1960s and 1970s, said Lorenz, aimed to legitimise his kind of Marxist history. Secondly, theory usually sketches a specific ‘programme’ of doing history – Hobsbawm argued that the doing of history would become more ‘scientific’, for example. Thirdly, Lorenz suggested that theory serves to ‘demarcate’ a specific way of ‘doing history’ from which all the other ways of ‘doing history’

¹³ Neil McLeod, ‘Irish law and the wars of the Túatha Dé Danann’, in Liam Breatnach, Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Damian McManus and Katharine Simms (eds), *Proceedings XIV International Congress of Celtic Studies. Maynooth 2011* (Dublin, 2015), p. 75.

are ‘*excluded*’ or ‘*degraded*’.¹⁴ It has not been the intention here to legitimise a specific world view, and if there is any degradation being done it is hoped that it is kept to a reasonable and polite level. Rather than, it is hoped, reinforcing a particular world view, the intent here is to use theory to unpack a concept – ‘power’ – the interpretation of which in the context of the history of Irish kingship carries with it its own prejudices and assumptions. The aim was to broaden, not to narrow.

In short, this is a study of power, of lordship, and of kingship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, viewed through the prism of resistance – revolts, regicides, and popular subversion. It argues, firstly, that to view power in this way offers new insights into the development of royal power between c.1000 and c.1200, and also into the ways in which a system of domination operated in pre-invasion Ireland. It further argues that we see not necessarily a diminution in the status of petty kings but a definite increase in the power of non-royal lords, but also that this need not be seen as antithetical to a growth in the power of the greater Irish kings. The two need not be mutually exclusive *per se*. Thirdly, it argues for changes at the level of royal lordship or kingship. It discusses changes taking place at the highest levels of kingship, how the high-kingship was evolving, and it also argues that kings, kingship, but also violence, were being thought about in new ways up to the English invasion.

¹⁴ Chris Lorenz, ‘History and theory’, in Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf (eds), *The Oxford history of historical writing. Volume 5: historical writing since 1945* (Oxford, 2011), p. 15.

Chapter 1: The concept of ‘power’ and the study of Irish kingship

The following chapter discusses at length the issue of ‘power’, both as it has been used by historians of medieval Ireland and as a concept in its own right. It is argued below that the failure to engage with the work of sociologists and political scientists has created a disjuncture between ‘practicalities’ and ‘ideology’ in the historiography of royal power. This in turn has led to a very narrow conception of power in the context of Irish kingship, and has created a somewhat blinkered vision in relation to both the evolution of royal power and power relations generally in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. In what follows the theoretical foundations from which later chapters flow is set out. Ultimately, this is a call for a more expansive interpretation of ‘power’ which, it is submitted, can lead us to new avenues of research and a more nuanced picture of pre-invasion Irish society.

1. POWER AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF IRISH KINGSHIP

In 1978 Donnchadh Ó Corráin penned his oft-cited essay, ‘Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland’.¹⁵ In it, Ó Corráin portrayed power-hungry and powerful kings; kings who skilfully managed the reform movements of the eleventh and twelfth centuries in an effort to further their prestige and authority, kings that steadily assumed a greater role in law-making, who devoured the petty kingdoms of the island and emerged as provincial rulers with greater resources and power than that ever envisaged in the old eighth century law tracts.¹⁶ The eleventh and twelfth

¹⁵ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland’ in T.W. Moody (ed.), *Historical studies XI: nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast, 1978), pp 1-35.

¹⁶ Ó Corráin, pp 21, 23-4, 35.

century kings perceived by Donnchadh Ó Corráin were very much *domini terrarum*.¹⁷

‘Nationality and kingship’ certainly broke with some of the older texts on kingship, like Daniel Binchy’s *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship* (published in 1970) and Francis John Byrne’s *Irish kings and high-kings* (1973). Both of these works centred their discussion to a large extent on the Indo-European foundations of Irish kingship and its various peculiarities which set it apart from other European kingships.¹⁸ Thus Binchy devoted much time to the etymology of words like *rí* and *tuath*, and to the supernatural and sacral aspects of kingship, such as the *gáú flathemon* and the inauguration-marriage ceremony.¹⁹ Similarly, Francis Byrne, in what has become in many ways *the* work on kingship, dedicated a large proportion of his text to all that was different about Irish kingship (although he also spent much time, too, charting the rise of Uí Néill hegemony). In the book’s preface, Byrne explained:

‘Ireland was a country where archaic Indo-European institutions, and probably traditions even more primitive surviving among the descendants of the stone age megalith builders, have been untouched by the levelling bulldozers of Roman civilisation; where Latin Christianity had bestowed the gift of literacy in two tongues indeed, but had itself been adapted to Gaelic culture. We may thus find surviving here even into modern times features of that sacral kingship which has been traced over wide areas of the world in many periods of civilisation. A primitive Irish legend may throw light on a ritual survival in fifth-century Athens; the relations of Irish king and goddess complement Scandinavian accounts of the

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 24.

¹⁸ D.A. Binchy, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship* (Oxford, 1970); F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high-kings* (Dublin, 1973/2001)

¹⁹ Binchy, *Kingship*, pp 4-9, 11.

Uppsala kingship; the poet's reward for his inauguration of the king can be explained by a Vedic hymn.²⁰

Elsewhere, Giraldus Cambrensis' infamous account of the horse-sacrifice inauguration ritual is placed in its Indo-European context and compared with the *asvamedha* of ancient India and the eating of horse-flesh in Norway, while parallels between Hindu and Brehon law schools are noted.²¹

Both Binchy's and Byrne's works must be placed in context, of course. Four years prior to the delivery of Binchy's lecture on 'Celtic' kingship at Oxford, Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson had published his *The oldest Irish tradition: a window on the Iron age* (1964). Jackson distinguished '[t]he pseudo-historical literature' from 'epic tales'.²² The latter, he claimed, 'belong to a period some centuries earlier than the time when they were first written down – belong in fact to a "pre-historic" Ireland.'²³ The various proofs he offered in support of his thesis are the vestigial remnants of La Tène culture, oaths which referred to a plurality of gods and the similarities in material culture which can be drawn from ancient Roman accounts of Gaul and the Ulster cycle stories, amongst others. Accordingly, Jackson maintained, 'the title of this lecture is not altogether fanciful or without justification' and 'the stories provide us with a picture – very dim and fragmentary no doubt, but still a picture – of Ireland in the Early Iron Age'.²⁴

A notion common to all three texts just discussed, then, is that of 'pagan' or 'pre-Christian' survivals, though it cannot be classed as the primary consideration in *Irish kings and high-kings*. Yet the king portrayed by Byrne was, as he stated, 'hamstrung'. In an earlier period,

²⁰ *IKHK*, pp 2-3.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp 18, 8.

²² K.H Jackson, *The oldest Irish tradition: a window on the Iron Age* (Cambridge, 1964), pp 1-3.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 4.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp 55, 5.

divinity would have restricted the king's room for manoeuvre, but so too would tribal law and custom.²⁵ The Irish king was no legislator, nor had he any tremendous involvement in the enforcement of law.²⁶ Later, the passing of paganism was to prove a double-edged sword, for the king was deprived of his priestly functions. This, Byrne opined, must have led to a decline in royal power.²⁷ Even when he conceded that there was a movement within the Irish church towards increasing royal power, Byrne qualified it, saying that this alliance only began to bear fruit in the twelfth century.²⁸

The discussion of these three texts – *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon kingship*, *Irish kings and high-kings*, and *A window on the Iron age* – should bring greater appreciation for the ground-breaking nature of Ó Corráin's 1978 essay. The kings portrayed in 'Nationality and kingship' were not 'hamstrung' as were Byrne's; further, the discussion moved from the ideological to the practical. Ó Corráin explained how 'the great kings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were deliberately using the church – and the reform movement itself – to further their political ambitions and enhance their prestige', how 'the greater overkings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had emerged as law-makers' and that the rule that the king could not alienate hereditary land 'had long become obsolete.'²⁹ He concluded that Irish society was hurrying towards feudalism and that it bore 'some striking resemblance...to European society in the first age of feudalism.'³⁰ This was no discussion of the weird and wonderful, of pagan survivals and Irish exceptionalism; Ó Corráin's article was concerned solely with the practicalities of kingship and placed its Irish variant in its broader European context.

²⁵ *IKHK*, p. 30.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 31.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp 33-4.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 34.

²⁹ Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship', pp 21, 23, 24.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 32.

Indeed, the ‘pagan survival’ thesis, so central to the discussions of Binchy, Byrne, and Jackson, soon came under attack from Ó Corráin, Kim McCone, and others. Two articles published in *Peritia* in 1984, one by Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Aidan Breen, the other by Liam Breatnach alone, dismantled the idea that the Irish law tracts preserved a pagan law code which remained uninfluenced by the advent of Christianity in the fifth century. ‘Rather, the evidence...provides firm support for the integration of the churches into Irish society as a whole, the involvement of churchmen in the law, and their close family connections with the secular learned orders’.³¹ As such, ‘we can hardly speak of secular law-schools uninfluenced by Christianity’, and it appears that ‘the law tracts, in Latin and in the vernacular, are the work of a single class of learned men who were as well versed in scripture as in the legal lore of their ancestors and founded their laws on a conscious and sophisticated compromise between the two.’³² Kim McCone’s *Pagan past and Christian present in early Irish literature* (1990) tackled more directly the ‘window on the Iron Age’ hypothesis advanced by Jackson twenty-six years previously. Irish literature, in both Latin and the vernacular, argued McCone, was produced in monasteries or by those endowed with a monastic education. As such, he added, it is obvious that the proper frame of reference for these sagas was not the late Iron Age, but rather the early Christian period.³³ Furthermore, just as Ó Corráin had done in 1978, McCone placed Ireland in the European mainstream, noting its links with Britain, France, Spain, southern Germany, the Low Countries, Switzerland, northern Italy and Bohemia.³⁴ Accordingly, Ireland was no ‘isolated cultural backwater clinging unquestioningly to

³¹ Liam Breatnach, ‘Canon law and secular law in early Ireland: the significance of *Bretha Nemed*’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), p. 459.

³² *Ibid*; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, & Aidan Breen, ‘The laws of the Irish’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), p. 412.

³³ Kim McCone, *Pagan past and Christian present in early Irish literature* (Maynooth, 1990), pp 1, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 12.

remarkably archaic practices and perceptions disturbed only by the occasional intrusion of more advanced foreigners.³⁵

Yet, ground-breaking though Ó Corráin's piece was, it made little immediate impact. The following year Prionsias Mac Cana read his paper, '*Regnum and sacerdotium: notes on Irish tradition*' to the British Academy. It was rooted firmly in the 'pagan survival' school and he argued that Continental Europe could be contrasted with its Celtic fringe. Irish kingship, it was suggested, 'remained relatively unaltered by ecclesiastical interference either in its morphology or its ideology'. The reason for this was Ireland's conservatism born of its 'geographical isolation'.³⁶ The focus of the article was on the sacral nature of kingship, the *banfeis rígi*, and the survival of the druidic caste as the *filid*. Although Mac Cana accepted that Irish churchmen sought to Christianise the king-making process, much as their continental counterparts had done, he noted that they worked 'in a much more difficult terrain'. In other words, Ireland's conservatism retarded their efforts to transform the inauguration ritual.³⁷ Mac Cana did not even cite Ó Corráin's essay.

Perhaps the first genuine attempt to take up Ó Corráin's mantle came in 1987 when Marilyn Gerriets penned 'Kingship and exchange in pre-Viking Ireland'. There was little talk of Indo-European roots and kingship goddesses here; Gerriets was concerned with the practicalities of kingship and royal power. She argued that ties of dependence provided kings with an important source of power in the pre-Viking period (by 'pre-Viking' she meant pre-840, not pre-795).³⁸ Furthermore, Gerriets submitted, kings soon began to levy taxes and draw revenue from law enforcement. This provided 'a permanent source of power' for kings; hitherto, power rested on the rather unstable foundation of ties of

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Prionsias Mac Cana, '*Regnum and sacerdotium: notes on Irish tradition*', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65 (1979), p. 445.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 451.

³⁸ Marilyn Gerriets, 'Kingship and exchange in pre-Viking Ireland', *Cambridge Medieval Studies* 13 (1987), pp 39, 71; 41.

allegiance.³⁹ Gerriets concluded that ‘royal powers had certainly begun to grow before the major onslaught of the Vikings in the mid-ninth century’ and that ‘the internal dynamics of Irish society allowed Irish over-kings to increase their own power in the same direction as the centralized monarchies which developed elsewhere in Europe’.⁴⁰ The significance of Gerriets’ article lies both in its attempt to continue the concern with practicalities advanced by Ó Corráin in ‘Nationality and kingship’, but also in the fact that it breaks with that essay when it argues for a pre-Viking growth in royal power (and, it must be noted, with Byrne and Mac Cana who argued for the aggrandisement of royal power in the eleventh and twelfth centuries).⁴¹

Ó Corráin has continued to propound his thesis of the ‘power-hungry’ king of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries who built up provincial kingships that dominated Irish politics until the arrival of the English in the later twelfth century. *Imperium* and *dominium* were to merge in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which led to the development of ‘feudalistic institutions’.⁴² Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in his survey work, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200*, argued for a new breed of post-Clontarf king and, like both Ó Corráin and Byrne, for a process of feudalization in Ireland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁴³

There has been a dichotomy in the historiography of Irish kingship, two schools of thought. The first – older – school was concerned with all that might be termed ‘unusual’: pagan survivals, Indo-European roots, ‘the ruler’s truth’ and curious inauguration rites that involved horses and fertility goddesses. We might also term this a preoccupation with ‘ideology’. The second – later – school, fronted by

³⁹ Ibid, pp 40, 71-72.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 72.

⁴¹ See Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality and kingship’, pp 32, 35; Byrne, *IKHK*, pp 269-71; Mac Cana, ‘*Regnum* and *sacerdotium*’, p. 479.

⁴² Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Ireland, Scotland and Wales, c.700 to the early eleventh century’, in Rosamund McKitterick (ed.), *The new Cambridge medieval history volume II, c.700-c.900* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 46.

⁴³ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (Harlow, 1995), pp 273-6, 291-2.

Donnchadh Ó Corráin, has been more concerned with the ‘practicalities’ of kingship: how power was augmented and exercised, taxation, law-making and military tenure. Both schools concern themselves with ‘power’ but this is hardly a surprise; any study of kingship would tend to entail an investigation of ‘power’. What is perhaps somewhat surprising though, is that the approach of the ‘later’ school has been to set itself almost in opposition to that of the ‘older’. Some kick-back was inevitable, of course, not least because certain aspects of the ‘older’ thesis are, in light of recent research, somewhat dated (in particular, reference is made here to the ‘pagan survival’ theory).⁴⁴ Denis Casey framed his 2009 PhD thesis as follows:

‘Historians of medieval Ireland, however, have too often focused their attention on esoteric features of Irish kingship, such as the possible survival of aspects of pre-Christian ideology and practices. The study of such facets of kingship has occurred at the expense of investigating the practical challenges of everyday royal rule. As Patrick Wormald has pointed out: “historians of kingship have arguably been too preoccupied by ideology, especially if the ideology is in any way weird. All societies have their political rhetoric, and its study is both legitimate and necessary; but it is never the whole story’. Thus while much has been written about abstract political notions, such as vernacular literary depictions of a sovereignty-goddess...historians still remain very much in the dark about basic aspects of royal rule.’⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The pagan survival thesis still has at least one strong proponent however: John Waddell. See his ‘Continuity, cult and contest’, in Roseanne Schott, Conor Newman and Edel Bhreathnach (eds), *Landscapes of cult and kingship* (Dublin, 2011), pp 192-212, and his *Archaeology and Celtic myth* (Dublin, 2014). However, see also Denis Casey ‘Review: *Archaeology and Celtic myth*’, *Irish Historical Studies* 39 (156) (2015), pp 682-3.

⁴⁵ Denis Casey, *Studies in the exercise of royal power in Ireland, c.650-c.1200 AD* Unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge, 2009), pp 12-13.

Casey was in many respects correct, and the ‘practicalities’ of royal power had been neglected by older historians. The problem is, it is submitted, Casey draws too stark a distinction between ‘ideology’ and ‘practicalities’ and this in turn stems from a broader problem with the historiography of kingship in medieval Ireland. ‘Power’, although central to the discussion, has not been engaged with as a concept in its own right. It is this failure that has led to such a stark distinction being drawn in the historiography between ‘ideology’ and ‘practicalities’; historians of Irish kingship have failed to recognise, or at least discuss in a meaningful way, how the one can complement the other; that is, how ‘ideology’ can facilitate the ‘practicalities’.

This failure to engage with the concept of ‘power’ has also led to ‘power’ being conceived of in a very narrow way, thereby channelling the discussion down one particular route. Actually, much of the discussion has revolved around the question of whether the Irish kings were ‘powerful’ or not but, as has been said, the nature of this ‘powerfulness’ is narrowly conceived. As one might have gathered from the foregoing discussion, the ‘later’ school have seen the Irish kings as ‘powerful’ and portrayed them as such, but, for them, this ‘power’ is related to an approximation of Irish kings with their Continental counterparts. Irish kings were more ‘powerful’ than older historians had given them credit for because actually, they argued, they behaved in much the same fashion as European kings. In fact, Ó Corráin and Ó Croinín seem to conflate the issue of the ‘power’ of eleventh-century kings and ‘feudalism’; we may view the kings of post-Clontarf Ireland as more powerful than their predecessors because we see the beginnings of the processes of ‘feudalization’.

The concept of feudalism, as anyone who has studied the medieval past will know, is quite problematic. The two – feudalism and medieval history – are inextricably linked of course, in the popular mind, and most people with a second-level education would, no doubt, have some sort of notion (however hazy) of what feudalism consists of. Amongst historians though, the concept has been the subject of increased

scrutiny and criticism since the 1970s, particularly since the publication of Elizabeth A. R. Brown's 1974 article, 'The tyranny of a construct: feudalism and historians of medieval Europe'. Concluding, Brown called on historians to focus attention on 'the different social and political relationships in which human beings were involved' and the 'written and unwritten rules governing these ties...[and] the ways in which the different degrees to which these principles were systematized and enforced.'⁴⁶ Too frequently, she lamented, historians have been guilty of 'encouraging concentration on oversimplified models', of defending usage of the term on the grounds of 'utility', and perhaps worst of all, of employing 'the idea of fully developed classical, or perfectly formed feudalism as a standard by which to rank and measure areas or societies.'⁴⁷ Certainly historians of Irish kingship have been guilty of much of this. Francis Byrne argued that a native feudal society began to emerge between 1014 and 1169, although, in his defence, *Irish kings and high-kings* was published prior to the promulgation of Brown's article.⁴⁸ The same cannot be said for Ó Corráin's 'Nationality and kingship'. He concluded that '[t]he type of society that was emerging in Ireland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was one that was moving rapidly in the direction of feudalism, and indeed bears some striking resemblance – in conservatism as well as in innovation – to European society in the first age of feudalism.'⁴⁹ Ó Corráin, it is submitted, commits the third of the three crimes decried by Brown as he used a more developed 'European' standard of feudalism by which to measure Ireland's 'progress' (my word, not his). This is unsurprising since one of the central aims of 'Nationality and kingship' is to place Ireland back in the European mainstream. The irony is that, in attempting to do so, Ó Corráin does not take cognisance of wider, mainstream historiographical trends. It is funny

⁴⁶ Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'The tyranny of a construct: feudalism and historians of medieval Europe', *American Historical Review* 79(4) (1974), p. 1087.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1065, 1067, 1076.

⁴⁸ Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 269. The defence does not apply to the 2001 edition of his text though – Brown's article was only twenty-seven years old at that point.

⁴⁹ Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship', p. 32.

how the modern historian of medieval Ireland behaves like Gerald of Wales, if in a perhaps ‘inverted’ fashion sometimes. They might eschew terms like ‘barbarous’ and so on, but the ‘measure’ of Irish society – in this case, the ‘power’ of its kings – is nevertheless determined by reference to other societies, that is, to the extent to which it is similar or dissimilar to European societies. The goal has been to understand the medieval Irish past by reference to Continental trends: Irish kings were powerful because they acted like European kings, Irish marital practices were not deviant because they shared many of the same traits as marriage practices on the Continent.⁵⁰ Perhaps this summary is unfair; Ó Corráin is obviously a giant of Irish history – but it is just a thought.

Terry Barry, too, has seen in Ireland a sort of ‘feudal structure’: ‘[i]f we associate castles generally with the existence of some form of feudal structure in medieval Europe, then Turlough O’Conor comes closest of all the Irish kings to being a medieval feudal monarch.’⁵¹ Finally, as has already been mentioned, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, writing some twenty-one years after the publication of Brown’s piece, concluded his work by arguing for the feudalization of Irish society after the year 1000.⁵² It is only now, very recently, that the problems in referring to the post-Clontarf era as a time of ‘feudalization’ have been explicitly recognised by an Irish historian. Marie Therese Flanagan has pointed out that the ‘lack of consensus as to what constitutes ‘feudalism’, in effect, nullifies its use without very precise definition.’ Indeed, she continues, there:

‘is a certain irony in the fact that feudalism has so often been associated with the breakdown of political power, the weakness or decline of public, or central, authority, and yet it

⁵⁰ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *The Irish Church, its reform and the English invasion* (Dublin, 2017).

⁵¹ Terry Barry, ‘The origins of Irish castles: a contribution to the debate’, in Conleth Maning (ed.), *From ringforts to fortified houses: studies on castles and other monuments in honour of David Sweetman* (Bray, 2007), p. 36.

⁵² Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, pp 273-4.

has been used by historians of twelfth-century Ireland to argue for the intensification of royal control. Concrete analyses need to be privileged over general claims. Developments in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland still need to be explored in greater detail, and comparatively by region, before meaningful comparisons can be drawn with other so-called feudal societies.⁵³

We have identified two problems with the discussion of ‘power’ in the historiography of Irish kingship then: 1.) the perceived increase in royal power after Clontarf has been linked to processes of feudalization, but ‘feudalism’ as a concept is itself wrought with difficulties, and 2.) ‘power’ has been narrowly conceived, and the dichotomy between the ‘ideology’ and ‘practicalities’ of power as presented in the historiography is too wide. Having spoken briefly about some of the problems inherent in using the term ‘feudalism’ it is now time to discuss at some length some of the problems with ‘power’.

2. THE CONCEPT OF POWER

2(a.) The Dimensions of Power

Historians of pre-invasion Ireland have not felt the need to define the term ‘power’. Francis Byrne spoke of ‘a movement towards increasing the royal power’ in the Irish church, whereby church and dynasty offered one another their mutual support.⁵⁴ Similarly, Ó Corráin argued that the clergy ‘did much to enhance kingship’, and, as mentioned before, that the eleventh and twelfth century kings used the church reform movement to ‘further their political ambitions and enhance their prestige’.⁵⁵ Indeed, he

⁵³ Marie Therese Flanagan, ‘After Brian Bóraime: the high-kingship and the kings of Connacht’ in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XVI* (Dublin, 2017), p. 243.

⁵⁴ Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 34; Id., ‘The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169’ in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume II: medieval Ireland, 1169-1543* (Oxford, 1986), p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ó Corráin, ‘Nationality and kingship’, pp 16, 21

opined, the greater kings (that is, not the petty kings, or kings of a single *tuath*) ‘increased in power’ in the tenth and eleventh centuries and harnessed more effective control of military and administrative machinery.⁵⁶ Though Dáibhí Ó Cróinín did not use the term ‘power’, he stated that ‘the authority of the great twelfth-century kings over their vassals, though often transitory, was greater than at any previous time’ (more on ‘authority’ and ‘power’ below).⁵⁷ Finally, in a work not hitherto discussed, Patrick Wormald discussed the ‘escalating royal power’ of Ireland’s eighth century kings.⁵⁸ However, none of these works expanded the concept of ‘power’ in any meaningful way; all take for granted that there is an agreed notion of what ‘power’ is. Most, too, agree that there was an increase in this ‘power’ (whatever it may be) as exercised by kings between the eighth and twelfth centuries. The ‘power’ of kings had increased dramatically by the time the English arrived.

Perhaps this is not altogether surprising: most people have ‘an intuitive notion of what it means.’⁵⁹ Nevertheless, ‘power’ has received altogether more attention from a coterie of sociologists and political scientists. Robert Dahl was one of the first to attempt a definition. Accepting that people have an intuitive idea of what ‘power’ is, he noted that ‘scientists have not yet formulated a statement of the concept of power that is rigorous enough to be of use in the systematic study of this important social phenomenon.’ Attempting to rectify this situation he defined power as follows: ‘*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do’.⁶⁰ Power, Dahl continued, was a relation – a relation among people.

Dahl’s conception of power (hereinafter, the ‘one-dimensional’ view) was not without its critics however, not least Bachrach and Baratz,

⁵⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), p. 40.

⁵⁷ Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 274.

⁵⁸ Patrick Wormald, ‘Kings and kingship’, in Paul Fouracre (ed.), *The new Cambridge medieval history volume I, c.500-c.700* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 590.

⁵⁹ Robert A. Dahl, ‘The concept of power’, *Behavioral Science* 2(3) (1957), pp 201-15.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp 202-03.

who argued that power had not one but two dimensions. Power, they claimed, lay as much in non-decisions as it did in decisions. Non-decision-making constituted ‘a means by which demands for change in the existing allocation of benefits and privileges in the community can be suffocated before they are even voiced; or kept covert; or killed before they gain access to the relevant decision-making process.’⁶¹ They stressed the need for conflict however, and argued that if ‘there is no conflict, overt and covert, the presumption must be that there is consensus on the prevailing allocation of values, in which case nondecision-making is impossible.’⁶²

Not that this was the end of the matter; Steven Lukes argued for a third dimension. He defined power as follows: ‘*A* may exercise power over *B* by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping or determining his very wants.’⁶³ Lukes continued:

‘is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? To assume that the absence of grievance equals genuine consensus is simply to rule out the possibility of false or manipulated consensus by definitional fiat.’⁶⁴

⁶¹ Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, *Power and poverty: theory and practice* (London, 1970), p. 44.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶³ Steven Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (Basingstoke, 2005; second edn.), p. 27.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

A somewhat similar conception of power was envisioned by Pierre Bourdieu, and advanced in *Masculine Domination*. Attempting to account for male domination of females, Bourdieu explained that:

‘The dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural...Symbolic violence is instituted through the adherence that the dominated cannot fail to grant to the dominant (and therefore to the domination) when, to shape her thought of him, she has only cognitive instruments that she shares with him and which, being no more than the embodied form of the relation of domination, cause that relation to appear as natural...’⁶⁵

The ‘symbolic violence’ mentioned above was a form of power likened to a type of ‘magic’, but a magic which worked ‘only on the basis of the disposition deposited, like springs, at the deepest level of the body’ that ‘does no more than trigger the dispositions that the works of inculcation and embodiment has deposited.’⁶⁶ Symbolic power operates below the level of consciousness and thus, when external restraints are removed (for example, women are given the right to vote, to education or access to all professions) self-exclusion and ‘vocation’ take over from explicit exclusion.⁶⁷

Both Steven Lukes and Pierre Bourdieu nevertheless illustrated the ways in which power could work to shape preferences, beliefs, desires and judgements.⁶⁸ Further, both accepted that power could work in this way, at the level of unconsciousness, or, as Lukes put it, without being ‘intelligent and intentional.’⁶⁹ Indeed, ‘adaptive preferences ‘can be

⁶⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine domination* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 35.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 38.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp 42, 39.

⁶⁸ Lukes, *PRV*, pp 109, 130.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 136.

induced and encouraged by power.’ Ultimately, however, Lukes did concede that power’s third dimension is only ever partially effective and that, ‘as Foucault insisted, power means resistance...’.⁷⁰

Michel Foucault and his adumbrations have heavily influenced the practice of history writing since the 1970s. It seems inevitable then that his name and his works should crop up here, in a study of ‘power’. Foucault’s conception of power (a conception that Peter Digeser has termed ‘the fourth face of power’ or ‘power₄’) differs from the previous three ‘dimensions’ summarised above in that, unlike the other three conceptualizations, it does not presuppose the existence of a subject. To put it another way, while Lukes and Dahl spoke of *A*’s power over *B* in one way or another, Foucault does not take the *A*’s and *B*’s as a given. Indeed, this very ‘individualizing’ is the result of power; subjects are understood as social constructions.⁷¹ As Foucault himself states:

‘The individual is not to be conceived of as a sort of elementary nucleus, [or] a primitive atom...In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the *vis-à-vis* of power; it is, I believe, one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.’⁷²

There are other differences too, but for our purposes it is enough to appreciate this core difference between ‘power₄’ and the other three faces of power. Of greater interest are comments made by Foucault in his 1982

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp 150-51.

⁷¹ Peter Digeser, ‘The fourth face of power’, *The Journal of Politics* 54(4) (1992), p. 980.

⁷² Michel Foucault, ‘Two lectures’ in Colin Gordon (ed.), *Power/knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (New York, 1980), p. 98.

essay 'The subject and power'. In this piece he advanced a 'new, "more empirical"' way to 'go further toward a new economy of power relations.'⁷³ This 'more empirical' approach involves 'taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point...it consists of using this resistance as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position and find out their point of application and the methods used.'⁷⁴ Simplifying, he explains that in order to understand what is meant by sanity we must look at insanity, to understand what is meant by legality, we must explore what is happening in the field of illegality, and so forth.'⁷⁵ Foucault suggested that one should 'analyze institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice versa' and that '[p]ower relations are rooted in the system of social networks.'⁷⁶

2(b.) The problem of 'essential contestedness' and pre-conceptions

Steven Lukes suggested that underlying all three dimensions is a common concept of power: A affects B in some (significant) way. For him, this common concept of 'power' is an essentially contested one. He stated:

'One feature which [the] three views of power share is their evaluative character: each arises out of and operates within a particular moral and political perspective. Indeed, I maintain that power is one of those concepts which is ineradicably value-dependent. By this I mean that both its very definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application – and I shall maintain below that some such uses permit that range to extend further and deeper than others. Moreover, the

⁷³ Michel Foucault, 'The subject and power', *Critical Inquiry* 8(4) (1982), p. 780.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

concept of power is, in consequence, what has been called an ‘essentially contested concept’ – one of those concepts which inevitably involve endless disputes about their proper uses in the part of their users.’⁷⁷

However, the essential contestability of power is itself essentially contested – Peter Morriss has argued that the concept of power itself is not essentially contested. He does accept that we will often want to determine someone’s ‘overall power’ though – that ‘someone is powerful, or more powerful than someone else’ and that ‘[p]eople are the more powerful the more important to them the results they can obtain are; or, to put this another way, the more these results accord with their intention.’⁷⁸ This introduces the concept of *interest*, which does play a significant role in the aggregation of separate powers, if not the identification of power. Importantly though, Morriss stressed that there is no need to conflate the concepts of interest and of power and therefore ‘disputes about “interests” are not about “power”’; so that, whilst the concept of interest may be essentially contested [or may not] this, of itself, does not make “power” an essentially contested concept.’

So the question of value-dependency is somewhat intractable because (a.) as Lukes maintains, ‘power’ is an essentially contested concept and as Andrew Mason maintains although there may be a correct answer which requires ‘judgement’ to discern, there exists no independent criterion which can be used to show that a ‘more accurate perception *is* more accurate’; and (b.) even if, following Morriss, the concept of power is not essentially contested, ‘we often want to say that someone is more powerful, or more powerful than someone else’ and therefore the question of a concept of ‘interests’ arises, separately from the concept of power,

⁷⁷ Lukes, *PRV*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ Peter Morriss, *Power. A philosophical analysis* (Manchester, 2002; second edn.), p 89

and which may itself be essentially contested, but is most certainly value-dependent.⁷⁹

In failing to define what exactly it is they mean by ‘power’, historians of medieval Ireland have come to the subject with their own preconceived notion of what ‘power’ is or ought to be. As, as has just been noted, the question of value-dependency is intractable, though, the question might be asked: what is so wrong with Ó Corráin et al.’s approach? Had he been fully cognisant of the literature on the concept of power when he wrote his ‘Nationality and kingship’ piece back in the late 1970s, it would then surely have been reasonable for him, in seeking to determine the ‘overall’ power of Irish kings, to make a value-dependent judgment, and attach greater weight to the issues of law-making and taxation. Problems remain in relation to the use of the concept of ‘feudalism’ though, and in relation to scope: the discussion of the ‘power’ of Irish kings lacks a certain richness.

Ultimately, it is not about coming down on any one side or the other, in favour of any one ‘face’ of power. It would be wrong of me, in criticising historians of medieval Ireland for adopting a monolithic view of ‘power’, to then prescribe a ‘correct’ view. It is about engaging with ‘power’ as a concept, it is about engaging with the literature on ‘power’, and coming at ‘power’ in the context of medieval Irish kingship in a new way; it is about narrowing the gap between ‘practicalities’ and ‘ideology’ that exists in the historiography, and understanding and identifying the ways in which ideology allows for or facilitates the practicalities. It is about deepening and diversifying our understanding of royal ‘power’ in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland.

2(c.) ‘Power’ applied

Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek, in the introduction to their edited volume on power and authority in the middle ages observed

⁷⁹ Andrew Mason, *Explaining political disagreement* (Cambridge, 1993), pp 55-7; Morriss, *Power*, pp 88-9.

that '[h]istorical and literary study over the last half-century, influenced by other disciplines such as law, political theory, and above all anthropology has produced a much broader understanding of what constitutes both authority and power' before going on to discuss the two terms.⁸⁰ Power, they noted 'is now understood much more broadly.'⁸¹ There was more to power than 'landed wealth and liquid funds' and scholars, Bolton and Meek observed 'now look at more subtle aspects of the exercise of power, such as diplomacy, the formation of groups of supporters by grants and gifts, and persuasion through sermons or literature and works of art. They also look at the exercise of power by non-traditional groups such as the peasantry...'.⁸² Scholars of British and Continental kingships have shown their inventiveness in other ways too. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andrew Rabin, in their studies of Anglo-Saxon kingship adopted a sort of Foucauldian approach to 'power', and explored the ways in which royal law-codes created 'subjects'.⁸³ Timothy Reuter has recognised that 'power' was a subject that medieval historians 'tended to shy away from', and they had failed to engage with the literature produced on the subject by sociologists and political scientists. He attempted to rectify this situation himself in his paper 'Nobles and others: the social and cultural expression of power relations in the Middle Ages'. The basic question that Reuter sought to answer was 'how did they [elites] get away with it?'.⁸⁴ Reuter notes, rightly, that we should not ignore the contribution of direct and coercive force.⁸⁵ We are not so much concerned with that here

⁸⁰ Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek, 'Introduction' in eadem (eds), *Aspects of power and authority in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2007), p. 1.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 2. Some work has been done here, not least by Denis Casey who looked at the granting of lands in power.

⁸³ Katherine O'Keefe O'Brien, 'Body and law in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), pp 209-32, and Andrew Rabin, 'Witnessing kingship: royal power and the legal subject in the old English laws', in Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (eds), *Kingship, legislation and power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp 219-36.

⁸⁴ Timothy Reuter, 'Nobles and others: the social and cultural expression of power relations in the Middle Ages', in Janet Nelson (ed.), *Medieval politics and modern mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), pp 111, 113.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 116.

however. We are concerned, rather, with the ways in which domination is made to seem ‘natural’, in the Lukesian sense, whereby people ‘accept their role in the existing order of things’.

This chapter may, at certain times, come across to the reader as an incessant bashing of the work of others, so it might be high time for some praise. Nicholas B. Aitchison’s curiously neglected article ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality: rank, power, and ideology in early medieval Ireland’ was the first to examine more fully this idea of ‘power’ as something quite insidious (within the context of Irish kingship that is).⁸⁶ There is no mention of his work in the preface to the 2001 re-release of *Irish kings and high-kings*, nor is it included in the bibliographies attached to Denis Casey’s 2009 doctoral thesis, or Seán Duffy’s *Brian Boru and the battle of Clontarf*. Only Bart Jaski can take any credit here for he does cite Aitchison’s article. Not that failure to cite this piece constitutes some sort of heinous crime against the study of history – of course it does not. Yet the essay is one of the more interesting works on kingship, it is submitted, to emerge in the last twenty-five years or so, because it does recognise power as a means of shaping preferences and perceptions.

The basis of power, argued Aitchison, was control of the reproductive capacity of land and livestock, and ‘was ultimately dependent on physical force.’⁸⁷ It is his discussion of the interrelationship between rank, sacrality, and power which is of most interest here. The source of power, then, was clear; the source of ‘rank’ less so. The two should not be confused, he submitted, though they very often were. ‘Rank’ was not ‘real’, like power; it was ‘perceived’ and created through periodic rituals. It held reality only on specific occasions, like at *óenaige*. The possession of rank was based on the perceived possession of metaphysical properties, but rank, which was itself dependent on the notion of sacrality, was, along with the latter, one of the ‘two facets of

⁸⁶ N.B. Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality: rank, power, and ideology in early medieval Ireland’, *Traditio* 49 (1994), pp 45-75.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 45.

those ideological structures within which royal power was exercised’.⁸⁸ In short, power had an ideological dimension. He explained:

‘[t]he tenure and legitimacy of elevated rank in general, and kingship in particular, rested – in part at least – on the possession of metaphysical properties. The ideology of rule sought to represent political power as being not only immemorial, through its emphasis on ancestry and traditional authority, but also on being both natural and associated with metaphysical powers. As a result, political power itself was projected as being both permanent and unchallengeable.’

Perhaps Maurice Bloch, quoted by Aitchison in his conclusion, put it best of all:

‘Some inequality is often manifested as unadorned oppression, but...it is then highly unstable, and only becomes stable when its origins are hidden and when it transforms itself into a hierarchy: a legitimate order of inequality is an imaginary world which we call social structure. This is done by the creation of a mystified “nature” and consisting of concepts and categories of times and persons divorced from everyday experience, and where inequality takes on the appearance of an inevitable part of an ordered system.’⁸⁹

Aitchison also recognised that ‘power exists in a multiplicity of forms and extents, and varies according to the social context within which it is exercised.’⁹⁰ Power is, as just discussed, very much a contested term, and

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 73.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 57.

Aitchison, in acknowledging its myriad ‘forms and extents’ goes some way to recognising this.

As Timothy Reuter noted, though, we must not assume too readily that the dominated necessarily accepted unconditionally this world view constructed by elites. Indeed, Steven Lukes also accepted that power’s third dimension is only ever partially effective and that, ‘as Foucault insisted, power means resistance...’.

The significance of Aitchison’s essay lies in its approach rather than its conclusions. He recognised that the ‘natural order of things’, the order within which the ‘practicalities’ exist, was a creation of political ideology. For Aitchison, there was no gulf between ideology and practicality, nor was ‘power’ simply conceived of as an [measurement] of the trappings of feudalism. Thus ‘ideology’ and ‘practicality are intimately bound together; we are right to be concerned with the ‘how’ in the sense of ‘the machinery’, by which, say, taxation is collected, of course, but we must also ask: why was it paid, in many instances voluntarily? Or, in the words of Tim Reuter, ‘how did they get away with it’? If kings were imposing taxes on individual households, as Marilyn Gerriets has argued, surely the willingness of the taxed to pay is as much an example of a king’s power as is his ability to coerce payment? Surely taxation was not simply ‘essential *to* the creation of a permanent source of power’ (my emphasis) but is a symptom of it. Machinery and metaphysics go hand-in-hand; the former, indeed, is only possible in the context of the latter. So while we might, quite rightly, be concerned with the role of the steward, we would do well to recall that his work was only possible because the taxpayers accepted as natural the fact that they pay tribute or tax to ‘King X’. It goes without saying that there is nothing wrong with *treating* the exercise and portrayal of kingship as separate in order to shed some light on the more basic aspects of royal rule. The difficulty lies in the historiographic tradition of Irish kingship, where the problem has been framed as if the esoteric and the practical are always mutually exclusive which, as has been argued here and by various sociologists, they are not. ‘Pagan survivals’ are most definitely *passé*, but there is

nothing wrong with the study of the esoteric aspects of kingship *per se*, and there is absolutely nothing to suggest that they should be examined separately from the practicalities of kingship, or the ‘basic aspects of royal rule’. Indeed, a more inclusive approach must be adopted, as was done by Aitchison in his inexplicably overlooked essay.

3. POWER RELATIONS

As mentioned already, the concept of ‘feudalism’ has undergone intense scrutiny since the publication of Elizabeth Brown’s 1974 article. One historian that went a long way to answering Brown’s call was Susan Reynolds. She was critical of the concepts of feudalism and vassalage (and ‘feudo-vassalic’ institutions and relations) and sought to explore the full range of human relations within a medieval community. She argued that:

‘Studying medieval society through vassalage will never get us further, because those who undertake it are almost bound to have decided what is there to be found... What we need to investigate are relations between rulers and subjects, superiors and inferiors, starting with such general and non-technical categories as these, rather than lords and vassals, until we see the categories that the sources impose.’⁹¹

Government and community were of particular interest to Reynolds, particularly the way in which government depended on collective activity. Collective activity was, for her, ‘a permanent, lawful, and necessary part of all government at every level’, be it kingdom, village, or estate.⁹² Interestingly, she argued that in order to be able to truly understand

⁹¹ Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals: the medieval evidence reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), p. 47.

⁹² Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and communities in western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford, 1997; second edn.), p. 1; *Ibid.*, ‘Government and community’ in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds), *The new Cambridge medieval history volume IV, c. 1024-c.1198 Part I* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 87.

collective activity in the middle ages, more attention must be devoted to lay political ideas for '[p]olitical thought is not, however, the prerogative of political philosophers, jurists or theologians. Kings, barons, and even commoners, as human beings, thought too, though less systematically.'⁹³

As for these commoners, Reynolds did accept that they held resentments against their superiors (and it would have been astonishing if she held otherwise). Yet there is little evidence, she continued, that they rejected the general structure of authority outright.⁹⁴ Indeed, Reynolds submitted, inequality was 'the accepted premise of almost all social and political thought in the middle ages.'⁹⁵ The king was seen as the archetypical ruler and every kingdom (which was the natural unit of government) needed a king.⁹⁶ Even so, the interests of lords and peasants could and did conflict in a variety of ways and there is some evidence, noted Reynolds, that peasants did organise them in such a way as to worry their superiors.⁹⁷ This could, however, end badly for the peasantry. Take the *rustici* of Normandy who, in the eleventh century, decided to elect representatives and demanded the right to live according to their own laws and have free use of the woods and waters. Ultimately, the elected representatives had their hands and feet cut off and the rest were sent home.⁹⁸ While the obligations of rulers and subjects were often held to be mutual (in an Irish context, see the *Audacht Morainn*), in both preaching and in practice there was a strong emphasis on the duties of obedience owed by the peasantry, and on the sin of rebellion.⁹⁹

Reynolds' approach is an interesting one indeed. As noted above, she holds that the correct way to study government in the middle ages is through an analysis of the relationships between the rulers and their subjects, for approaching the study of government with preconceived

⁹³ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and communities*, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁹⁵ Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals*, p. 35.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Reynolds, 'Government and community', p. 102.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals*, p. 37.

ideas of feudalism and feudo-vassalic relations will only take us so far. She also alludes to relationships of conflict and tension, which are, axiomatically, still relations, and relations worth examining at that. Echoing Reynolds, Marie Therese Flanagan has called for a more detailed exploration of post-Clontarf developments in Ireland ‘in the first instance within their own trajectory...without recourse to generalized analogies with feudal society.’¹⁰⁰

It will be recalled that Foucault’s ‘new “more empirical”’ way of studying power involved using resistance as a type of catalyst through which we bring power relations to light. He suggested that one should ‘analyze institutions from the standpoint of power relations, rather than vice versa’ and that ‘[p]ower relations are rooted in the system of social networks.’¹⁰¹ If Foucault and Reynolds start from two very different positions *vis-à-vis* their conceptualization of power, their approach to the study of government and power bear, at least ostensibly, considerable similarities. Both advocate the study of social relations. Both refer to relations of tension and resistance, too. Indeed, as already mentioned, Foucault argued that an examination of forms of resistance can act as means of accessing and understanding more fully a society’s power relations.

One theorist who did examine resistance in considerable detail is James C. Scott. Two key concepts developed by Scott, which are very much interlinked, are that of the ‘little tradition’ and that of ‘hidden transcripts’. Scott noted the ‘slippage’ between religious and political ideas as understood and practiced in the city (read: *élites*) and in the countryside (read: peasantry). Take, for example, the misappropriation of Christian doctrine by the peasantry/in the countryside; the misappropriation does not result from a failure to comprehend orthodox doctrine developed by *élites*/in the city, nor are certain outlandish or bizarre ritual practices simply pagan survivals. Rather, argued Scott, there

¹⁰⁰ Flanagan, ‘After Brian Bóraime’, p. 248.

¹⁰¹ Michel Foucault, ‘The subject and power’, *Critical Inquiry* 8(4) (1982), p. 780.

‘is something systematic about this slippage’.¹⁰² This systematic slippage is the ‘little tradition’: ‘the distinctive patterns of belief and behaviour which are valued by the peasantry of an agrarian society’.¹⁰³ But the ‘little tradition’, he explained, was not just a crude version of the corresponding ‘great tradition’. Rather, it functioned as a symbolic criticism of elite beliefs and values, both in form and in content.¹⁰⁴ Even when elite control is pervasive, as with the slave system, dominant classes are never entirely successful in imposing their definition of reality on subordinate classes, and what is, at best, achieved, is an uneasy compromise.¹⁰⁵ Many of the central tenets of the elite culture or ‘great tradition’ are symbolically rejected or inverted in the ‘little tradition’. This symbolic opposition is expressed in myriad forms, including ritual practice, folklore, and myth, and remains for the most part latent.¹⁰⁶

The ‘little tradition’ is just one of the many ‘weapons of the weak’; largely symbolic acts like boycotting feasts and defaming reputations that Scott classes as acts of resistance.¹⁰⁷ Such ‘token’ acts are unorganised, unsystematic, opportunistic, and are without revolutionary consequence, though, but this does not render them ‘trivial’ or ‘inconsequential’. To view them as such, Scott explained, is to misconstrue the ‘very basis of the economic and political struggle conducted daily by subordinate classes’.¹⁰⁸ Though the application of class consciousness to the study of early medieval Ireland is anachronistic, it is submitted that the notion of ‘everyday’ forms of peasant resistance to the rule of an elite does hold a certain attraction and possesses methodological validity.

¹⁰² James C. Scott, ‘Agrarian revolt and the little tradition part I’, *Theory and Society* 4(1) (1977), pp 1-4.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁷ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance* (London, 1985), p. 290.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 292.

In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* Scott sought to map out the ‘hidden transcripts’ of both subordinates and the elites:

‘I try to make out a case for a different study of power that uncovers contradictions, tensions, and immanent possibilities. Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a “hidden transcript” that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of *both* hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understanding resistance to domination’.¹⁰⁹

A social space is needed to air and develop this ‘offstage dissent’, which is expressed through rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes, and theatre.¹¹⁰ These vessels insinuate a critique of power, all the while hiding behind anonymity or behind an innocuous understanding by the elite.¹¹¹ Furthermore, ruling groups can be called upon to realise their own idealised representation of themselves to their subordinates, so ‘that the masks domination wears are, under certain conditions, also traps.’¹¹² Scott explained that the ‘hidden transcript’ does not act as a type of ersatz resistance, taking the place of actual resistance, rather it is a ‘condition of practical resistance’.¹¹³ The ‘hidden transcript’ continually presses against the limits of what is permitted, testing the limits. If the limit to what is permitted ‘onstage’ is breached, and the act of insubordination is not

¹⁰⁹ James C. Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts* (London, 1990), p. xii.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp xi, xiii, 12, 14.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. xii.

¹¹² *Ibid*, pp 54-5.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 191.

reprimanded, others will exploit the breach and a new ‘*de facto* limit’ is established.¹¹⁴

‘...a clear view of the “micro” pushing and shoving involved in power relations, and particularly power relations in which appropriation and permanent subordination are central, makes any static view of naturalization and legitimation untenable...The naturalization of domination is always being put to the test in small but significant ways, particularly at the point where power is applied.’¹¹⁵

In short, Scott, much like Foucault, advanced the notion that the study of resistance is an appropriate means of exploring power relations. Like Reynolds, too, Scott argued that more cognisance needs to be made of the politics of the dominated.

‘So long as we confine our conception of *the political* to activity that is openly declared we are driven to conclude that subordinate groups essentially lack a political life or that what political life they do have is restricted to those exceptional moments of popular explosion. To do so is to miss the immense political terrain that lies between quiescence and revolt and that, for better or worse, is the political environment of the subject classes.’¹¹⁶

Of course, Reynolds and Scott may well have had very different ideas as to what constituted the ‘political’, nor is it intended here to conflate the arguments of Scott, Reynolds and Foucault as one and the same – they very clearly are not – but both accept that the political thought and

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp 195-6.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 197.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 199.

political activity of the dominated has a valuable role to play in understanding medieval power relations.

Some of the difficulties with the work of James Scott, must be borne in mind also. Scott clearly supposes a ‘unity’ amongst the oppressed that may not in reality exist; his *Domination and Resistance* ‘requires that each subordinated population produces a unitary and shared hidden transcript’ (my emphasis).¹¹⁷ Charles Tilly, in his critique of Scott’s writings, categorises the latter’s work as ‘populist’, in other words, he sought to let the powerless speak for themselves. Tilly placed the genesis of this ‘populist’ turn in American sociological and historical writing in the 1960s, that is, against the backdrop of civil rights movements for blacks, homosexuals, women, Chicanos, Native Americans and so forth – ‘the oppressed’. Such writers believed that routine social arrangements actually harmed ordinary people, and only force held them back from overt resistance. They also tended to favour a ‘strong’ conception of power (the ability of one party to control another’s actions), in particular Steven Lukes’s conception of power’s ‘third dimension’.¹¹⁸ Pointing out some of the difficulties with Scott’s work (not least that he criticises the populist argument before falling in with it to an extent), Tilly concludes:

‘In short, compliance does not consist of conscious rule following or straightforward exchange, but of pursuing personal agendas by [manoeuvring] among obstacles, obstacles put in place by other people and past experience. Often people share agendas, [manoeuvres], and obstacles; these people are ripe for collective action. The exercise of power consists of placing obstacles and of offering rewards for completing the course. These lessons hold for compliance,

¹¹⁷ Charles Tilly, ‘Domination, resistance, compliance...discourse’, *Sociological Forum* 6(3) (1991), p. 598.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp 593-4.

passive resistance, and open revolt. They hold for individual action and for collective action as well.’¹¹⁹

3(a.) ‘Power over’ and ‘power to’

We must also be aware that there is a strong emphasis, both in the preceding discussion and in the chapters that follow, on resistance. This is in part an attempt to redress what this writer perceives to be an imbalance of sorts; the story of Irish kingship, and in particular the high-kingship, between the battle of Clontarf and the English invasion is one of admittedly slow, but perhaps unchecked, progress; of a march towards centralisation and innovations – castles, larger armies, increased legislative functions, and so forth. Again the perhaps overriding concern with all of these bears once again the imprimatur of a fascination with ‘feudalization’.

Furthermore, the theorists discussed to this point can be described as proponents of a ‘power over’ conceptualisation of ‘power’. Such a view can be contrasted with the ‘power to’ school of thought, a key proponent of which was Hannah Arendt in her essay *On Violence*. Arendt was critical of the tendency amongst thinkers to equate violence with power, thereby muddying the conceptual waters. She also noted a tendency towards equating ‘power’ with domination, with the order to command and obey.¹²⁰ Such a view was utterly erroneous she held, for violence and power were opposites.¹²¹ ‘Power’ was ‘the human ability to not just act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is “in power” we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 601.

¹²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On violence* (London, 1970), pp 35-7.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 56.

to act in their name'.¹²² For Arendt, power manifested itself 'whenever people get together and act in concert'.¹²³

Power and resistance, from a 'power-over' perspective, go hand in hand; the classical definition of power in the 'power-over' sense was advanced by Max Weber who made mention of resistance: power was 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance'.¹²⁴ This is not so obviously the case from a 'power-to' perspective. In fact, some feminist writers, such as Jean Baker Miller, who analyse power from a 'power-to' standpoint, reject 'power-over' perspectives, 'there is enormous validity in women's not wanting to use power as it is presently conceived and used', she wrote. 'Rather, women may want to be powerful in ways that simultaneously enhance, rather than diminish, the power of others.' Her own definition of power conceived of power as 'the capacity to produce a change – that is, to move anything from point A or state A to point B or state B', quite the opposition of domination.

It is probably clear by now that in the body of this thesis the power of Irish kings in the eleventh- and twelfth-century will be, for the most part, analysed from a 'power-over' perspective, but mention is made of the 'power-to' theorists for the sake of completeness. The literature on power might well be 'marked by deep, widespread, and seemingly intractable disagreements over how the term...should be used' (the 'essentially contested' nature of power was discussed above), but both perspectives hold theoretical and methodological merit, and far be it for this author for state conclusively that one or the other view is bogus.¹²⁵ It is also important to note that 'power-over' and 'power-to' conceptions of

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 44.

¹²³ *Ibid*, p. 52.

¹²⁴ Max Weber (Roth, Guenther, and Claus Wittich, eds), *Economy and society. An outline of interpretive sociology, volume I* (New York, 1968), p. 53.

¹²⁵ Amy Allen, 'Feminist perspectives on power', *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy* (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feministpower/>) (accessed 24 August 2017).

power are not exclusive of one another.¹²⁶ In any case, this chapter seeks to broaden, not narrow, the analyses of ‘power’ in an Irish context.

3(b.) Resistance

It is important to note that resistance, much like power itself, is relational – it is a part of everyday social life.¹²⁷ Resistance is itself quite a complex practice, and can take many forms. This is because power itself is complex, and power relations may touch upon various different social relations – ethnic, gendered and sexual, economic, and so forth. It is hardly surprising then that resistance can adopt many guises, and in fact it can be directed towards one particular power relation without attempting to disturb the others; quite the opposite – resistance might actually support or even depend on one power relation while attacking another.¹²⁸ This variety as to the forms resistance might take – violent or nonviolent, confrontational or circumventory, individual or collective, and so on, is at least something that was acknowledged by James Scott, whatever the problems with his work, in his study of peasant resistance.¹²⁹

Resistance need not mean resistance to domination though. Indeed, resistance is neither intrinsically good nor evil, intrinsically emancipatory, progressive or democratic.¹³⁰ Resistance as understood by Nietzsche can be either emancipatory (that is, resistance to domination) or it can be domination’s resistance to that emancipatory effort.¹³¹ Furthermore, domination may actually shape the form that resistance takes. Wendy Brown gives the example of workers that dream of a world without work or teenagers who dream of a world without parents. Imagining such a world presupposes the subject identities of ‘worker’ and

¹²⁶ Steven Lukes, ‘Power and authority’, in Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet (eds), *A history of sociological analysis* (London, 1979), p. 639.

¹²⁷ Stellan Vinthagen and Mona Lilja, ‘Resistance’, in Gary L. Anderson and Kathryn G. Herr, *Encyclopedia of activism and social justice, volume III* (London, 2007), p. 1216.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1216.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1217.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1216.

¹³¹ David Couzens, *Critical resistance. From poststructuralism to post-critique* (London, 2004), p. 2.

‘teenager’, and therefore the same social organization that is resisted. This suggests that ‘resistance is contextually bound to the social and psychological structures that are being resisted.’¹³²

What is important though is that from an analytic perspective we treat ‘resistance’ and ‘power’ as distinct. If not, we simply treat resistance as another form of power. ‘It is only through distinguishing between power and resistance that we are able to discuss the empirical opposition, integration, or implication of power and resistance.’¹³³

4. AUTHORITY

Above, a few words on ‘authority’ as distinct from ‘power’ was promised, and what follows is a very succinct discussion of the concept of ‘authority’. Again, as with the term ‘power’, there appears to have been little thought behind the use of the term ‘authority’ in the historiography of Irish kingship. One wonders if, when he wrote of the ‘authority of the great twelfth-century kings over their vassals’, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín was using the term as a synonym for ‘power’. Again, Bolton and Meek, drawing on the work of sociologists, and histories of power in a European context, were able to proffer their own definition of power: ‘the generally accepted justification for action’, and this justification can be ‘of either worldly or otherworldly origin’.¹³⁴

Various definitions of ‘power’ have been offered up by sociologists and political scientists. For Steven Lukes, the concept of ‘authority’ had two components; it was both the ‘surrender of private judgment’ and an identification of the possessor of authority as having a claim to do so.¹³⁵ Joseph Raz identified three uses of ‘authority’. ‘To have authority’, he said, ‘is, sometimes, (1) to have (a right created by a) permission to do something (which is generally prohibited). It is also (2) to have the right to grant such permissions, and finally, it is (3) to be an

¹³² Ibid, p. 3.

¹³³ Vinthagen and Lilija, ‘Resistance’, p. 1216.

¹³⁴ Bolton and Meek, ‘Introduction’, p. 1.

¹³⁵ Lukes, ‘Power and authority’, p. 641.

expert who can vouch for the reliability of particular information'.¹³⁶ For Barrington Moore Jr., 'authority' implied obedience 'on the basis of more than fear and coercion' and was a reflection of the fact 'that human society is in part a set of arrangements through which some human beings manage to extract an economic surplus from other human beings and turn it into culture'.¹³⁷ Hannah Arendt saw as authority's hallmark 'unquestioning recognition by those who are asked to obey' and neither coercion nor persuasion were necessary to produce compliance.¹³⁸ She viewed 'authority' as something that could be vested both in people and in offices.

As to the exact relationship between 'power' and 'authority', one's perspective can often depend on one's conception of power. The 'power over' and 'power to' (or in Lukes' parlance, 'asymmetric' and 'collective') conceptions are not 'in any simple way' exclusive of one another, of course.¹³⁹ That being said, for proponents of the 'power to' conception of power, 'authority' might be viewed as the *basis* of power.¹⁴⁰ For C. Wright Mills, a proponent of the 'power over' conception, 'authority' was a *form* of power, that could be contrasted with manipulation (another form of power).

Again, as with power, the literature on authority is complex, its complexity in part a product of the contested nature of 'power' itself, but engaging with this literature can, in turn, deepen our understanding of power in the context of medieval Ireland and lead to more innovative and diverse studies.

¹³⁶ Joseph Raz, 'Introduction', in Joseph Raz (ed.), *Authority* (Oxford, 1990), p. 2.

¹³⁷ Barrington Moore Jr., *Injustice. The social bases of obedience and revolt* (London, 1978), p. 17.

¹³⁸ Arendt, *On violence*, p. 45.

¹³⁹ Lukes, 'Power and authority' p. 639. Gerhard Göhler also played down the differences between to two, see Göhler, 'Power to and power over', pp 27-39

¹⁴⁰ Talcott Parsons, 'The distribution of power in American society', in G.W. Domhoff and H.B. Ballard (eds), *C. Wright Mills and The Power Elite* (1968), p. 82; Lukes, 'Power and authority', pp 666-71.

5. CONCLUSION

The nature of ‘power’ is hotly contested in the field of sociology and political science, and the literature on it, of which a very brief overview has just been given, is marked by deep disputes as to how we should understand ‘power’. This chapter has offered very little by way of new thinking on the nature of ‘power’ and ‘authority’ but then, that was never the objective. It has not been the aim here to add to the debate on the nature of ‘power’, ‘authority’, or ‘resistance’ – that will be left to the political scientists and sociologists, though of course historians can offer insights of their own. Rather, the aims of this chapter have been more modest. This brief piece has sought only to show how a failure by historians of Irish kingship to engage with the works of such sociologists and political scientists has led to a very narrow interpretation of the term ‘power’ and how this, in turn, has stymied our discussion of the ‘power’ of Irish kings. Academic analysis has consistently ‘discovered’ new characteristics of ‘power’, and the discussion has become wider and more complex with each passing year.¹⁴¹ Such complexity should be reflected in the richness of the historiography but such richness is sadly lacking. We have, to this point, been more concerned with determining the extent to which Irish society was undergoing ‘feudalization’ and conflating this process with an increase in ‘power’. As with ‘power’, a failure to engage with the concept of ‘feudalism’ has hindered our discussion, too.

This chapter has set out in quite a succinct fashion some of the principal fissures in the debate on the nature of ‘power’ – the distinction between ‘power over’ and ‘power to’; the various ‘dimensions’ within the ‘power over’ conception of power; the distinction between Foucault’s conception of ‘power over’ and those of Lukes, Dahl, and Bachrach and Baratz; and the relationship of power to authority. This is done both in the hope that this will encourage others to come at the topic of the power of

¹⁴¹ Gerhard Göhler, ‘“Power to” and “power over”’ in Stewart R. Clegg and Mark Haugaard (eds), *The SAGE handbook of power* (London, 2009), p. 27.

Irish kings in innovative and exciting ways, but also to set out the theoretical bedrock upon which the rest of this thesis is built.

Chapter 2: Kingships and lordships in pre-invasion Ireland

One of the accepted conventions relating to eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland is that, over the course of time, we see a diminution in the numbers of petty kings and kingdoms of Ireland. Historians, in seeing an increase in the power of the larger over-kings, have posited a related reduction in the powers and numbers of the petty kings. The evidence, they suggest, lies in the fact that the petty kings were no longer termed king (or *rí* in Irish), but *dux*, *tigerna* or *toisech* (which can, broadly speaking, all be translated as ‘lord’). A second accepted convention is that, after Clontarf, Ireland became increasingly violent and anarchic. These two conventions are related, and the second shall be explored at length in chapter three. The aim of the present chapter is to dissect the former, though, and it shall be argued that there is little enough evidence to support the view that we see a reduction in the number of kings operating in Ireland between the ascent of Brian Bóruma and the arrival of the English in the 1160s.¹⁴²

1. THE ACCEPTED CONVENTION

It will be recalled that it was Donnchadh Ó Corráin who first argued strongly for viewing the kings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as being of a peculiarly new breed. In doing so, he suggested that the *rí tuaithe* or ‘tribal king’ began to decline in standing, though this was process which had begun ‘even in the period of the canonical law-

¹⁴² After much of the research had been concluded for this chapter, the writer became aware of an unpublished 2002 PhD thesis by Katharine Megan McGowan (‘Political geography and political structures in earlier mediaeval Ireland: a chronicle-based approach’, Unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge, 2002)), whose approach and conclusions bore similarity to my own, though the latter were reached entirely independently. Where appropriate, reference to McGowan’s thesis will be made throughout this chapter.

tracts'.¹⁴³ Ó Corráin pointed to some specific examples in the annalistic sources of individuals 'who must have been kings of *túatha* or even of large kingdoms (*ruirig*) referred to by the inferior title *dux*', namely kings of Delbna Ethra, Luigne, Laigse, Mugdorna, Cenél Conaill, and Uí Meic Uais.¹⁴⁴ Ó Corráin continued: '[t]he growth of even more powerful overkingship further reduced these lesser kings, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the normal title of the ruler of an area similar in size to the old *túath* is *tigerna*, *toísech* and *toísech dútchais*, all of which may be translated "lord".'¹⁴⁵ Seán Duffy argued along similar lines in *Ireland in the middle ages*:

'Over time, many of these lesser individuals were no longer called a king (*rí*) at all. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the *túath*, the old tribal kingdom, was no longer a 'kingdom', and it was not ruled by a king but by a man described in Irish documents as a *toísech* (which originally may have meant a leader of a war-band) or more often by a *tigerna*, a 'lord' (indeed, from as early as the eighth century the Latin *dux* is frequently used for such people). It seems clear that the refusal to call such a man a *rí* reflects a distinct erosion in the status of petty kings subsequent to the time when the law tracts were compiled, and a corresponding increase in the power of the province-kings who came from the ranks of the dominant dynasties.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', in T.W. Moody, *Historical studies XI: nationality and the pursuit of national independence* (Belfast, 1978), p. 9.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*; AU 756.4, 771.7, 796.5, 869.5, 870.3, 872.2, 877.6, 879.5, 883.5, 884.7, 912.6.

¹⁴⁵ Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and kingship', pp 9-10. See also, Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), pp 29-30.

¹⁴⁶ Seán Duffy, *Ireland in the middle ages* (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 16. See also Duffy, 'Brian Boru: emperor Scotorum', *History Ireland* 22(2) (2014), p. 10.

As recently as 2014, Charles Doherty wrote: ‘Norse trade...brought great wealth to Ireland. When Irish kings gained access to this it allowed for the increasing militarisation of society, and kingdoms became larger and fewer in number.’¹⁴⁷ This then has been a common trope of writings on eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish kingship. We turn now to look at the evidence for this convention.

1(a.) The evidence of the annals

A cursory examination of a number of annalistic sources (the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Inisfallen*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of Loch Cé*, the *Cottonian Annals* and *Mac Carthaig’s Book*) suggests that our established convention might well possess a strong evidentiary foundation. The number of individuals recorded as *dux*, *tigerna* or *toisech* in the twelfth century is indeed higher than for the eleventh century. In fact, the number of those labelled as such rises markedly in the second half of the twelfth century. Of course, what we might term the ‘orthodox’ view on the matter – that the petty kings began to be termed ‘lord’ as a result of their diminishing power – might have been encouraged by the tendency in the *Annals of the Four Masters* to employ the title *dux*, *tigerna* or *toisech* where other annals might have used *rí*. Take, by way of illustration, Domnall ua Domnalláin. In the *Annals of Ulster* we see that Domnall, labelled *ri Derluis* (king of Thurles), was killed by Aed ua Néill in the year 1000. The *Annals of the Four Masters*, recording the same killing (albeit in the year 999) awards Domnall the title *tigherna Durlais* or ‘Lord of Thurles’. The death of Flaithbertach ua Canannáin is also recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* in the year 1000. Here, Flaithbertach is titled *ri Ceniuil Conaill* (king of Cenél Conaill). The *Annals of the Four Masters* labels him *tigherna Cheneoil Conaill* (lord of Cenél Conaill). In the obit for Fearghal mac Domnaill mic Conaing, recorded in the *Annals of Tigernach* in 1001, the title *ri Ailig* (king of Ailech) is used. In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, he is awarded the title of *tigherna Oiligh*

¹⁴⁷ Charles Doherty, ‘Ireland in the Viking age’, *History Ireland* 22(2) (2014), p. 17.

(Lord of Ailech). In the *Annals of Ulster* for the year 1002, Meirlechán is termed *ri Gaileng* (king of Gailenga). In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in an entry for the year 1001 we see the following: ‘*Meirlechán, .i. mac Cuind, tigherna Gaileng*’ (Lord of Gailenga). In the *Annals of Tigernach*, in 1003, Ceallach mac Diarmata’s given moniker is *ri Osraige* (king of Osraige). The *Annals of the Four Masters* style him *tigherna Osraighe* (lord of Osraige). In 1004, in the *Annals of Ulster*, Muiredach mac Diarmata is titled *ri Ciaraidhe Luachra* (king of Ciarraige Luachra). In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in 1003, Muiredach is styled *tigherna Ciarraighe Luachra* (lord of Ciarraige Luachra). Finally, in the *Annals of Tigernach*, in 1100, Gilla na Naem Ó hEidin is labelled *ri Sil Muiredaigh ocus Condacht* (king of the Síl Muiredaig and Connacht), but in the *Annals of the Four Masters* he is termed *tigherna Iarthair Connacht* (lord of west Connacht). This list is not exhaustive, but is intended to highlight the phenomenon alluded to; the tendency of AFM to demote to lordly status individuals recorded as a *ri* in other more contemporary sources.

Not that the *Annals of the Four Masters* are always in disagreement with the other annal records. Both the *Annals of the Four Masters* and the *Annals of Tigernach* style Cú Meada Ó Laeghacháin *ard-taisech Síl Rónáin* (overlord of the Síl Rónáin) in the year 1100. Both sets of annals also award Donnchadh uí Eochaid the title of *ri Ulad* (king of Ulster). In many instances, however, as the examples in the previous paragraph illustrate, the *Annals of the Four Masters* frequently prefer ‘lord’ to ‘king’. The tendency of the *Annals of the Four Masters* to do this, it is suggested, has coloured the historian’s view of kingship – in particular, of petty kingship – in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. It must be remembered that the *Annals of the Four Masters* are a product of their time, and, as such, have a very definite agenda. In undertaking the work of compiling that set of annals, Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, Cú Choigcríche Ó Cléirigh, Fearfeasa Ó Maoil Chonaire and Cú Choigcríche Ó Duibhgeannáin sought ‘to ensure that the kingdom of Ireland would have

a history such as other European nations had'.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, wrote Bernadette Cunningham, the desire to show that the kingdom of Ireland had a history comparable in richness and status to that of other European nations 'was at the core of the entire research project'.¹⁴⁹ As such, the 'four masters' systematically downgraded many of the minor kings to the status of 'lord', being concerned with promulgating the idea that Ireland had an immemorial monarchy, a unity. They were more concerned with forcing medieval Ireland into the mould of a seventeenth-century ideal than representing historical reality.

The distorting lens of the *Four Master* aside, though, there is, as stated, in the twelfth century, and particularly in the post-invasion period, a sharp increase in leaders termed 'lord' (however rendered in Irish or Latin). There are some seventy-three different styles used in the *Annals of Ulster* between 1000 and 1033. Of these seventy-three, we find three individuals styled 'lord' rather than 'king': 'Mael Duin m. Ciarmeicc, muire Ceniuil mBinnigh Glinni', 'Gilla Ciarian m. Ualgairg, toisech H. Duib Innrecht', and 'Cu Connacht m. Dunadaigh, toisech Sil nAnmchada.'¹⁵⁰ Conversely, the 'head' or 'leader' of the Síil Anmchada is, in the same set of annals and within the same time-frame also styled 'rí'.¹⁵¹ Jumping ahead to the period 1167-99 in the same set of annals, there are recorded fifty-seven separate styles, eighteen of which use the term 'lord' rather than 'king'. Similar results are to be found in all of the sets of annals mentioned above. On the face of it, then, we do see a

¹⁴⁸ Bernadette Cunningham, 'Writing the Annals of the Four Masters', in Edel Bhreathnach & Bernadette Cunningham (eds), *Writing Irish history: the Four Masters and their world* (Dublin, 2007), p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁰ AU 1030, AU 1026, AU 1007. For the 'muire' used in AU 1030, the DIL has the following to say: 'A term denoting rank applied to individuals; the precise sense is uncertain and prob. varied in different ages...Some of the ex. given below suggest the sense of a military leader or officer in command of a division. Occurs several times in AU between the years 1159 and 1200, apparently to denote the head of a clan or sept (always wrongly translated 'steward'); the corresponding term in FM is in all cases 'tigherna'.

¹⁵¹ AU 1027.2: '...Dhogra m. nDunadhaigh, rí Sil Anmachada...'

decline in the number of individuals termed ‘king’ over the 200 year period from 1000 to 1200.

The matter is not so straightforward, though. It will be recalled that our established convention was founded on the theory that, over the course of time, the petty kings or kings of a single *túath* lost the title ‘king’ and, instead, came to be termed ‘lord’ (*toisech, tigerna, dux*, and so forth). Overwhelmingly, though, the ‘lords’ that litter the annalistic entries of the twelfth century do not appear in earlier entries as ‘kings’. Very often, in fact, they do not appear at all. For many of those later-twelfth-century lords – those of Clann Cathail, Muintir Birn, Muintir Mongáin and the like, we see no reference made to them in the annal entries for the eleventh century. Nor do we see many examples of kingships becoming lordships, though there are a few to be found. Thus we see the king of Callraige demoted to the lord of Callraige, and the king of Clann Sínaig become the lord of Clann Sínaig. We also see the king of Clann Sneidgile recorded as the ‘royal lord’ of Clann Sneidgile at a later point. Yet this is anything but a one-way stream, and we see the inverse occur also: ‘lords’ become ‘kings’. Thus the lord of Corco Achlann is later recorded as the king of Corco Achlann, the lord of Síl Anmchada becomes the king of Síl Anmchada, and the lord of Síl Muiredaig is later styled the king of Síl Muiredaig. The fact that we see this taking place – former lords termed kings – indicates that the matter is not so straightforward as to point to a few instances of the inverse and argue that, over the course of time, the petty kingships were being eroded.

Katherine Megan McGowan took a more *long durée* approach than the one adopted here, having as its focus the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She tabulated the number of polities recorded per century in the annalistic sources from the fifth century to the twelfth. The numbers she gave run as follows:

	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Total Number of Polities Recorded ¹⁵²	33	67	115	157	192	204	256	272

As can be seen from the information she puts forward, the number of recorded polities increases steadily from the fifth century to the twelfth. Of course, much of this must be connected to the equally steady increase in detail given by the annals with each passing century; it must, McGowan says, ‘also reflect – to a great extent – an ever-increasing interest in more local affairs on the part of contemporary annalists’.¹⁵³ Such an increase in the recorded number of polities need not necessarily be antithetical to that ‘established convention’ mentioned at the outset of this chapter, but the fact that so many of our eleventh and twelfth century lords are never termed king at an earlier stage, it is suggested, is, if not fatal, certainly damaging.

McGowan’s approach was chronicle-based, as is the approach adopted here. She included in her figures those polities recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, thus her number of 114 ‘political communities denoted by a non-royal status-term’ recorded between 432 and 1172 is skewed somewhat, something she readily acknowledges herself.¹⁵⁴ McGowan further counted 260 royal polities (‘kingdoms’) and 139 polities not denoted as either kingdom or lordship.¹⁵⁵ McGowan further noted that the number of polities recorded per century increased every single time between the fifth and twelfth century (see her figures in the table above). The number of ‘new’ polities she recorded rose in every century from the fifth to the eighth, dropped in both the ninth and the tenth, rose again in the eleventh, and dropped once more in the twelfth.

¹⁵² McGowan, ‘Political geography’, p. 15.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp 11-13.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

All of this, she argued, points to a process of ongoing ‘polity-destruction and polity-reconfiguration’.¹⁵⁶ McGowan concluded that:

‘The escalation in numbers of polities recorded per century must also argue against the premise that larger overkingdoms came to replace more local kingdoms and mesne overkingdoms in the earlier Middle Ages, although the greater overkings do certainly seem to have come to exercise an ever more intrusive and extensive lordship over their subject kings. Likewise, the predominance of the title *rí* indicates that kingdoms remained the basic units of governance in Ireland from the beginning of contemporary record to the twelfth century, and that they were not replaced by lordships. Nonetheless, lordships formed a significant part of the political hierarchy.’¹⁵⁷

The approach adopted by the present author differed slightly from McGowan’s. It was concerned almost exclusively with the eleventh and twelfth centuries, thereby adopting a much narrower time-frame. Nor was the present author concerned with polities which could be categorised as neither kingdom nor lordship. Rather, titles were the subject being tabulated. Thus anyone termed *rí*, *ardrí*, *dux*, *tigherna*, *muire*, *toisech* or *righ thoisech* was included in the tables which can be found in appendix one at the back of this thesis. The number of annalistic sources surveyed was also narrower than McGowan’s – only the *Annals of Ulster*, *Annals of Tigernach*, *Annals of Inisfallen*, *Cottonian Annals*, *Mac Carthaig’s Book*, and the *Annals of Loch Cé* have been mined. The *Annals of the Four Masters* have been excluded from this survey, in light of some of the issues outlined above. So too have the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* for, broadly speaking, similar reasons (see chapter 3, s. 3(a.)).

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp 15-16.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 19.

The two-hundred years covered were then sub-divided into six sections for the purposes of analysis: 1000-33, 1034-66, 1067-99, 1100-33, 1134-66, and 1167-99. The number of unique styles within each thirty-three year period was then recorded but once. So, if, for example, there were twelve references to a *rí Cenel Conaill* and three references to a *tigherna Durlais* in the period 1000-33, for example, spread over three different annal collections, you can expect to find *rí Cenel Conaill* and *tigherna Durlais* comprise but one entry each in the section for 1000-33. If, however, there are twelve references to *rí Cenel Conaill* in the period 1000-33, four in the period 1034-66, and eleven in the period 1067-99, *rí Cenel Conaill* will appear as one entry in each of those chronological sections – once in 1000-33, once in 1034-66, and once in the period 1067-99. Where, for example, an individual might be styled *rí Síil Anmchada* in one set of annals, and *dux Síil Anmchada* in another set of annals, both titles will make up an individual entry each.

We turn now to what the survey reveals. Firstly, as table 2.1 below shows, the number of recorded styles (both regal and lordly) in each thirty-three year period remains more-or-less stable. The highest recorded number is 102 in the period 1100-33, the lowest is 94 in the period 1034-66. The average is 98. The percentage of styles which can be classed as a ‘lordship’ as opposed to a ‘kingship’ is very low in the first two thirds of the eleventh century; it rises in the period 1067-1133, and it peaks in the final two thirds of the twelfth century. The lowest percentage of recorded lordships is to be found in the period 1000-33 (3.9%) while the highest is to be found in the period 1167-99 (32.9%).

Table 2.1 – Recorded styles in the eleventh- and twelfth-century annals

Time-frame	Total rec. styles	Total rec. lordships	% lordships
1000-33	102	4	3.9
1034-66	94	4	4.2
1067-99	95	18	18.9
1100-33	100	14	14
1134-66	101	23	22.8
1167-99	97	32	32.9

Therefore, as was alluded to above, the number of recorded lordships does actually increase over time and, if our recorded styles are indicative of recorded polities, then the percentage of recorded polities that lordships comprise is also increasing over time.

As was also referred to above though, this does not mean our kingships are becoming lordships. When one looks at many of the lordly styles recorded in the latter two-thirds of the twelfth century, it soon becomes apparent that, in most instances, the rulers of these polities are not styled ‘king’ at any prior point in the annalistic record. In fact, there is no prior mention at all of our lords of Muintir Birn, Muintir Mongáin, Clann Tomaltaigh and the like. It is clear therefore that we are not seeing any real reduction in the number of kingships in pre-invasion Ireland, nor are we seeing our kingships becoming lordships – there is no solid evidence for this. What we might posit, then, is an evolution in the institution of lordship; perhaps that process of ‘intensification of lordship’ to which Marie Therese Flanagan often refers.¹⁵⁸ Two possible conclusions present themselves for our consideration: we are seeing the

¹⁵⁸ Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), pp 178-9; Flanagan, ‘After Brian’, p. 227.

emergence of new polities or we are seeing long-existing polities being recorded for the first time in the second half of the twelfth century.

2. LORDSHIP

Lordship itself is clearly not a new phenomenon – that is not what is being argued here. Indeed, the sheer variety of lords is well-attested in the eighth-century law text *Críth Gablach* (though it seems unlikely that the exact schema set out therein actually existed in medieval Ireland; there is very much an artificiality about it). It sets out seven grades of lordship: *aire desa*, *aire echta*, *aire ard*, *aire tuise*, *aire forgaill*, *tanaise rí*, and *rí*. The *Uraicecht Becc* sets down a slightly different schema: *aire desa*, *aire echta*, *aire tuise*, *aire ard*, *aire forgaill*, *rí*, and *rí ruirech*. Thus we have attested the existence of various grades of lordship, distinguished from one another by material wealth, in Ireland by the eighth century. What, though, is to be made of the explosion of ostensibly ‘new’ lordships recorded in the twelfth-century annals? It is always a distinct possibility that there is nothing ‘new’ about them. The annalistic entries for the twelfth century tend to be longer and more detailed than those entries for previous centuries (see also chapter 3, s.3(d.), as regards the increased recording of homicides). McGowan, it should be recalled, suggested that the increase in the number of ‘lords’ mentioned in the annalistic materials ‘appears simply to reflect a greater interest in recording more local affairs’ on the part of the annalists.¹⁵⁹ In short, as far as she is concerned, what we are seeing really is a trick played by our sources. Two theses are worthy of consideration here, it is suggested: that of Paul MacCotter, set out in his *Medieval Ireland*, and that of Thomas Bisson, expounded over time in a number of journal articles and most fully in his *The crisis of the twelfth century*.

Is it not possible that the progressive increase in references to ‘lords’ in the annals is the result of a quantitative growth in lordship? Thomas Bisson has seen in the same period, but in a broader European

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

context, an unambiguous and ‘demonstrably massive multiplication of lay lords and fiefs...in the years 950 to 1150.’¹⁶⁰ Never, he said, ‘had there been – in some senses as much qualitative as quantitative – so *much* lordship.’¹⁶¹ What we see in the period between the late tenth and the early twelfth century is the proliferation of coercive lay lordships, a phenomenon that spread across Europe, from south to north, and is attested widely across the Continent.¹⁶² Lordship now existed ‘on a massive scale’.¹⁶³ ‘No one’, he said, ‘doubts that personal and patrimonial lordships were proliferating’.¹⁶⁴ Central also to Bisson’s thesis was the idea of disruptive violence. Such violence was ‘a means of attaining as well as exercising power. The horsemen of Old Catalonia threatened and seized from peasants to create lordships and win knightly respectability’.¹⁶⁵ Coercive violence attended the multiplication of lords and castles; this, he said, was the ‘feudal revolution’.¹⁶⁶ This new coercive lordship progressed at the expense of obligations to regalian courts.¹⁶⁷

Bisson’s thesis has come in for some criticism, not least because of its use of that most risible of terms, ‘feudal’. The construct of ‘feudalism’ has come under attack as a concept since the 1970s, with the publication of Elizabeth Brown’s ‘Tyranny of a construct’ article in the middle of that decade (discussed in chapter one). Bisson defended his use of the title ‘feudal revolution’ by arguing that to focus on this metaphor alone was to miss the point; he denied that he ever claimed that the ‘feudal revolution’ was a conceptual tool capable of withstanding rigorous tests, and he invited readers to come up with a better metaphor.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas N. Bisson, *The crisis of the twelfth century. Power, lordship, and the origins of European government* (Oxford, 2009), p. 42.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 69.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 56.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 574.

¹⁶⁴ Thomas N. Bisson, ‘The feudal revolution’, *Past and Present* 142 (1994), p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 48, 42.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 36.

Most importantly, he noted, ‘the problem of disruptive change *and its consequences* remains a bigger problem...than that of what to call the phenomenon in question, because the evidence it evokes cries out for explanation.’¹⁶⁸ But other issues were raised too. Bisson’s ‘feudal revolution’, argued Dominique Barthélemy, was ‘based on poorly relativized sources’ which become more diverse after 990; so, the violence and instability that Bisson saw was nothing new, but was a product of source biases.¹⁶⁹ Barthélemy also believed that Bisson over-emphasised violence so as to contrast it with an earlier ‘order’, when in fact, ‘regalian authority was never the only curb on the “violence” and “oppression” of the nobility.’¹⁷⁰ While Barthélemy did quibble with Bisson’s claim that *no one* doubted the proliferation of lordships, he did say that Bisson was right in emphasizing the seigneurializing trend.¹⁷¹ Stephen D. White had difficulties with Bisson’s reading of ‘violence’ in the sources; violence, White argued, ‘turns out to be a complex and highly artificial construct’.¹⁷² This much was at least acknowledged by Bisson at a later stage: ‘[t]he evidence of distress, like that of violence, no longer seems so easy to read as it once did’.¹⁷³ That said, he suggested that the words that come down to us in our sources need to ‘be explained, not explained away’, and while historians have ‘not unreasonably’ become quite sceptical of this evidence, Bisson suggested that to dismiss it would be misguided for ‘[t]he violence alleged, although sometimes exaggerated, was seldom invented’.¹⁷⁴

Elements of Bisson’s work, it is suggested, fail to rise to the challenge posed by some of his critics, in particular the work of Stephen

¹⁶⁸ Thomas N. Bisson, ‘The “Feudal Revolution”: a reply’, *Past and Present* 155 (1997), p. 212.

¹⁶⁹ Dominique Barthélemy and Stephen D. White, ‘The “Feudal Revolution”’, *Past and Present* 152 (1996), p. 200.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, pp 202-03.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 198.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p. 210.

¹⁷³ Bisson, *Crisis*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp 21, 66.

White. It is also the case that German scholarship has adopted a different approach to changes that took place in the nature of non-royal lordship from the eleventh century onwards. The works of older writers bear close similarity to much of what Bisson had to say. Horst Fuhrmann saw the growth and development of territorial lordship, based around a central castle, growing up ‘at a time of semi-anarchy’, that is, during and after the period of strife known as the ‘Investiture Contest’.¹⁷⁵ This process, he said, was accelerated by ‘the weakness and failure of royal government’.¹⁷⁶ Views have changed since the 1980s. Benjamin Arnold has also seen, between the late eleventh- and early-fourteenth century, the emergence of a ‘more pointedly autarkic and regionally based princely authority’.¹⁷⁷ The growth of regional lordships, of regional powers, did not necessarily come at the expense of royal powers, though; in this way, his thesis runs contra to Bisson’s, whose lordly violence seems to emerge from a period which saw the ‘centre’ stagnate. In this way, it also differs from Fuhrmann’s theorised process, which saw the process of the development of territorial lords accelerated by the weakness of royal government. Rather, said Arnold, royal and princely power grew concurrently.¹⁷⁸ It was not the association of aristocratic families with castles as the centre of their possessions that was new, he argued, but the development of large stone fortifications.¹⁷⁹ What we are seeing, though, in Germany, in this period, is the emergence of stronger dynastic identification with castles and localities; a social transition in the ways in which aristocratic families self-identified – from consanguinity to dynasty. Nearly all the princely families were, by the year 1100, ‘being identified by toponymics obtained from larger castles built of stone,

¹⁷⁵ Horst Fuhrmann, (Reuter, Timothy, trans.), *Germany in the High Middle Ages, c. 1050 – 1220* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 100.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁷⁷ Benjamin Arnold, *Princes and territories in medieval Germany* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 61.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 64, 77.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 146; *idem*, *Medieval Germany, 500-1300. A political interpretation* (Houndsmills, 1997), p. 67; Robert Bartlett, *The making of Europe. Conquest, colonization and cultural change, 950-1350* (London, 1993), pp 65-84.

toponymics which themselves are indicative of renewed local identities'.¹⁸⁰ We are seeing great changes, said Arnold, but the 'castle turned out to be a significant mechanism for change in the forms of German lordship if not the originating force, as it appears to have been in eleventh-century France' (according to people like Bisson and Duby).¹⁸¹ More recently still, Matthew Innes did not deny that politics were 'fundamentally transformed' between the tenth and twelfth centuries or that 'at the heart of this transformation lay the development of intensive and effectively independent forms of local lordship'.¹⁸² He did, however, downplay the roll of castles and castle-building in these changes, as either a vehicle or as a spark. Lordly jurisdiction became 'not only personal, but territorial', but this 'did not come about because post-Carolingian lords were able physically to seize control of all the land in an area or establish real ownership'. Rather, it 'was the creation of formal rights of command, and the resultant definition of territorial jurisdictions with which they were exercised which marked the end of early medieval politics, leading to important changes in the working of aristocratic family structures, and in notions of status.'¹⁸³ German scholarship has thus differed from French. While the chronology of castle development is 'not that much different from that found further west', historians of medieval Germany 'have not placed it at the centre of a mutation (except in family structure), and it is doubtful if it could be made to sustain one... The crisis of medieval Germany did not end the old order by castellanizing it and replacing public courts with private arbitration and predation, for castles were there already, and public courts were of negligible importance.'¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Arnold, *Princes and territories*, pp 60, 135, 149, 151.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 180.

¹⁸² Matthew Innes, *State and society in the early Middle Ages. The middle Rhine valley, 400-1000* (Cambridge, 2000), pp 242-3.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 250.

¹⁸⁴ Timothy Reuter, 'Debating the "feudal revolution"', in Janet L. Nelson (ed.), *Medieval polities and modern mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 84; John B. Freed, 'The counts of Falkenstein: noble self-consciousness in twelfth-century germany', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 74 (6) (1984).

There is much that remains attractive about Bisson's thesis for our purposes though, namely the suggestion that lordships proliferated from the tenth century onwards, in France at least, if not in Germany; whether or not they can be contrasted starkly with an old 'order' or whether they were a necessary precursor to the birth of the modern state is not of utmost concern. What is of note is that, across Europe we see change at the level of non-royal lordship, and perhaps a phenomenon which, as Bisson states, warrants an explanation, whether it be one couched in the terminology of 'feudalism' or not (that is, the alleged proliferation of lordships around Europe). It seems likely that, given the explosion of references to non-royal lords in the Irish annals that we are seeing *something* happen in Ireland too.

Paul MacCotter (more on his work below) noted that references to territories ruled by a *taisech* first occur in the tenth-century annals – which approximates with the time we see the proliferation of lordships across Europe in Bisson's study. And, as has been noted above, in section 1(a.), we see *mention* of lords in the annals expand exponentially in the second half of the eleventh century. Thus, in terms of timing at least, Bisson's model of a growth in coercive lordships across Europe, at the expense of regalian powers, fits quite well with the evidence afforded us in the annals. The problem with this theory though, is that it runs counter to almost everything else that has been written about medieval Ireland in the last forty years or so. As has been discussed in chapter one, the medieval Ireland of recent historiography is one which witnessed the growth of great, centralising kings.¹⁸⁵

Paul MacCotter has interpreted the references to *taisech* and *dux* in this light, that is, in light of recent historiography. The prevailing orthodoxy of a three-tiered kingship is, he held, too simplistic and

¹⁸⁵ This has been noted by Peter Crooks. He wrote: 'The distinctive feature of feudalism for European historians is the fragmentation of royal authority – the so-called feudal anarchy of Montesquieu – whereas for British historians its essence is strong royal power and a precisely calculated hierarchy of land holder, the "feudal pyramid" familiar from school days'. See Peter Crooks, 'Feudalism' in Seán Duffy (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of medieval Ireland* (London, 2005), p. 167.

problem-ridden. MacCotter thus put forward a new model of lordship structure for medieval Ireland. His proposed structure – much like the view of society contained in the early Irish law tracts – is open to the accusation of being overly schematic, an accusation he anticipated.

MacCotter’s view of medieval Ireland ran as follows: at the top of our structure sat eight or nine semi-provincial kings, all vying for the kingship of all Ireland. Below these sat regional kings. These were kings that ruled over two or more petty kingdoms. We might term both of these grades of king (the semi-provincial and regional kings) ‘superior kings’. Beneath the regional king lay the petty king, the king of a *trícha cét*. The *trícha cét* was ‘a spatial unit of royal tenure, taxation, local government, and military levy.’ The *trícha cét* and *baile biataig* system (to be discussed presently) became established during the eleventh century, he argued, as a refinement of a pre-existing system. In many cases (in fact, in the vast majority of cases) the *trícha cét* corresponded with the boundaries of a local kingdom, ruled by a petty king, though this correspondence was not absolute. Some may have been made up of two polities.¹⁸⁶ This local kingdom was ‘the basic level of kingship, a kingdom ruled by a king who ruled no other kings and whose immediate subjects were *taisig túaithe*.’ The territorial borders of the *trícha cét*, in a large number of instances, were of some considerable antiquity, and proved to be remarkably enduring. These *trícha cét* were, in turn, comprised of a number of what MacCotter termed ‘late-*túaithe*’. The late-*túath* was ‘the smallest political community...the immediate sub-unit of the *trícha cét* and was ruled by the *taisech túaithe*’. The late-*túath* represented the lowest unit of authority, and it was composed of a number of *bailte* (*bailte biataig*). These were taxable units of landholding, mostly held by family heads as freeholders. Taxes were probably collected by the *taisech túaithe* before being forwarded on to the petty kings (kings of a *trícha cét*) who, in turn, acted as collection points for the ‘superior kings’. Indeed, these local kings or petty kings, he argued, almost certainly held office with the

¹⁸⁶ Paul MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland*, pp 91-2.

consent of these ‘superior kings’ ‘in an almost feudal sense...[t]herefore, local kings held their kingdoms at the pleasure of their superior kings – a form of tenure.’ The local kingdoms were ruled by related kindreds, all competing for the regional kingship of a polity comprised of several individual kingdoms, all of whom claimed descent from an eponymous ancestor. By way of conclusion, we might give the following summaries by MacCotter, in full:

‘To summarize, we see that the twelfth-century *trícha cét* bears the names the majority of which originate before 600 AD, appears to be a spatial unit which has undergone little alteration for centuries, in some cases with borders relevant only to an earlier political era, and is almost always ruled by either a petty-king of the lowest order of kingship or is a demesne (native or private) lordship of a king of higher order. Therefore, the twelfth-century *tríchas* are largely older units under a new name. This older unit can only be the local kingdom or *túath* of the early Irish Laws (of c. 700). This is confirmed in the later glosses to these laws where *trícha cét* occurs as a gloss of the earlier *túath*... The *trícha cét* system, in essence, was merely a further development of the age-old system of levying wealth and military service from the local kingdoms by the greater powers. This system must be of similar antiquity to that of the kingdoms themselves. Down to the Invasion most *trícha céts* were also local kingdoms, and the history of both are inextricably linked.’¹⁸⁷

We are seeing evidence of a system of taxation, or perhaps several such systems; a system which chose local kingdoms as units of assessment.¹⁸⁸ We only begin to hear about it from the late tenth century, but this is not

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, pp 97-8.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 92.

due to the ‘novelty’ of the system – as MacCotter argued, the *trícha cét* system was merely a development of a centuries-old one – but is the consequence of a poverty of sources.¹⁸⁹

We are then presented with two ostensibly opposing scenarios; one destructive, the other centralising. On the one hand, it would be wrong to dismiss off-hand wider European trends, to see an Irish exceptionalism when, in fact, lordships were proliferating all across the continent at the exact moment we see an increase in references to ‘lords’ in the annalistic sources. That being said, much of Bisson’s evidence for these sprouting lordships was based on the spread of castles across Europe. Bisson’s coercive lordships used castles as a base from which to dominate the surrounding territory. In Ireland, though, the evidence for castles is quite patchy. There is some consensus that fortified sites became an important feature of warfare in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; that is, the moment we begin to hear of more and more lords in the annals. We do begin to hear mention of words like *caistéil*, *caislén*, and *caisdeol* in our sources, but there has been some scepticism on the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 89. Conversely, further work remains to be done in respect of land divisions. Much tremendous work has been done in the realm of place-name studies (Nollaig Ó Muraíle provides a good overview of the history of place name studies both here and in other jurisdictions. See his ‘Irish placenames: the current state of research’, *Éigse* 38 (2013), pp 273-305.) Even still, certain terms which arise in our sources are deserving of greater discussion, like *íath* (glossed in the *DIL* as ‘land, country; territory, estate’). Our knowledge relating to *íathaib* might impact our understanding of the process hypothesised in respect of the changing relationship between lord and settlement (chapter two). We see the term use in connection with lords and ‘households’ (*trebaib*) (Liam Breatnach, ‘Satire, praise and the early Irish poet’, *Ériu* 56 (2006), pp 72-3.) The term recurs in many of the old law texts, and is also to be found in the *Annals of the Four Masters*: ‘Upon their arrival there [Aughrim Uí Maine] the [inhabitants of the] lands and the tribes (*na hiatha 7 na haicmeda*) in their vicinity collected behind them and before them, and shouted in every direction around them.’ (*AL*, vol. I (Dublin, 1865), pp 136, 254 = *CIH* 2 372.14-.16, *CIH* 2 407.27-.38; vol. IV (London, 1879), p. 266. AFM 1602.) It also crops up in *Dimbad messe bad rí réil*: ‘When the saint had finished his advice the spirit of the king / was not weak; it was an advantage for the apostle from the / place that hostages were kept in their country’ (*O tharnaic comairli ind nóib; nirb amnirt aicend dond rig / ropferrde int apstal ond íath; fostad na ngiall ina tír*). (Tadhg O’Donoghue, ‘Advice to a prince’, *Ériu* 9 (1921-3) p. 45, s. 7.) The term has been discussed by Melanie Malzahn, but further research is needed to fully unravel the connection between *íath* and *crích*, *tír*, *túath*, *tonn*, *trícha cét* and *baile* (see her ‘Back into the fields and into the woods: Old Irish *íath* “land, field” and *fiad* “wild; deer; uncultivated land” revisited’, *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 39 (1/2) (2011), pp 116-26.).

part of some historians to see the Irish *caisté* as anything close to the Norman motte. For T.E. McNeill, an archaeologist, the change in terminology was the result of ‘men attracted to new, fashionable and boastful words’.¹⁹⁰ Such a conclusion seems rather unsatisfactory, though. Other archaeologists, like Terry Barry, have been strongly taken by the fact that the annals use the same terms – *caisté* and the like – for the Anglo-Norman motte castles that appear in Ireland after the invasion.¹⁹¹ Marie Therese Flanagan is probably correct in saying that the adoption of the new terminology ‘suggests that contemporaries perceived them as distinctive in some way’.¹⁹² While the physical features of ‘castles’ and *dúin* and *longphoirt* remain obscure, she said, ‘it is certain that garrisoned strongholds and more fortified dwellings became a strategic component of warfare and territorial control in the post-Brian era’.¹⁹³

What is most problematic though, is that those sites identified in the annals specifically as *casideoil*, whatever they may have looked like, are associated with *royal* power, and, even more specifically, with the great twelfth-century king of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair; only one *caisté*, that at Cullentrach (situated perhaps in county Meath or county Longford) is not connected to the Connacht king. In this sense, castles can be seen as evidence for burgeoning royal power, not political fragmentation.¹⁹⁴ There is some evidence that certain sites, not named *casideoil* in the annals, were being constructed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that were of remarkable – perhaps even innovative – scale. Excavations conducted at the site of King John’s castle in Limerick city in the first half of the 1990s revealed that it was constructed atop of an

¹⁹⁰ T. E. McNeill, *Castles in Ireland: feudal power in a Gaelic world* (London, 1997), p. 10.

¹⁹¹ Terry Barry, ‘The origins of Irish castles: a contribution to the debate’, in Conleth Manning (ed.), *From ringforts to fortified houses. Studies on castles and other monuments in honour of David Sweetman* (Bray, 2007), p. 36.

¹⁹² Marie Therese Flanagan, ‘After Brian Bóraime: the high-kingship and the kings of Connacht’, in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XVI* (Dublin, 2017), p. 230.

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 232.

¹⁹⁴ Mary A. Valante, ‘Fleets, forts and the geography of Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair’s bid for the high-kingship’, in Vicky McAlister and Terry Barry (eds), *Space and settlement in medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2015), pp 48-63.

earlier enclosure.¹⁹⁵ Excavations done at Beal Boru, Killaloe, county Clare unearthed an eleventh-century enclosure, which, though ‘undoubtedly a ring-fort of native Irish type’, was ‘a strong and elaborately built structure’.¹⁹⁶ The ‘English Mount’ at Downpatrick was shown to be an enclosure with ‘particularly massive defences’.¹⁹⁷ Even so, all of these sites just mentioned are more likely to be associated with royal rather than lordly power. This led Tom McNeill to conclude that there were not enough ‘swallows here to make a summer’ and that the sites we do have are associated with the major kings ‘not with the wider circles of lesser kings and aristocracy’. ‘In Ireland’, he said, ‘we have evidence for fortification, linked to royal power, but not of the structure of landed lordship parcelling out the landscape’.¹⁹⁸

In the time since McNeill wrote, though, excavations carried out at the ‘Rock’ in Lough Key, county Roscommon, have revealed a large, mortared, cashel-like enclosure, similar to other such enclosures on Inis Creamha, Lough Corrib, and Hag’s castle in Lough Mask, all of which seem to date from the twelfth century. The enclosure at Lough Key was ‘far more defensive’ than the average ringfort or cashel of the early medieval period. It had higher walls, held together by mortar, and it was located on a semi-artificial island.¹⁹⁹ This enclosure, held Kieran O’Conor et al., is evidence of ‘a development towards stronger lordly and princely fortifications before 1169. This helps to explain the appearance of the new words *caislén*, *caistéil* and *caisdeol* in the native annals’.²⁰⁰ So, for

¹⁹⁵ *Excavations* (1991), Isabel Bennett (ed.), pp 43-4; *Ibid* (1996), pp 54-5; McNeill, *Castles*, p. 12; Brian Hodkinson, ‘The medieval city of Limerick’, in Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Liam Irwin and Matthew Potter (eds), *Limerick – history and society* (2005), pp 18-19.

¹⁹⁶ Michael J. O’Kelly, ‘Beal Boru, Co. Clare’, *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 67 (205) (1962), pp 13, 5. See also Cólín Ó Drisceoil, ‘Recycled ringforts: the evidence from archaeological excavation for the conversion of pre-existing monuments to motte castles in medieval Ireland’, *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society* 25 (2) (2002), pp 189-201, esp. pp 193-4.

¹⁹⁷ McNeill, *Castles*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp 14-15.

¹⁹⁹ Kieran O’Conor, Niall Brady, Anne Connors, and Carlos Fidalgo-Romo, ‘The rock of Loch Cé, co. Roscommon’, in Thomas Finan (ed.), *Medieval Lough Cé. History, archaeology and landscape* (Dublin, 2010), pp 29, 37.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 40.

O’Conor, there may have been many more castles in Ireland, besides those of Ua Conchobair which are listed in the annalistic sources, and these castles might well have resembled this ‘super-cashel’, which has been associated with lordly rather than royal power.²⁰¹ It is a possibility, certainly, but even so, if such ‘super-cashels’ can be accepted as the *caisdeoil* of the written sources, the problem remains that we cannot point to enough sites to say with confidence that ‘castles’ or even ‘super-cashels’ were popping up across the Irish landscape with any tremendous frequency in the centuries before the invasion. Of course, further archaeological excavation might reveal an abundance of such sites; but as of now we are dealing in ifs, buts, and maybes.

There is some little documentary evidence that does associate ‘castles’ with lords. The *Life* of St Munna (or St Fintán of Taghemon; the *Life* dates perhaps from the middle of the twelfth century) makes reference to a ‘castle’ held by a certain lord of Fothard.²⁰² The line runs as follows: ‘*Quadam nocte dux Dimma filius Aedha erat cum magno gaudio in suo castello*’ (‘One night lord Dimma, son of Aed, was with great delight, in his castle’).²⁰³ The Latin word *dux* is used in relation to Dimma, and this can be contrasted with later references to a *rex* or king, of the Uí Cheinnselaig. Thus we might stress Dimma’s lordly status here. What is meant by the Latin term *castellum* is, of course, hard to know. How does this term relate to our Irish *caisdeoil* and *caislén*? What physical structure might *castellum* describe; something akin to the ‘super cashel’ of Loch Cé?

Without a lordship centred around castle-building, where do we stand? Castles were an important feature in Bisson’s argument, as they were to an extent in that of Georges Duby, who also stressed the changing nature of lordship and ‘widespread and uncontrolled castle-building’ of

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 37.

²⁰² Pádraig Ó Riain, *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin, 2011), p. 505.

²⁰³ Charles Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, vol. II* (Oxford, 1910), s. xviii, pp 232-33.

the late ninth century.²⁰⁴ In the Mâconnais, Duby claimed, ‘*Les gardiens des forteresses se sont ainsi dégagés de leurs obligations judiciaires envers le comte; on peut admettre qu’ils lui refusèrent également leur service d’armes; après l’an mil, ils cessèrent de reconnaître la supériorité de son pouvoir*’.²⁰⁵ Another important aspect of Bisson’s argument was the transformative violence of the tenth century. Lay lordship without *violentia* (without a castle), said Bisson, became uncommon in France, and ‘what must be stressed is that the violence of castellans and knights was a method of lordship...It has neither political nor administrative character, for it was based on the capricious manipulation of powerless people’.²⁰⁶ Which is not to say that violence had not been an integral part of the old ‘order’; of course it had been.²⁰⁷ In Ireland, too, historians have stressed the escalation and changing nature of violence and warfare in the post-Clontarf era. Our sources tell us much about the nature of warfare between the great provincial kings though – the use of fleets, of castles, and so forth – but we hear very little about the nature of violence performed by our ‘lords’. Actually, we hear very little about what the lords were up to at all. Overwhelmingly, references are limited to mere obits; the following is quite representative: Cathal ua Muirróin, lord of Clann Cathail, dies.²⁰⁸ When we do hear about their involvement in battle, it is usually in the army of a great king – two lords of the Cenel Feradaigh were killed when the forces of Tigernán Ua Ruairc lost a battle to Miles de Cogan in 1171.²⁰⁹ Or sometimes, like many other of the elite in medieval Ireland, they are slain by their relatives or those over whom they ruled. It is only very rarely that we get an insight into anything else these individuals are up to. For example, in 1113 the Muintir Gillgain and

²⁰⁴ Georges Duby, (Vale, Juliet, trans.), *France in the middle ages, 987-1460. From Hugh Capet to Joan of Arc*, (Oxford, 1991; French edn., 1987), pp 55-9.

²⁰⁵ Georges Duby, *La société aux XI^e et XII^e siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, 1971), p. 142.

²⁰⁶ Bisson, ‘Feudal revolution’, pp 16, 18.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 14.

²⁰⁸ CS 1111.

²⁰⁹ ALC 1171.4.

the Muintir Maelmarthain fought one another, and the lord of the former was slain along with other nobles.²¹⁰ In short, the annals have very little to say about the violence done by Irish ‘lords’ specifically, which may in itself be quite telling; surely, if there was something novel about lordly violence, we would, as Bisson suggests was the case in Europe, be told about it in our sources.

There is some indication, in the sources, that the nature of warfare was changing, of course. But the evidence for this is the usual lines often churned out, and usually to support the argument that the power of greater kings was expanding. There are the references to castles, just set out, to the fleets now employed by the greater provincial kings, the famous line in the *Annals of the Four Masters*: ‘Great war in this year, so that Ireland was a trembling sod’.²¹¹ Again, this is taken to refer to the ‘game of thrones’ under play, that constituted the struggle for the high kingship of Ireland. There is some evidence that the Peace and Truce of God movements may have had some impact in Ireland (see chapter three, below). In a French context, these movements have been pointed to as evidence for escalating lordly violence. In Ireland, though, the evidence for the Peace and Truce of God movements has most often been seen as evidence for the close relationship between church and king, and by implication, of strong – not diminishing – royal power.

What is of note, however, is that Irish archaeologists have observed a change in settlement patterns around the year 1000, namely the abandonment of the ringfort or *ráth*. The *ráth* has been defined by Aidan O’Sullivan et al. as a settlement enclosed by at least one perimeter earthen bank and an external ditch.²¹² These *ráith* came to be replaced by cashels or stone-built enclosures. It is the case that radiocarbon dating evidence points towards cashels being a somewhat later phenomenon than

²¹⁰ AT 1113.3.

²¹¹ AFM 1145.13.

²¹² Aidan O’Sullivan, Finbar McCormick, Thomas R. Kerr and Lorcan Harney, *Early medieval Ireland, AD 400-1100. The evidence from archaeological excavations* (Dublin, 2014), p. 48.

raths, and their construction and occupation seems to post-date the building of most of those earthen enclosures.²¹³ For some, this has been viewed as evidence of a move away from a type of settlement characterised by individual homesteads and towards the development of unenclosed, nucleated, village-like settlements around fortresses (cashels or *caisteoil*). Tadhg O’Keeffe has argued that ‘this remarkable change in settlement history is almost certainly related to the rise of feudalism in Ireland between the tenth and twelfth centuries’.²¹⁴ Charles Doherty also saw in this changing settlement pattern evidence for a move towards feudalism.²¹⁵ Doherty was attracted by the notion that the world of the *treb* (farmstead) was disappearing. He argued that references in hagiography to church tenants fleeing their lands in hagiography ‘echo the suppression of the population under the new emerging lordships’ (a process seen also by Bisson), and that we see the emergence of new terms like *baile* which, like MacCotter, he suggested was ‘clearly the basis of assessment and taxation’.²¹⁶ Both Doherty and O’Keeffe envision the erosion of the individual farmstead and its replacement with nucleated settlement, usually around a royal or aristocratic settlement.²¹⁷ The memory of this appears to have been preserved in a poem dating from about the year 1150. In this ‘poem of prophecies’, we see it said that ‘the needy, transitory king will subdue the miserable husband-man’ (*Traethfaidh in fear treabair truadh / in drochrigh daigbir dimbucan*).²¹⁸ Here, it is true, it is said to be a *rí* and not a *toísech* that is subduing the possessor of the *treb* or individual farmstead, but that it appears to refer to the process envisioned by Doherty and O’Keeffe certainly seems manifest.

²¹³ *Ibid*, pp 54, 67, 330.

²¹⁴ Tadhg O’Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland: an archaeology* (Chalford Stroud, 2000), p. 26.

²¹⁵ Charles Doherty, ‘The Vikings in Ireland: a review’, in H.B. Clarke, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Ragnall Ó Floinn (eds), *Ireland and Scandinavia in the early Viking age* (Dublin, 1998), p. 324.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 315, 317. See also Matthew Stout, *The Irish ringfort* (Dublin, 1997), p. 33.

²¹⁷ O’Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 26.

²¹⁸ Eleanor Knott, ‘A poem of prophecies’, *Ériu* 18 (1958), s. 57, pp 71, 70.

The problem is, as O’Sullivan et al. have pointed out, we lack any archaeological evidence for these postulated nucleated settlements. They do concede, however, that the ‘ephemeral nature of early medieval wooden house construction may, however, render such settlements archaeologically invisible; furthermore, ‘isolated’ souterrains may provide evidence for putative unenclosed homesteads.’²¹⁹ While archaeological evidence for such settlements might well be lacking, there is some historical evidence for the existence of nucleated settlements around a fortified residence of some kind, though, and it is to this evidence that we will turn now.

In the annals, we see *bailte* associated with ecclesiastical centres. We are told that on the night Muiredach Ua Cobthaigh, bishop of Cenél Eogain, died, the whole sky was illuminated and a mass of fire arose over the *baile* in which he died, namely, Derry.²²⁰ In 1177 a body of water is said to have run through Glendalough, destroying the bridge and mill of its *baile* and depositing some fish there.²²¹ Here, *baile* more obviously appears to refer to those areas of industry and agriculture that surrounded churches and which may have housed dependents that performed much of the manual labour on the lands, like *scolóca*. It seems not unreasonable to infer that *baile* as used by the annalists in connection with ecclesiastical centres refers to the areas of settlement around the church itself. We also see *baile* used in relation to several of the Viking towns. What is interesting here is that the *bailte* of Dublin, of Limerick, and of Waterford appear to lie around the *dúin* of those same towns. There are a plurality of references to the *dún* of Dublin in the Irish annals.²²² In 944, we are told, the men of Brega and the men of Leinster took the fort (*ag gabáil an dúine*) of Dublin (*Ath Cliath*), killing four hundred foreigners and taking

²¹⁹ O’Sullivan et al., *Early medieval Ireland, AD 400-1100*, p. 330. See also Fergus Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law*, p. 110.

²²⁰ AU 1173.2. See also ALC 1211.7.

²²¹ AT 1177.13.

²²² John Maas, ‘Longphort, dun, and dúnad in the Irish annals of the viking period’, *Peritia* 20 (2008), pp 257-75.

many goods and spoils from the *dún*.²²³ We hear about a twenty-night siege of the fort of Dublin (*forbais an dúine*) some forty years later, and at the turn of the century, Brian Bóruma gave the *dún* of Dublin to the ‘king of the foreigners of Ath Cliath’ in exchange for hostages.²²⁴ In the middle of the eleventh century the Irish annals tell of an expedition by Diarmait mac Mael na mBó into Fine Gall and many skirmishes that took place around the *dún* of Ath Cliath.²²⁵ These are just some of the annalistic references to the presence of a *dún* in Dublin from at least the tenth century. The annals also make clear that Dublin possessed a *baile*. In 1170 Diarmait Mac Murchada and the English invaders came together to take Dublin, which was being defended by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair. Dublin, we are told, was struck by lightning and destroyed. Thereafter, the *baile* of Dublin was burned and the Ostmen were slaughtered by the English.²²⁶ Dublin is also said to possess a *baile* in *Mac Carthaig’s Book*; here the *baile* is said to have been left in the care of Diarmait Mac Murchada.²²⁷ Similarly, Waterford is said to possess both a *dún* and a *baile*.²²⁸ In the case of Waterford, the *Annals of Tigernach* distinguishes between the *baile* and the ‘whole district’ around Waterford (*an crich uile*), which suggests that when the annalists used *baile* in relation to these Viking towns, they did so in a very particular way; the *baile* of Waterford is distinct from the *dún* but also from the surrounding vicinity as a whole.

Of particular interest for our purposes is the reference to the *baile* of Loch Cé (Lough Key, co. Roscommon). In 1184 the Rock of Loch Cé – the residence of Muintir Maelruanaidh – was burned by lightning. As has been discussed above, the cashel-like enclosure was of such an extraordinary nature that some observers are happy to see in it evidence

²²³ CS 943.

²²⁴ CS 987, AT 989.2; AI 1000.2, AT 999.3.

²²⁵ CS 1052, AT 1052.2.

²²⁶ AT 1170.10; AFM 1170.13, AU 1170.5.

²²⁷ MCB 1169.4.

²²⁸ AI 1088.3, AT 1173.10.

for lordly *caisdeol*. It is significant that, in relating the circumstances of its burning, the *Annals of Loch Cé*, twice makes use of the term *baile*. We are told that the people and goods within the *baile* were not spared by the fire (*baile na ranic anacal maoine iná daoine da raibh ann*) and that many were drowned in the entrance to the *baile* (*a n-dorus an bhaile*).²²⁹ Castles and *bailte* are paired together later in that same set of annals; Cathal Crobderg, king of Connacht, entered Munster and destroyed ‘many castles and towns therein’ (*caissléin ocus bailedha*).²³⁰ Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair’s castle (*caislén*) at Galway (*Bun Gaillimhe*) is also connected with a *baile* – Cormac Mac Carthaig with the fleet of Leth Mogha plundered the castle and burned the *baile* in the 1130s.²³¹ We see the connection made between ‘castles’ and *bailte* made in non-annalistic sources also. In recension I of the twelfth-century tale *Aided Diarmata* there is mention of the entrance to a *baile* which is said to relate to a ‘castle’ in Uí Maine (...*is amlaid dogníodh in callaire a irfóca .i. dorus in baili ocus in chaisteoill a rachtáis a minugud rempu ocus cotoigeacht gái Diarmata tarsno in*).²³² Attention has also been drawn by other scholars to the burning of Dún Ehdach in 1011. In this year Flaithbertach Ua Néill brought his army to Dún Ehdach in what is now county Down, and both burned the *dún* and destroyed the *baile* (*Slogad la Flaithbertach H. Neill co Dun Ehdach coro losic in dun ocus coro bris a baile ocus co tuc aitire o Niall m. Duib Thunne*).²³³ Tadhg O’Keeffe has argued that the reference to *baile* in this entry probably denotes a ‘nucleated settlement’. ‘Thus’, he said, ‘we can interpret the events at Dún Ehdach in 1011 as the burning of a fort and the breaking of a settlement’.²³⁴ Ferns, the central power-base of Diarmait Mac Murchada’s kingship, also appears to

²²⁹ ALC 1184.9.

²³⁰ ALC 1195.4.

²³¹ MCB 1132.

²³² Standish Hayes O’Grady (ed. & trans.), ‘Aided Diarmada meic Cherbaill’, in Id., *Silva Gadelica (I-XXXI). A collection of tales in Irish* (London, 1892), Vol. I, p. 76, Vol. II, p. 80. *Bailte* are said to possess an entrance (*dorus*) both in this text and, as we have seen, in ALC 1184.9.

²³³ AU 1011.6.

²³⁴ O’Keeffe, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 29.

have possessed some species of fortification. The annals tell us that Mac Murchada possessed a ‘stone house’ in Ferns (*tech cloiche*). We are also told that there was a *chaisteóil* and a *longport* there. The *Annals of Tigernach* distinguish between the *tech cloiche* and the *longport*, whilst the *Annals of the Four Masters* distinguish between ‘his house’ (*a thaighi*) and his castle (*a chaisteóil*).²³⁵ Neither set of annals makes any mention of a *baile* in Ferns. The ‘Song of Dermot and the Earl’ repeatedly makes mention of *la cite* of Ferns. The ‘Song’ recounts the various times that ‘king Diarmait’ (*reis Dermot*) would stay in his *cit  * of Ferns.²³⁶ *Cit  * seems to imply some form of fortification also. The same appellation, *cit  *, is also attached to Wexford in the ‘Song’. The *Annals of Tigernach* mention the *d  n* of Wexford: in 1170, Robert Fitz Stephen, Richard Fitz Gilbert and Diarmait Mac Murchada captured Mac Giolla Muine the officer (*armand*) of the fort (*an d  ine*) and slaughtered some seven hundred men situated in the fort (*in duine*).²³⁷ The ‘Song’ actually makes reference to a fortification at Wexford too – *le langport*. Wexford is also termed a ‘city’ (*De Weyseford la cite*) and a ‘town’ (*la vile*).²³⁸ This distinction between *vile* and *cit  * is of particular interest. A.J. Greimas, compiler of the *Dictionnaire de l’ancien Fran  ais*, gives the following explanations for the term *vile*: ‘*Ensemble des villages ou hameaux qui se groupaient de la cit  *’ and ‘*Ville non fortifi  e par opposition    la cit  *’.²³⁹ *Cit  * therefore appears to relate to a stronghold, a fortification of some type. The *vile* of Wexford is, by extension, a collection of non-fortified settlements extending from its fortified *cit  *. It is tempting to see the old French *vile* as a parallel to our Irish *baile* and thus our *bailte* as

²³⁵ AT 1166.13, AFM 1166.14.

²³⁶ Evelyn Mullaly (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland: La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Dublin, 2002), l. 160-4, 516-19, 816, 824.

²³⁷ AT 1170.

²³⁸ Mullaly (ed.), *Song of Dermot*, l. 1000-1, 996, 485.

²³⁹ A. J. Greimas, *Dictionnaire de l’ancien Fran  ais jusqu’au milieu du XIV   si  cle* (Paris, 1968; second edn.), p. 666.

unenclosed settlements around an aristocratic or royal fortification in the style posited by Doherty and O’Keeffe.

We see this connection between fortification and *baile* continued in other, non-annalistic sources also, perhaps most strongly in a text dating from the first third of the twelfth century, *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*.²⁴⁰ We are told, early on in that text, of Viking oppression, and that the *Gaill* had put ‘a king over every cantred (*tricha*), and a chieftain (*taisech*) over every tribe (*tuath*), an abbot over every church, a steward (*maer*) over every *baile* (‘*gach mbaili*’ which Bugge translates as ‘village’) and a billeted soldier (*suaitreach*) over every house (*tighe*)’.²⁴¹ We are told little else about what a *baile* is at this juncture, though we might infer that it seems to be a taxable unit, given that we see a *maer* or ‘steward’ put over it.²⁴² Poring over the rest of the text, we see the connection between *duin* and *bailte* reinforced.

²⁴⁰ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘*Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil*; history or propaganda?’, *Ériu* 25 (1974), pp 57-60.

²⁴¹ Alexander Bugge (ed. & trans.), *Caithreim Cellachain Caisil. The victorious career of Cellachan of Cashel* (Oslo, 1905), s. 3.

²⁴² The steward is in some ways a shadowy figure. Both *rechtaire* and *maer* have variously been translated as ‘steward’ in modern times, though the exact relationship between the two is somewhat unclear. Of *rechtaire*, certainly, it seems possible to conclude that he must have had some role in the collection of taxation, as is evinced in a number of saints’ ‘Lives’. The *Life of Patrick* states that the king’s steward went to Patrick’s foster-mother ‘to demand tribute of curd and butter’, but it being winter, he left empty handed (*Life of Patrick* in Whitley Stokes (ed. & trans.), *Lives of saints from the Book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), p. 127). In the *Life of Findchua of Brí-Gobann*, which is also to be found in the *Book of Lismore*, the king wondered what rent (*cís*) was due to him. In this case, it is his steward who is able to calculate it for him: ‘one white sheep, all the washing and cleansing they wanted, and a measure of malt out of every townland of the nine townlands that are nearest me’ (*Life of Findchua of Brí-Gobann*, in Stokes, *Lismore*, p. 23, l. 2919-22). In the *Life of Senán*, the saint is termed ‘the mayor and steward and spencer, whom the Heavenly Overking sent to exact tribute of virtues and good deeds from Goedel’s many clans’ [*Is e so maer 7 rechatire 7 ronnaire refhaide a t-Airdri nemdhai do thabhuch císuaalach 7 sognímh doilclannuibh Gaeidhil*] (*Life of Senán*, in Stokes, *Lismore*, p. 220, l. 2464-6). Here we see both *maer* and *rechatire* used, but it is not entirely clear whether the composer of this ‘Life’, in using both terms in immediate succession, is drawing a distinction between the terms or conflating them as one. Bairne of Cork is termed ‘high-steward’ of ‘the High King of heaven’ in his ‘Life’, who was ‘sent to exact the tribute of virtues and good deeds from the clans of the Gael’ (*Life of Bairne*, in Charles Plummer (ed. & trans.), *Bethada Náem nÉrenn. Lives of Irish Saints, volume II* (Oxford, 1922; latest edn., 1997), p. 19). The ‘tributes’ exacted by Senán and Bairne are not the tangible ones sought by terrestrial kings, of course, but the metaphor employed – that they were the ‘steward’ of the ‘over-’ or ‘high-king’ who exacted ‘tribute’ – is certainly suggestive of the role of the *rechtaire* in the collection of

The *Caithréim* tells us that the eponymous hero Cellachán ‘was the man who spent a year and a half searching in Munster...both fort and strong fortress and the broad land of every Norseman, seeking charity in every fortress, and shelter in every town’ (*Ór as e an fer sin do bhi bliadhain co leith ag iaraidh na Muman...idir lis 7 laechdhun 7 lethantuaith gach Lochlannaig ag araid dhérce in gach dun 7 caisced in gach cathraig cu bocht ara bhinnleircheacht 7 a thiagh brec ima bragait ag brath gacha baili...*).²⁴³ When Limerick is attacked, the Norsemen shut themselves up in the *baile* (...7 romheabh uich dona miledaib 7 innsaigedair co Luimnech da luath-conmhail. Ocus is tre deiridh na Lochlannach do chuatar maithi na Muimnech isin mbaili).²⁴⁴ This *baile* is said to be enclosed by a gate (*na doirrsi do dunad*), and to possess houses (*tighibh*) and towers (*toraihb*).²⁴⁵ Residing in the *baile* were women and children, and it is said to have possessed gold, silver and various riches (*or 7 airget 7 ilmhaire in baili*).²⁴⁶ To adjudge from the information given

taxes. When we turn to look at the evidence of the annals, we see that the term *maer* is associated mainly with ecclesiastical communities, and *rechtaire* with secular rulers. For examples of the former, see AU 924.5, 929.1, 1052.5, 1053.3, 1072.2, 1073.3, 1108.4, 1113.3; AI 1095.13, 1108.7. For examples of the latter, see AU 1018.7, 1056.7, 1103.4; AI 1031.6; CS 1021. It is always a possibility that *maer* and *rechtaire* performed similar roles, one within ecclesiastical domains, the other within those ruled by a secular lord. For more on the position of *rechtaire*, see Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords. The changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1987; latest edn., 2000), pp 30, 82. She suggested that the position of *rechtaire* might well be hereditary, but also that a king might have a number of *rechtaire* under his command at any one time.

²⁴³ Bugge, *Caithreim*, s. 4, pp 59, 3.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, s. 18, pp 66, 9.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. fn. 229 above in re *doirrsi*. Perhaps attention should also be drawn to Gerald of Wales’ description of Wexford in the *Expugnatio Hibernica*. He mentions town walls (*‘muros’*). Gerald envisaged Wexford having a large enough population – about two thousand (*numero virorum circa duo milia*). Frightened by the sight of the English troops, ‘they [the inhabitants] adopted new tactics in the face of changed circumstances, burned the entire suburbs, and immediately turned back and withdrew inside the walls’ (*Videns autem ordinatas preter solitum acies et equestrum turmam loricis et clipeis galeisque fulgentibus insignem, novis super casibus novo fugens consilio, suburbio toto igne succenso, se statim intra muros reversa suscepit*). Finally, we are told that Robert fitz Stephen and his men ‘filled the town ditches’ (*viris fossata replentibus*). Wexford, then, is said to be an *urbs*, with protective walls and a ditch, capable of sheltering a large number of people. See A.B. Scott and F.X. Martin (eds & trans), *Expugnatio Hibernica. The conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis* (Dublin, 1978), pp 32-3.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

in the *Caithréim*, Limerick's *baile* was an enclosed or defended area, capable of housing many people, probably encircling or in extremely close proximity to its *dún*. Cork is also said to possess or consist of a *baile*.²⁴⁷ Thurles, we are told, consisted of both a fortification (*dún*) and a *baile*. Interestingly, a distinction is drawn between *crích* and *baile* – while the Irish heroes burned the former, they refrained from burning the latter.²⁴⁸ We saw a similar distinction drawn in the *Annals of Tigernach* – between the *dún*, *baile*, and *crích uile* of Waterford. A *dún* might thus be associated with both a *baile* and a territory designated as *crích*; the latter two being somehow distinct from one another. Speaking of Waterford, we are told that the *baile* of that place is enclosed, as was that of Limerick (and that of Loch Cé and the *baile* belonging to a lord of the Uí Maine in *Aided Diarmata*).²⁴⁹ Here again also a distinction is drawn between *crích* and *baile*.²⁵⁰ All of these places, all associated with *bailte* (Limerick, Cork, Waterford) are also, we are told, possessed of a *dún* (*Corcach 7 Luimnech 7 Port Lairgi 7 Caiseal ana n-duintibh dhuinn mar do batar again roimhe*).²⁵¹ Dundalk (*Dun n-Dealgan*) is also associated with a *baile* in the *Caithréim*. Surely, here, the toponym is telling; once again we have a connection between *dún* and *baile*.

The *Caithréim* also supplies us with information on the ecclesiastical centre of Armagh. In planning their assault on Armagh, Donnchad tells four troops to advance on the fortification (*dunad*) and instructs the Uí Liatháin to approach from the north and enter the town (*baile*).²⁵² Again, the connection between *dún* and *baile* is reinforced in the *Caithréim*. The *baile* at Armagh appears to have housed members of the ecclesiastical community. A man in the *baile* (*fer 'sa mbaili*) tells

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, s. 20, pp 68, 10.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, s. 20, pp 68, 11.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, s. 22, pp 71, 13.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, s. 22, pp 72, 13.

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, s. 43, pp 81, 23.

²⁵² *Ibid*, s. 54, pp 90, 32.

Donnchad that he was formerly primate (*primfhaidh*) but now serves only as *aistreoir*.²⁵³

Propinquity between *baile* and *dún* may also be seen in the twelfth-century *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*. As with the *Caithréim*, the *Cogad* informs us that the Vikings had put ‘a king (*ri*) from them over every territory (*cac tir*), and a chief (*toescac*) over every [*tuath*], and an abbot over every church, and a steward (*maeir*) over every village (*cac mbaili*) and a soldier (*suartleac*) in every house (*cac tigi*)’.²⁵⁴ This passage is remarkably similar to that from the *Caithréim* cited above, and Ó Corráin was quite correct in suggesting that the author of the *Caithréim* drew heavily on the *Cogad*.²⁵⁵

We then hear of a fort or *dún* of Limerick when the text describes the sacking of that city by the Dál Cais in 968. The warriors from county Clare enter the fort (*co ndectatar isin dún*) and slaughter the Norse in the streets and houses in close proximity to the *dún* (*ocus ro marbait ar na sraitaib, ocus isna taigib*).²⁵⁶ As with the description of the *baile* at Loch Cé in the *Annals of Loch Cé* and Limerick in the *Caithréim*, Limerick in the *Cogad* is said to be replete with jewels, gold, silver, and luxurious cloths and saddles.²⁵⁷ We are then told that the Dál Cais reduced the fort and good *baile* to smoke and fire (*Tuccad in dún, ocus in degbaili for dluim diad ocus is dergtened i arsin*).²⁵⁸ We see mention of *dún* and *baile* (and indeed, *margad*) in the same breath later on in the *Cogad*, when the author relates the details of the sacking of Dublin on New Year’s Day in the year 1000. Brian Bóruma’s forces had defeated the Norse in the battle of Glenn Máma on 30 December 999 AD. By New Year’s Eve they had

²⁵³ The *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* defines *aistire* as ‘a doorkeeper in a monastery (whose duties included ringing of the bell and later custodian of the monastery and probably in control over the commercial dealing in the monastic town’ (<http://www.dil.ie/search?q=aistreoir>) (accessed 12 July 2018 at 3.41pm).

²⁵⁴ J. H. Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: the war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (London, 1867), pp 49, 48.

²⁵⁵ Ó Corráin, *CCC*, pp 61-3.

²⁵⁶ Todd, *CGRG*, pp 79, 78.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 81, 80.

reached the gates of Dublin, before then ravaging it on 1 January 1000 AD. The *Cogad* explains: ‘The fortress then was plundered by them [Brian’s men] and ransacked, and Brian at that time remained encamped in the town from great Christmas to little Christmas. He came then into the market and the whole fortress was burned by them, and they left not a treasure under ground that they did not discover’ (*Ro hindrad imorro a dún leó, ocus hairged, ocus ro bai Brian ar sin a ffos longport isin bmaile ó nodlaic mór co nodlaic becc. Tanic iarsin margad, ocus ro loisceand an dún uile leó, ocus nir fagaib sid ciste i ttalmain gan fagbáil*).²⁵⁹

Later still, we find Brian in the north of Ireland, in the territory of the Ulaid, in 1005. At Cráeb Tulcha (which Flanagan has associated with Crew, county Antrim), Brian received food renders from the Ulaid and in return bestowed gifts upon the food providers (*biatach*) from their *baile* (*bhaile díobh*).²⁶⁰ We are given little clue in this passage alone as to what *baile* might constitute, although we may fairly conclude that it a taxable unit of some description. Instead, we must infer its meaning from the way in which it was used earlier in the text which, in turn, is similar to the way in which it is used both in the *Caithréim*, in multiple annalistic entries, and in one brief reference in the *Aided Diarmata*. Time and again we see the term *baile* used in connection with various forms of fortification – the *dúin* of the Viking towns, the large cashel at Loch Cé, the *caislén* of Taidelbach Ua Conchobair and the ‘*caissléin*’ of the English invaders in Munster. We also see the term used in connection with ecclesiastical sites, like that of Derry and Glendalough. The description of Wexford by the compiler of the ‘Song of Dermot and the Earl’ is also telling. We must also bear in mind the distinction sometimes drawn in our sources between *crích* and *baile*. So, of the *dún* of say, for example, Waterford we can speak of a surrounding ‘territory’ or *crích*, but also, as a separate or distinct constituent of that broader area, of a *baile*. These *bailte*, it appears, we often enclosed and defended (we have more than one

²⁵⁹ Ibid, pp 113, 112.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, pp 137, 136. Todd translates *biatach* as ‘purveyor’ but I have followed Seán Duffy’s rendering of the term as ‘food-provider’. See Duffy, *Brian Boru*, p. 154.

reference to a *dorus* and ‘towers’). Within this enclosed *baile*, it appears, lay houses (*tighe*) and they might be inhabited by many people indeed. There might also be a street, as the description of Limerick attests, or a ‘green’ (*faithche* – the *Caithréim* speaks of a ‘green’ of Waterford).²⁶¹ It can be no coincidence that we see the term *dún* and *baile* discussed in concurrence time and again. There must, therefore, have been a connection with *dúin* and *bailte* in twelfth-century Ireland.

As the most recent, and fullest, analysis of the Irish *bailte* makes clear though (MacCotter’s *Medieval Ireland*) the term also applies more generally to a unit of land below the level of the late-*túath*.²⁶² These were, as has been discussed, taxable units of landholding, probably held by family heads. We can perhaps see *baile* used in this sense on a number of occasions in the annals. In 1143 a *baile* ‘between Loch and Cluain Uí Birn and between Loch na nÉan and the river in the east’ was purchased for gold.²⁶³ In 1157, we are told, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn gave the *baile* of Drochait-atha ‘to the clergy’ (*do na clerchibh*).²⁶⁴ Donnchad Ua Cairelláin, *toisech* of Clann Diarmata gave a *baile biataigh* in Domnach Mór to the community of Derry in 1177.²⁶⁵ The ‘charters’ contained in the Book of Kells pertain to the transfer of *bailte*; a number of these units were given to the community at Kells in c. 1133.²⁶⁶

MacCotter argued that the *baile biataig* unit and the *trícha cét* unit were ‘inextricably linked’ – that the ‘*baile biataig* was an intrinsic part of the *trícha cét* system – and that the *baile biataig* was the taxable unit of

²⁶¹ ‘*faighthi Phuirt Lairgi*’. See Bugge, *Caithreim*, pp 71, 13.

²⁶² MacCotter’s account is the fullest, but he was not the first to argue along these lines. See Thomas McErlean, ‘The Irish townland system of landscape organisation’, in Terence Reeves-Smyth and Fred Hamond (eds), *Landscape archaeology in Ireland*. BAR British Series 116 (1983), pp 315-39, esp. pp 326, 328. See also Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Patterns of landownership in Gaelic Monaghan in the late sixteenth century’, *Clogher Record* 10 (1981), pp 304-22.

²⁶³ AT 1143.9.

²⁶⁴ AU 1157.4.

²⁶⁵ AU 1177.6.

²⁶⁶ John O’Donovan, ‘The Irish charters in the Book of Kells’, in *The miscellany of the Irish archaeological society, volume 1* (Dublin, 1846), pp 127-8; MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland*, p. 95.

landholding in pre-Norman Ireland and was an economically independent estate; that the *baile* was the ‘basic unit of free-kinship landholding, the rents of which were paid in food renders and cattle to the overlord’.²⁶⁷ He then set out the evidence for this. ‘The earliest datable reference to the *baile biataig* I can find occurs in *Cogad* (of c. 1100)’, he said. ‘In this narrative Brian Boraimhe gives a gift or *tuarastal* “to each *biatach* of every *baile*” of the Ulaid during his circuit (*cuairt*) of 1005’, MacCotter continued. ‘In another passage the *baile* is shown as the unit immediately under the late-*túath* in a schema of society’.²⁶⁸ These passages in the *Cogad* have been discussed at length already. MacCotter fails to note that, as has also been mentioned above, the *baile* of the *Cogad* are also linked to *dúin* and where any description of the *baile* is given in the *Cogad*, it appears to be a defensible area in the immediate vicinity of a *dún*.

MacCotter attaches significant weight to the ‘impressive...evidence’ of what he calls ‘two pre-Invasion topographical tracts, *Críchad an Chaoilli*, relating to a part of Co. Cork, and *Críchaireacht Muinntiri Murchada*, relating to a part of Co. Galway.’ Both tracts, he held, ‘preserve remarkable evidence for the existence of the *baile biataig* system...’.²⁶⁹ We might question his dating of these two texts, as some of the most recent work on these tracts attribute to them a somewhat later date of composition. Both, it is true, could easily be interpreted as providing evidence for the existence of a ‘*baile biataig* system’. *Críchad an Chaoilli* speaks of ‘Hi Ingair...the noblest baile’, ‘the chief baile of Ibh Ingardail’, the ‘half-baile’ of Hi Finn and Na hArda, the baile of Bri Gobunn, ‘Baili Hi Mhaeilmordha’, ‘Baile Hi Chuind’, the ‘baile between two rivers’, the *bailte* of Mag Drisein and Feic Beg, and so forth.²⁷⁰ Edel Bhreathnach gives ‘a date of compilation during the ascendancy of the Uí Chaím dynasty, from the 1120s to circa

²⁶⁷ MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland*, pp 23, 53-54.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 55.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp 55-6.

²⁷⁰ Patrick Power (ed. & trans.), *Críchad an Chaoilli*. Being the topography of ancient Fermoy (Cork, 1932), pp 47-49; J.G. O’Keeffe (ed. & trans.), ‘The ancient territory of Fermoy’, *Ériu* 10 (1926-8), pp 172-7.

1200x1250'. It is suggested, for reasons to be discussed below, that a thirteenth-century date of production makes most sense, and indeed Bhreathnach herself concludes that '[t]here is a likelihood that the detailed landholding structure described in *Críchad an Chaoilli* was in place by the beginning of this period and was threatened by incoming Anglo-Norman families in the thirteenth century, a factor which may have led to a perceived need to document existing proprietary rights'.²⁷¹ There is also that curious reference to *Muilinn Mairteil*, perhaps 'Martel's mill' near the beginning of the text.²⁷² As Patrick Power observed, '“Martel” does not look an Irish personal name'. He suggested it may mean 'cripple' or could be a late loan-word for 'mortar'.²⁷³ More intriguing is Diarmaid Ó Murchada's suggestion that '[t]his unidentified place-name is obviously connected with the Norman family name Martell/Mortell...[and] [i]t is one of the indications that the tract is not earlier than the thirteenth century'.²⁷⁴

As with *Críchad an Chaoilli*, there are problems in securely dating *Críchaireacht Muinntiri Murchada* to the pre-invasion period. As was also the case with *Críchad*, there are myriad references to *bailte* in the text. For example, we see mention of the 'twenty-four *bailte*' of Clan Fergail, held by Ó hAllmhuráin; the fourteen *bailte* of Uí Bhriúin Rátha held by Ó Dathlaeich; the fourteen *bailte* held by Ó Dallaig, and so on.²⁷⁵ James Hardiman, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, dated the tract quite exactly to c. 1098, that is, the year that Flaithbertach Ua

²⁷¹ Edel Bhreathnach, 'Críchad an Chaoilli: a medieval territory revealed', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 110 (2005), p. 87.

²⁷² Power, *Críchad*, p. 45; O'Keeffe, 'Fermoy', p. 172.

²⁷³ Power, *Críchad*, p. 57.

²⁷⁴ Diarmaid Ó Murchada, 'Cenn Ebrat, Sliab Caín, Belach Ebrat. Belach Legtha/Lechta', *Éigse* 26 (1996), p. 157, fn. 26. Conversely, Liam Ó Buachalla, noting the absence of 'any Anglo-Norman overlord' concluded that the tract most likely dates to a period before the occupation of Cork. See his 'Townland development in the Fermoy area, 12th century – 19th century', *Dinnseanchas* 1 (4) (1965), p. 87.

²⁷⁵ James Hardiman (ed. & trans.), *A chorographical description of west or H-Iar Connaught, written A.D. 1684 by Roderic O'Flaherty Esq* (Dublin, 1846), p. 368 (full text 368-72); Nollaig Ó Muraile (ed. & trans.), 'A tract on the Connacht territory of Muintir Mhurchadha', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 113 (2008), pp 92-3 (full text 92-5).

Flaithbertaig, ‘king of west Connacht’, died.²⁷⁶ Such a date seems unlikely, even if it corresponds with the apotheosis of Ua Flaithbertaigh power, and it would push back into the eleventh century the emergence of the posited ‘*baile biataigh* system’.²⁷⁷ Nollaig Ó Muraile, one of the most recent commentators on the tract, rightly observes that ‘the style of writing is more suggestive of a work more or less contemporaneous with, or slightly later than, the fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Connacht manuscripts such as the Books of Uí Mhaine, Ballymote and Lecan’.²⁷⁸ It bears similarity to other, later texts, like the Ua Conchobair inauguration ode of the fifteenth century (though that does contain some early material) and the fourteenth-century *Nósa Ua Maine*.²⁷⁹ In the latter text we also find references to *bailte*: the ‘seventeen *bailte* of free land in the territory of the Uí Mhaine’, and the *bailte* of the ‘Fir Bolg’.²⁸⁰ The original copy of this text, which now survives in two late-fourteenth-century manuscripts, was probably done by a member of the Mac Aodhagáin family in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. This original copy was then reworked in the second half of the fourteenth century, most likely by Seaán Mór Ua Dubhagáin.²⁸¹ Máire Ní

²⁷⁶ Hardiman, *H-Iar Connaught*, p. 188.

²⁷⁷ Many of the place names listed in the *Críchaireacht* do in fact refer to areas under Ua Flaithbertaigh’s sway at the close of the eleventh century. The Uí Fhlaitbertaigh were a branch of the Uí Briúin Seola, who controlled much of the land around the mouth of the river Corrib in the eleventh and twelfth century. These same centuries saw the growth and expansion of Ua Chonchobair lordship, however. Indeed it was the Uí Chonchobair that murdered Flaitbertach Ua Flaithbertaig in 1098 in revenge for the blinding of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, ‘king of Connacht’. (AU 1092, 1098; AI 1092; ALC 1092, 1096). The Uí Fhlaitbertaigh were pushed further and further west, and away from the lands around what is now Galway city. In time, the Uí Fhlaitbertaigh came to hold office under the Uí Chonchobair, as *Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh* attests. See Ó Corráin, *IBTN*, pp 9-10, 169; Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 230.

²⁷⁸ Ó Muraile, ‘Muintir Mhurchadha’, p. 99, n. 2. See also p. 90: ‘It is undated but may well have been penned some time in the fifteenth century’.

²⁷⁹ Katharine Simms, ‘“*Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh*” – a fifteenth-century inauguration ode’, *Ériu* 31 (1980), pp 140-1.

²⁸⁰ Paul Russell (ed. & trans.), ‘*Nósa Ua Maine*. The customs of the Uí Mhaine’, in T.M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, & Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh king and his court* (Cardiff, 2000), pp 538, 540.

²⁸¹ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Nósa Ua Maine*: fact or fiction?’, in T.M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, & Paul Russell (eds), *The Welsh king and his court* (Cardiff, 2000), pp 367, 373.

Mhaonaigh situates the text in a literary genre that began to flourish in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.²⁸² One will also find references to *baile* in other, later, examples of texts in this genre, like the sixteenth-century *Ceart Uí Néill*.²⁸³ One could reasonably see *Críchad* and *Críchaireacht* as examples of this same genre, which might further support a post-invasion and perhaps post-twelfth-century dating for these texts. That said, there are earlier examples of this same genre – the early twelfth-century *Lebor na Cert* and a ‘Poem on the Airgialla’. The latter is an Old Irish poem, dating perhaps to about the year 900. In it, one will find not a single reference to *baile*.²⁸⁴ In *Lebor na Cert* there is one solitary reference to a *baile* belonging to the king of Osraige. The text states that he is entitled to *tuarastal* from his ‘two kings’ (*ó dib rígaib*). This is to be brought to his *baile* (*in cach bliadna dá baile / dá thuaristal togaide*). It is by no means obvious what *baile* refers to here, but is it wrong to wonder if it refers to the area around his royal *dún*?²⁸⁵ Other texts, within which we might expect to find reference to *baile*, such as the *Mórthimchell Éireann uile* of c. 1166, are silent on the subject of *baile*.²⁸⁶ Arguments from silence are always precarious, but it is surely telling that so much of our evidence for the existence of the ‘*baile biataig* system’ comes from texts which can, at the very least, be dated to the post-invasion period and might even have been first composed a century after that event.

²⁸² Ibid, p. 368.

²⁸³ Myles Dillon (ed. & trans.), ‘*Ceart Uí Néill*’, *Studia Celtica* 1 (1966), ss. 5, 11, 16, pp 6, 8, 10.

²⁸⁴ Máirín O’Daly, ‘A poem on the Airgialla’, *Ériu* 16 (1952), pp 179-88.

²⁸⁵ It must be stressed again here that those other twelfth-century texts which also provide context and detail consistently relate *baile* to *dún*, as has been discussed in considerable detail above. Conversely, one will not find any reference to *baile* in Myles Dillon (ed. & trans.), ‘The texts related to the book of rights’, *Celtica* 6 (1963), p. 184-92. It does state that ‘an ounce of gold for every fort’ (*7 unga d’ór gach lis*) is due from the Dal Cais when one of them is not the king of Cashel, p. 186.

²⁸⁶ John O’Donovan (ed. & trans.), ‘The circuit of Ireland by Muirchertach Mac Neill, AD 942’, *Tracts relating to Ireland* (Dublin, 1841), pp 24-59. See also Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and the *Circuit of Ireland*’, in Alfred P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas. Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*. (Dublin, 2000), pp 238-50.

MacCotter, though, pointed to two further pieces of evidence for the existence of the ‘*baile biataig* system’ in pre-invasion Ireland: the ‘Life’ of Colmán mac Lúacháin and the poem *Cá lín trícha I nÉrinn áin?*. The editor of the former, Kuno Meyer, dates this ‘Life’ to the period immediately after the discovery of the shrine of Colmán, which was buried in Lann in 1122. The most relevant parts of that text for our purposes are sections 73 and 74. It is useful to give extended extracts from these sections here. Section 73 states:

‘And he [King Domnall] gave to Colman increase of territory and land and freedom till Doom to his monks, both for the churches here with their monks, and for his churches in Ui Foranan with their monks, i.e. seventeen steadings and three churches that are in them to be ever free for Colman’.

*‘7 dobert sein immurgu do Cholmán fulled criichi 7 feroinn 7 saeire co bráth dia muindtir etir na cell[a] hi fus cona muindtir 7 a cella a nUib Forannán cona muindtir .i. secht [na] bale .x. 7 trí cella fil indtib a saeire co bráth do Cholmán’.*²⁸⁷

Section 74 then goes on to list the *bailte* given to Colmán by Domnall:

‘These are the steadings which Domnall gave to Colman here, viz. Ros Dullenn and Ard Cain and Raithin na Brechmaige and Les an Phobuil and Raith Drocan and Dun Senchada and Ard Nessian and Les Conin and Raithin na Gabann with Ard Mucada and Les Glinne and Raith Donnchada and Ard Mor and Lethchluain and Ros Omna and Les na Muama at Cluain Gilla Finain and Les na Moga with Tulach an Oiss and

²⁸⁷ Kuno Meyer (ed. & trans.), *Betha Colmáin Maic Lúacháin: Life of Colmán son of Lúachan* (Felinfach, 1997), pp 77, 76.

Raithin an Phupaill is its name to-day and Baile Asidta – and these to be free till Doom. Seventeen steadings they are, just as Conall Guthbinn gave him seventeen steadings. However, the land of his father’s brother, viz. Rath Laecht and Cluain Gamna and Senraith Lis an Daire, these Conall Guthbinn himself gave to Colmán.’

‘Issiat so bailed a tuge Domnall I fus do Cholmán .i. Ros Dullenn 7 Ard Cáin 7 Rát[h]ín na Bréhmaigi 7 Les an Pobuil 7 Ráith....[etc.]...7 a saeiri sin co bráth .i. secht mbale .x. sin amail tuse Conall Guthbind secht mbale .x. dó-som. Ferann immurgu bráthar a athar-som .i. Ráth...[etc.]...Conall Guthbind féin tuge iatt-sein do Cholmán.’²⁸⁸

As the reader will notice, many of the seventeen *bailte* given over to Colmán have *ráth*, *les* or *dún* as part of their toponym. It is also surely significant that, in section 62, after a number of *bailte* are named (Baile Ua Dungala, Baile Ua Fothata, Baile Ua Dima) the text continues: ‘and other raths up to seventeen with them’ (*7 ráthanna de cona secht déc léo-som*).²⁸⁹ This was also observed by Gregroy Toner. He said:

‘In the Life of Colmán, Conall offers Colmán seventeen *baileda*. *Baile* cannot be understood here solely in terms of settlements, as some of those that are named (*Tír Fráech*, *Tír Mór*) are clearly land units. However, the author does not list all the *baileda* in the endowment, but simply that the grant included ‘other raths up to seventeen’. In doing so, he moves easily between conceptualising the endowment both in terms of land units (*baileda*) and of settlements (*ráthanna*). It is

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 65, 64.

both farm (land unit) and farmstead (habitation) at one and the same time.²⁹⁰

Toner's article, which is not referenced by MacCotter, emphasises the myriad uses to which the word *baile* is applied. Toner concludes:

‘In short, the predominance of *baile* in townland names does not necessitate the assumption so often made that it means townland. While it is hardly to be doubted that *baile* was also applied to units of land which we now know as townlands, we must conclude that the connection between *baile*-names and townlands may have been considerably overemphasised.’²⁹¹

Clearly, *baile* did apply to units of land, as the evidence of both the annals and charters (discussed above) shows. In so many of our twelfth-century sources though, as has clearly been illustrated above, where *baile* is used, it seems to refer to a defensible nucleated settlement located beside or around a royal or lordly *dún*. It can also be used to refer to the land around an ecclesiastical settlement. Or it might simply be used to mean ‘place’ – after the Síol Muiredaig slaughtered the men of Mide in 1140 we are told that sixty heads were brought to *aen-baile*, which we might translate as ‘one place’.²⁹² *Baile*, in the twelfth century, was an extremely malleable term.

This very malleability allowed *baile* to be applied to a new land-division system after the English invasion of Ireland. Liam Price has saliently observed that ‘place-names in *baile* are found more frequently in the records’ after the arrival of the English, and postulates a process whereby English *tun* became translated to Irish *baile* after the Irish

²⁹⁰ Gregory Toner, ‘*Baile*: settlements and landholding in medieval Ireland’, *Éigse* 34 (2004), p. 38.

²⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 39.

²⁹² AT 1140.4. See also CS 866, where the word seems to have been used in a similar fashion.

‘revival’ of the mid-thirteenth century. The ‘new Irish occupiers would be likely to copy this way of naming their holdings’ and thus *baile* place-names became general. Price gives an example of this process:

Raggedston in county Kilkenny, so named by 1324 after the owner, Roger Raggede, became Ballyragget. He also notes that the greatest proportion of *baile* place-names are to be found in parts of Ireland overrun by the English.²⁹³

We must be cautious in seeing the existence of anything like a ‘*baile biataig* system’ in Ireland, prior to the twelfth century. There is very little evidence for it in sources that can be concretely dated to the twelfth century. *Baile* was most certainly applied to units of land that were sold or gifted to the church, but there is little in these references that one might call ‘systematic’. There *is* something schematic about the poem *Cá lín trícha I nÉrinn áin*, which sets down the number of *bailte* in each *trícha cét*. Donnchadh Ó Corráin has dated this poem to the twelfth century. Not claiming to have undertaken anything like a scrupulous analysis of the text, Ó Corráin stated: ‘It looks like a characteristic product of twelfth-century antiquarian learning and all later accounts – those of Keating, O’Flaherty, and others – depend on it’.²⁹⁴ There is little in the poem to place it squarely in a twelfth-century context though. If anything, the ubiquity of *baile* references (where they can happily be interpreted as references to land units) in later texts might mean that the poem was originally composed in the thirteenth or even early fourteenth centuries instead. It is difficult to conclude that, in the twelfth century, *bailte* were an ‘intrinsic part’ of the *trícha cét* system, and that the two were inextricably linked. For one thing, use of the term *trícha cét* occurs a full century before that of *baile*, something noted by both MacCotter and Ó Corráin. A poem attributed to Cúán ua Lothcháin (d. 1024) contains

²⁹³ Liam Price, ‘A note on the use of the word *baile* in place-names’, *Celtica* 6 (1963), pp 124-5.

²⁹⁴ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Hogan and early medieval Ireland’, in Idem (ed.), *James Hogan: revolutionary, historian and political scientist* (Dublin, 2001), p. 95.

numerous references to *trícha cét* (but of course, none to *baile*).²⁹⁵ At the very least, the term *baile* emerges a full century after we see *trícha cét* used for the first time. Even then, we might seriously wonder if it can be used to refer to anything like a ‘system’.

What we can say with certainty is that in sources which we can comfortably date to the twelfth century, we frequently see *dún* and *baile* used together and, where context is given, *baile* appears to refer to a settlement in the immediate vicinity of a *dún*. This is important for our purposes. It will be recalled that the question we are seeking to answer is this: are we seeing the emergence of new polities or are we seeing long-existing polities being recorded for the first time in the second half of the twelfth century (*pace* McGowan)? We can say this much: the word *baile* emerges at roughly the same time that we see an upsurge in references to ‘lords’ in the Irish annals. This in turn coincides, more or less, with the proliferation of lordships that Bisson notices throughout Europe, and with changes at the level of lordship in medieval Germany (though scholars of Germany deny the castle a catalysing role). We might also make note of changes taking place quite close to Ireland. In Scotland, as Dauvit Broun has observed, the Pictish word *pett* (meaning ‘portion’ or ‘share’) ceased to be used in place names from the early twelfth century. *Baile* then comes to be used in place names from the end of the eleventh century. The chronology, he said, suggests that there was a connection between the decline of *pett* and the beginning of the use of *baile*.²⁹⁶ Broun continued:

‘This can most readily be understood as a change in how settlements were *primarily* received. Each settlement was both a habitation and part of a shire, of course. Before the twelfth century, however, it was their identity as part of a shire that

²⁹⁵ ‘Temair III’ in Edward Gwynn (ed. & trans.), *The metrical dindsenchas, part I* (Dublin, 1901), l. 21-32, pp 14, 16.

²⁹⁶ Dauvit Broun, ‘Statehood and lordship in “Scotland” before the mid-twelfth century’, *Innes Review* 66 (1) (2015), pp 53-4.

was emphasised. During the early twelfth century this ceased to be the chief focus, and instead they were identified simply as habitations. This could be explained as a change in how lords typically related to settlements... With *baile*, however, the focus is on the settlement as a habitation rather than as part of a shire. This implies that, for the lord, his relationship with the habitation now had priority... It may be argued therefore, that *baile* emerged at the point when the ownership of settlements by lords had started to become a typical experience. By the time it had superseded *pett*, it had become the norm. This is not to say that all settlements were now owned by lords. According to this line of argument, however, this became the predominant feature of rural society around 1100.²⁹⁷

Is it not possible that we are seeing a somewhat similar change in the relationship between lord and settlement in Ireland? Is the takeover of settlements not what is being referred in the ‘poem of prophecies’ of c. 1150?²⁹⁸ If so, would this mean that Irish lordship, like French lordship, had a predatory element to it?

The twelfth century saw a reconfiguration of the relationship between lord and settlement, not just in Ireland but across Europe. In an Irish context, this involved the subjugation of the individual *treb* and the formation of nucleated settlements around defended lordly habitations. This writer can see no evidence to suggest that this process – the creation of the lordly *baile*, the reconfiguration of the relationship between lord and settlement – was obviously or necessarily linked to the emergence of the *trícha cét* system a century or so earlier. Not that it follows that this was destructive change. As Alice Taylor has argued, ‘lord’ and ‘king’ need not be ‘structurally opposed forces of political power’ and the

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, pp 54-5.

²⁹⁸ Knott, ‘Prophecies’, s. 57, p. 70.

growth of royal power did not develop at the ‘expense of the “private” power of aristocrats’.²⁹⁹ Ergo, what we might very well call perhaps an ‘independent’ change in the relationship between lord and settlement (that is, there is no obvious reason for the emergence of *baile* in the twelfth century to be connected to the *trícha cé* ‘system’) is by no means antithetical to the prevailing scholarly view of Ireland in this period: that we are witnessing the growth in the power of superior kings. It might be added that the upsurge in the number of recorded lordships in the Irish annals, and the concomitant surge in the percentage of recorded titles that lordships comprise is not simply the product of a newfound interest in local affairs on the part of the annalists; it is indicative of profound changes at the level of non-royal lordship which take place in the twelfth century.

2(a.) Varieties of lord

An ancillary question one might pose is: who are our ‘lords’? Who – or maybe what – are the individuals that are termed *dux*, *tigherna* and *toísech* in the medieval Irish annals? McGowan spent some time fleshing out the answer to this question. Firstly, she noted, the use of *toísech* in the law tracts does not correspond exactly with the use of *toísech* in the annals. *Toísech* in the former seems to refer to the head of any kin-group (or *fine*), royal or otherwise. Thus we see in *Di fhastud chirt ocus dligid*: ‘the *toísech* of every fine, that is, it is to him the *toisigecht* is due...’. McGowan also pointed to the fact that *Crith Gablach* states that it is the *thoisiuch* that is to give pledge for his *fine* to kings, at synods, and to craftsmen.³⁰⁰ In the annals, we see three ‘distinct’ usages of *toísech*, she says: as relating to the heads of aristocratic kindreds, as ‘familial’ *toisig*, and as ‘occasional’ *toisig*. The first is used to denote the heads of greater kindreds, who were companions to the king.³⁰¹ As regards the second

²⁹⁹ Alice Taylor, *The shape of the state in medieval Scotland, 1124-1290* (Oxford, 2016), p. 3.

³⁰⁰ McGowan, ‘Political geography’ pp 25-30.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp 38-41.

category, McGowan says that, to be included here are those groups whose leaders are usually styled *toísig* but are also occasionally called by other and apparently equivalent titles: *tigerna*, *muire*, and *dux*.³⁰² The third category – ‘occasional’ *toísig* refers to polities normally ruled by a king and are thus to be considered *tuatha* or overkingdoms. What we are seeing when such kings are styled *toísech* is the stylistic preference of the annalist shine through, rather than a change in status from kingship to lordship.³⁰³

How do *tigerna* and *dux* relate to *toísech*? To deal firstly with the former. McGowan explains that *tigerna* should not be considered a title as the term may simply refer to a ‘lord’ of any grade.³⁰⁴ It is suggested that McGowan is correct in this assertion, and there is non-annalistic evidence to support this claim. The *Triads* frequently use *tigerna* to refer to ‘lordship’ in a very general manner. That text states that an unfree client (*doer*) and his lord (*ocus a thigerna*) are one of three not entitled to renunciation of authority (*ath-chommu*).³⁰⁵ *Tigerna* is also used in the very general sense of the term ‘lord’ in sections 167 and 226, it is suggested. *Thigernais* is used to refer to lordship in quite a wide sense too in *Lebor na Cert*, it is submitted.³⁰⁶ As for *dux*, McGowan rightly noted that the term is almost exclusive to the *Annals of Ulster*, with just two uses of it appearing in other annal collections, namely, in the *Chronicon Scotorum*. Further, in the Ulster annals there is almost a perfect chronological split in usage between *dux* (which is found principally in entries pertaining to the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries) and *toísech* (which for the most part applies to the eleventh and twelfth century entries).³⁰⁷ She concludes that individuals styled *dux* in the annals can ‘be

³⁰² *Ibid*, pp 47-54

³⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 55.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 61.

³⁰⁵ *Triads*, s. 160.

³⁰⁶ *Lebor na Cert*, p. 17. Here we see Tara referred to as a ‘hill of lordship’ (*tulach thigernais*) in the general sense of rule or lordship over something or someone.

³⁰⁷ McGowan, ‘Political geography’, pp 59-60.

considered in the same class' as her 'occasional *toísig*'.³⁰⁸ Politics ruled by 'occasional *toísig*', it will be recalled, were normally ruled by a king or *ríg* and the application of the term *toísech* (and, axiomatically, *dux*) to these individuals amounted to little more than a stylistic preference on the part of the annalist.³⁰⁹

The matter is made more complicated when one turns to the evidence of the surviving Irish royal charters. In her monograph on Irish charters, Marie Therese Flanagan includes the full text, both in Latin and in translation, of the surviving Irish royal charters. She identifies five genuine or probably genuine survivals, numbered 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 in her text. 1 is from Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster, to Felix, abbot of Osraige and can be dated to c. 1162-5. The surviving copy is composed in a thirteenth-century hand. 2 is addressed to that same Felix, and is also from Mac Murchada. It can be dated to the same years, and it survives as a seventeenth-century transcript of a sixteenth century cartulary copy. 4 is again from Diarmait Mac Murchada and is addressed to the abbey of St Mary's in Ferns. It is slightly earlier than 1 and 2, and only a seventeenth-century transcript survives. Flanagan has suggested that this one is probably genuine. 5 is addressed to Newry Abbey and is from Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn. Flanagan dates it to c. 1157, and it survives as a seventeenth-century transcript. Finally, that charter numbered 6 in Flanagan's book is from Domnall Ua Briain and is addressed the Holy Cross Abbey. It survives in a fifteenth-century manuscript and Flanagan dates it to the period 1168-85. It is the address clauses in these charters that are of interest here.

Charter 1 refers to (and ecclesiastical dignitaries are being ignored here) 'kings, dukes, and counts' (*Regibus ducibus comitibus*). Charter 2, also from Mac Murchada's writing office, likewise refers to those three same grades: *regibus, ducibus, comitibus*. Charter 4, another Mac Murchada production, makes no mention of kings in the address clause,

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 60.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 55.

but speaks only to *comitibus* and *baronibus* (counts and barons). Later in that same charter, counts are mentioned again, in a passage referring to freedom from secular exactions, and we do now also hear mention of kings: ‘*neque episcopi neque regis neque comitis*’.³¹⁰ Charter 5, from Mac Lochlainn, is particularly interesting; although Mac Lochlainn is styled *rex totius Hiberniae* (‘king of all Ireland’), the address clause in this charter explicitly refers to lesser kings beneath him, or *subregulis*. Coupled with the evidence set out above, this further suggests that the struggle to establish oneself as king of Ireland did not necessarily entail the conversion of lesser kings to lords. This charter also speaks of the ‘magnates’, ‘princes’, and ‘dukes’ (*Mauritius Mag Lachlain rex totius Hiberniae universis magnatibus suis, subregulis, principibus, ducibus...*). Finally, charter number 6, from Domnall Ua Briain to Holy Cross abbey, mentions ‘kings, dukes, counts, barons’ (*omnibus regibus, ducibus comitibus baronibus...*).

What these charters make clear is that there existed in pre-Anglo-Norman Ireland a hierarchy of non-royal nobles. There is some evidence elsewhere that there existed individuals termed ‘*comes*’ and ‘*dux*’ in medieval Ireland. In the *Visio Tnugdali*, composed by an Irishman in Regensburg in 1149, we hear mention of a certain count that was killed on the orders of Cormac Mac Carthaigh: *quia iussit comitem interficere iuxta Patricium et prevaricates est i usiurandum*. Richard Sharpe noted that the ‘identity of the *comes* [count] has not been recovered. What high rank below the king of Munster might have been meant by *comes* “count” is not apparent; this is its only occurrence in the *Visio*’.³¹¹ Gilbert, bishop of Limerick, in his *De statu ecclesiae*, composed about the year 1111, also distinguished between *rex, dux, comes* and *miles*.³¹² This threefold division is also repeated in the ‘Life’ of Munna, certain aspects of which

³¹⁰ Flanagan, p. 86.

³¹¹ Richard Sharpe, ‘Humfrey Wanley, Bishop John O’Brien, and the colophons of Mael Brigte’s gospels’, *Celtica* 29 (2017), p. 287.

³¹² As Flanagan has noted, this ranking of lay dignitaries is echoed in Mac Murchada’s charters numbered 1 and 2 in her *Irish royal charters*.

suggest the Salamancan redaction dates from the twelfth century.³¹³ In this saint's life, there is mention made of a king (*rex*), a *dux*, and certain unnamed *comes*. It is by no means the case that the *dux* of our annals necessarily equates with the *dux* of our address clauses, or of Gilbert's *De statu ecclesiae*. *Dux* in the annals could be taken to mean a lord in the widest sense of the term, encompassing *dux*, *comes*, and *baro* or, simply, as McGowan has suggested, as a stylistic variant to *rí*. But what the address clauses do make clear is that the matter is altogether more complicated than a provincial king – regional king – petty king – *toísech túaithe* schema, and more complicated than the annalistic evidence would have us believe either.

Who were these individuals? How were their lordships created? What sort of powers did these men possess? What do we know of their interactions with kings? In answering these questions, we are not helped by the absolute silence emanating from the annalistic material. We frequently hear of the *maithe* and *degdóene* accompanying kings on raids or coming together in counsel with certain kings. It is quite likely the terms like *maithib* refer to the *duces* and *comites* of the royal charters. The law tracts, most of which date to the eighth century, set out, in a very schematic fashion, a social hierarchy. The two main social divisions in early Irish society were between those that were free (*sóer*) and those that were unfree (*dóer*), and between those that were said to be *nemed* or 'privileged' and those that were not *nemed*. The *Críth Gablach* sets out seven social grades; at the base of our social 'ladder' lies the *fer midboth*, followed by the *bóaire*, four grades of *aire* or 'lord/chief' and the king at the apex. It then sub-divides the *bóaire* into eight grades, and sets out seven grades of 'lords' (*gradda inna flaithe*). The eight divisions of *bóaire* are still regarded as free men; only those classed *fuidir* (semi-freeman), *senchléithe* (hereditary serf), *mug* (male slave), and *cumal* (female slave) are to be regarded as unfree or *dóer*. As the *Críth Gablach* explains though, the lords are deemed to be so because they can be said to

³¹³ Pádraig Ó Riain, *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin, 2011), p. 505.

possess *déis* (*Cid notaisaerad? A ndéis a ndligid cach ae cid becc ciid moor*). The lordship structure laid down in the *Uraicecht Becc* ('Small Primer') differs slightly from the gradation of lords given in *Críth Gablach*. It runs as follows, in ascending order of importance: *aire desa*, *aire echta*, *aire tuise*, *aire ard*, *aire forgaill*, *rí*, king of kings. Of the social structures promulgated in *Críth Gablach* and *Uraicecht Becc*, and of the differences between the two structures, Thomas Charles-Edwards, noting that there was 'more than a hint of artificiality', had this to say:

'The difficulty may be, that in any system of social rankings which depends upon a spectrum of property qualifications, it is always easy to insert further grades by making more frequent the dividing-lines between one rank and the next. There may well be persons satisfying all the property qualifications. In one sense, therefore, the distinctions will be real; but they will be the creations of a particular lawyer or lawschool and will not be generally recognized social classes.'³¹⁴

It is suggested that Charles-Edwards is probably quite right in his assessment. One might wonder whether anything like this social schema existed in early medieval Ireland, except within the realm of jurisprudence. In a sense, the author of *Críth Gablach* tells us as much when he says that the scheme is modelled on ecclesiastical orders, and the *aire echta* only emerges to fill a seventh spot when we discount the *fer midboth*; reaching a quota of seven, rather than mirroring reality, is the goal here. It might be said that the law texts are, in effect, creating legal subjects. So, while someone may well be regarded as a *fer midboth* or an *aire echta* for what we might term 'legal purposes', that is, for the purposes of determining what sick maintenance they are due, or what sort of contract they may pledge or even how long a statement they might

³¹⁴ T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh kinship* (Oxford, 1993), p. 348.

make at court.³¹⁵ Whether or not they might be regarded as such – as a *fer midboth* or *aire echta* – in what we might call everyday life is another question altogether. No doubt social categories were thought about in more general terms, like ‘free’, ‘unfree’, ‘commoner’, ‘lord’, and ‘king’. In any event, it is doubtful whether these early law tracts can help to shed too much light on the distinction between *dux* and *comes* in our later sources.

Two crucial texts might help make sense of this muddle – the *Life* of Maedóc of Ferns and one that has come to be known as *Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh*. Both texts have been dated to a period somewhat later than that under review here. The second Irish life of Maedóc is a late medieval recension; however, Katharine Simms has noted that it is ‘largely based on a twelfth century core’.³¹⁶ As regards the latter, the inauguration ode, Simms has argued that the tract ‘may have been originally compiled as early as the twelfth or thirteenth century’.³¹⁷ Accordingly, it is suggested, these texts can give us some insight into the workings of the nobility in the pre-Anglo-Norman period.

We turn firstly to the second vernacular life of Maedóc. A number of higher social gradations are mentioned in the text: *righ* (king), *aird-riogh* (high-king), *taoiseach* (chief), *righ-taoiseach* (royal chief), *ard-taoisigh* (high chiefs), *ticcerna* (lord) – many of the titles used in other sources, as discussed above. *Ticcernaic* appears to be the word used in the ‘Life’ for ‘lordship’.³¹⁸ It might reasonably be inferred therefore that those individuals termed *ticcerna* or ‘lord’ in the text are those

³¹⁵ Robin Chapman Stacey, *Dark speech. The performance of law in early Ireland* (Philadelphia, PA, 2007), p. 76.

³¹⁶ Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords. The changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later middle ages* (Woodbridge, 1987; latest edn.; Woodbridge, 2000), p. 23. The ‘Life’ itself can be found in Charles Plummer (ed.), *Bethada Náem nÉrenn* (Oxford, 1922; latest edn.; Oxford, 1997), pp 190-290 (Vol. I, Irish), pp 184-81 (Vol. II, English trans.).

³¹⁷ Katharine Simms, ‘“*Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh*” – a fifteenth-century inauguration ode’, *Ériu* 31 (1980), p. 143. The text, both in Irish and in translation, may be found in Myles Dillon, ‘The inauguration of O’Conor’, in J. A. Watt, J. B. Morrall, and F. X. Martin (eds), *Medieval studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn, S. J.* (Dublin, 1961), pp 186-202.

³¹⁸ Plummer, ‘Maedóc’, I, s. 44, p. 203.

individuals said to possess a ‘lordship’ or *ticcerna*.³¹⁹ The *taoiseach* is a sub-species (or perhaps, super-species) of a ‘lord’ or *ticcerna*. *Taoisigh*, the ‘Life’ makes clear, are invested into an office. Sections 46 and 47 set out the inauguration procedure for the king of Bréifne. These passages conclude with the following line: ‘He is no (lawful) king *or chief* (my emphasis) who is not ordained on this wise’ (*Ní rí immorro, [ocus] ní taoiseach antí nach oirdnighter amlaidh sin*).³²⁰ The point is emphasised once more in a short stanza: ‘No one of the men of Breifne till doom / Is either valid king or chief / Until this band of clerics / Are all ordaining him together’ (*Neach go brath do Breifneacaibh / Ní rí tren, is ní Taoiseach / Go mbe an cuine cleireach sin / ‘Ga noirdnedh uile a naoinfecht*).³²¹ Later still in the text, we hear that Maedóc is owed, as part of his ‘tribute and dues’ (*cíos ocus cánachus*) ‘a cloak from every chief (*taoisech*)’ on the day of their inauguration.³²² That same section of the texts speaks of kings and *taoisigh* (*tuaithe*) being ‘made’ (*do denamh*).³²³ It is clear then, that a *taoiseach* is an individual ordained in an office by means of a ceremony.

They appear to have held certain privileges and rights by virtue of their office, but also appear to have owed special dues also, as *Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh* makes clear. This text details the workings of the Ua Conchobair inauguration rite. Only certain individuals *must* be present. Many of these individuals are ecclesiastics, the coarbs of various

³¹⁹ Ibid, I, s. 206, p. 251.

³²⁰ Ibid, I, s. 47., p. 203.

³²¹ Ibid, I, s. 50., p. 206.

³²² Ibid, I, s. 200, p. 247. In addition to owing dues, we also see lords exacting dues. In charter number 4 in O’Donovan’s *The Irish charters in the Book of Kells*, which has been dated to about the middle of the eleventh century, we find the following passage: ‘no king or chieftain having rent, tribute, hosting, coigny, or any other claim on it [Cill delga, with its territory and lands] as...before, for no chief durst touch it while [staying] in the territory’ (*cen cis cen cobac cen fect cen luaged cen choinnim rí na toisig fuirri mar...ba raeimi, ar nil aimed taisech a tadall etir cén ro bai i cric*). O’Donovan, *Book of Kells*, pp 138-9. The *cis* owed to a *flaith* is distinguished from that owed to a *rí* in the twelfth century *Betha Colmáin Maic Lúacháin* also. We hear of an immunity from ‘tax’ (*cis*) owed to ‘king’ (*rí*), ‘chief’ (*flatha*) and ‘tribe’ (*tuaithe*). See Meyer, *Betha Colmáin*, pp 38-9, 40-41, 56-7, 100-101.

³²³ Ibid, I, s. 200, p. 248.

churches from around Connacht. The only others whose attendance is absolutely required are the ‘twelve chieftains (*thaoiseach*) of Síol Muireadhaigh’.³²⁴ Others have a right to be present, of course, such as the kings of Bréifne and Uí Fiachrach and Ua hEidhin, and so forth, and the ‘nobles’ (*maithe*) of Connacht.³²⁵ Only the twelve *taoisigh* of the Ua Conchobair are required to be present at the inauguration though, suggesting they are of higher standing than the other *maithe* of Connacht. According to the text there are four ‘royal chieftains’ or *rígh-thaoisechaibh* – Mág Oireachtaigh, Ó Fíonnachtaigh, Ó Maoil Bhrénainn, and Ó Flannagáin. Ó Flannagáin is said to possess the ‘High Stewardship’ (*árd mhaoraigeacht*) of Ua Conchobair over the other three. All *taoisigh* appear to have performed special duties for the king. Mac Branáin is said to possess the stewardship of Ua Conchobair’s dogs (*conmaor*). Ó hAinlidhe is to guard Ua Conchobair’s hostages. Ó Floinn is said to possess the stewardship of Ua Conchobair’s horses (*maoragheacht*). Others, not listed among the twelve *taoisigh* of Ua Conchobair are said to hold certain offices. Ó Taidhg – the king of Boyle (*rí Búille*) – acted as *mharasgál* or ‘marshal’. The *airdrígh* of Umhall, Ó Máille, along with Ó Flaitheartaigh are to command Ua Conchobair’s ships. The inauguration tract also tells us that, in addition to having to seemingly perform particular duties, the chieftains (*gach taoiseach*) held special estates from Ua Conchobair by virtue of their office, twenty four *bailte* each (*ceithre bhaile fichit*). The four ‘royal chieftains’ hold estates from Ua Conchobair double the size (forty-eight *bailte*) of those held by other *taoisigh*. The relevant line in the text runs as follows: ‘*Atáid immorro ceithre bhaile fichit do dhúthaigh ag gach Taoiseach díbh sin lena fheadhmantus féin ó Ua Conchabhair*’. The reference to ‘*dhúthaigh*’ here suggests that the land they possess was in some way seen as hereditary. If

³²⁴ Dillon, ‘O’Conor’, p. 197. These twelve chieftains are as follows: Ó Flannagáin, Mág Oireachtaigh, Ó Fíonnachtaigh of Clann Conmhaicne, Ó Fíonnachtaigh of Clann Murthuile, Ó Maoil Bhrénainn, Ó Floinn, Ó Fallamhain, Mac Branáin, Mac Ceithearnaigh, Ó Mannacháin, Ó hAinlidhe, Ó Coincheanainn.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

this is the case, then it follows that the office itself is hereditary since the passage suggests that they hold these lands because of the stewardship they perform for Ua Conchobair.

We may summarise the position of the *toisech*, as gleaned from the ‘Life’ of Maedóc of Ferns and the Ua Conchobair inauguration ode as follows: *toisig*, like kings, held an office and had to be inaugurated or ordained into that office. By virtue of possessing that office, they, like subkings, were expected to perform certain duties for their over-king and were expected to pay certain dues to that king also. Additionally though, the position brought certain privileges such as the endowment of estates. *Toisig* were separate from other ‘lords’ or *tigerna* because they held an office which required a ceremony of inauguration. Certain smaller kings might also be ordained as a *toisech*, and in the Ua Conchobair inauguration tract, we see the king of Boyle and the king of Umhall as examples of this. Much of this, at least, was also noted by MacCotter. He said that the *taisech tuaithe* ‘seems to have been [a] hereditary leader...[and] a formal title in twelfth-century Ireland’, and it was Latinised *dux*.³²⁶ He made little mention of the term *comes*, though.

How does this relate back to the *regibus/ducibus/comitibus/baronibus* gradation, found in the royal charters of the eleventh century? Perhaps certain parallels may be drawn with Norman England. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, formal titles were rarely used by the English nobility, instead they were often identified by the household office they possessed. There was, in fact, only one formal honorific title held in this period, that of ‘earl’ which was rendered *comes* in the Latin. ‘Those who bore the title formed a small elite within the aristocracy’, explained Robert Bartlett.³²⁷ The English *comes* was created, like our Irish *toisech*, in a formal ceremony, whereby they were ‘belted’ with a ceremonial sword.³²⁸ Alongside this rather

³²⁶ MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland*, pp 23, 46.

³²⁷ Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), p. 208.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 209.

select group (though numbers fluctuated over time) existed the other great ‘barons’ or landholders, from whose ranks the ‘earls’ or ‘*comites*’ were drawn. These earls formed ‘a very small group amongst the major tenants of the Crown and the comital title was obviously deemed the highest social distinction that a lay magnate could attain’.³²⁹ There are, of course, certain difficulties in taking the English model as a blueprint for Irish society. The closest parallel is to be found in the charter marked 4 in Flanagan’s text, where we hear mention of *comitibus* and *baronibus*, in that order. This correlates quite nicely with the English situation, whereby ‘*comes*’ serves as a parallel with the Irish *toísech* who, like his equivalent, the English ‘earl’ or ‘count’ is invested ceremonially into his office. The *baronibus* in charter 4 would, in this reading, equate with the great mass of English barons who were not ceremonially invested in an office. Goddard Henry Orpen also suggested that the *comes* of Irish charters was of higher standing than the *dux*, and, if this were so, would reinforce the parallel between the Irish *comes* and the English *comes*. In a charter from Áed Ua Conchobair bestowing lands to the community at Cîteaux, the witness list makes mention of a ‘Caro’, *comitte de Maglurig*. The position of *comitte* in this document can be set against that of *dux*, for the witness list also includes the names of two *duces*: ‘Donchathid, *duce de Cloind Tomaltaig*’ and ‘Flaithfertach *duce de Cloind Kathil*’. This ‘Caro’ has been identified as Cormac, son of Tomaltach, son of Conchobar Mac Diarmata, king (*ri*) of Clann Mael Ruandaidh or Mag Luirg.³³⁰ Of the rank of *comitte* (= *comes*), Orpen had the following to say: ‘I take [*comitte*] to stand for the ablative of *comes*, which seems to denote a higher title than *dux*. Cormac was a *righ* (king), while Mageraghty and O’Flannagan were *Taisighe*, or Chieftains, of their respective territories. Some such title as *comes* seems to be required here’.³³¹ While Orpen is, to my knowledge, one of the few, if not the only, historians of medieval

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ ALC 1244.11, A. Conn., 1244.12; Marie Therese Flanagan, *Charters*, pp 353-4, n. 15.

³³¹ Goddard H. Orpen, ‘Some Irish Cistercian documents’, *English Historical Review* 28 (110) (1913), pp 305-306, fn. 10.

Ireland to attempt to distinguish between Irish *duces* and *comes*, it is suggested that his conclusion is an erroneous one. Orpen attaches some considerable weight to the fact that this particular *comes* is a king, and thereby concludes that a *comes* must be of superior rank to a *dux*. As has been noted above though, in the Ua Conchobair inauguration tract we see the king of Boyle and Umhall styled *toisech*, and *toisech* appears to equate with the Latin *dux*. Thus we have kings (*reges*) being styled both *dux* and *comes* and it can hardly be enough to suggest that because a certain *comes* is a king, it follows that the *comes* must rank higher than the *dux*.

If anything, the inverse seems to be the case. In those charters which mention both *comes* and *duces*, in every single instance *dux* precedes *comes* in the address clauses, in which titles are quite clearly set down in descending order of importance.³³² Furthermore, in the *Life* of St Munna the *optimatibus* of Dimma son of Aed, *dux* of the Fothairt, are said to be composed of *comites*. In short, the story runs as follows.

Dimma, our *dux*, has two sons: Cellach and Cillian. He gives the former to the monastery of St Cuain and the latter to the monastery of St Munna. One day, Dimma, the *dux*, decides to go and visit his two sons, and is accompanied on his trip by his great men (*optimatibus*). They are pleased with what they see when they visit Cellach. Cillian, though, when they arrive at the monastery of St Munnu is said to be in a servile condition, leading a plough with other monks. This, we are told, greatly displeases the *comites* of the *dux* (*Et hoc multum displicuit commitibus ducis*).³³³ In this reading, the *comes* is seemingly of lesser standing than the *dux*.

Finally, the *Life* of Maedóc and *Gabh umad a Fheidhlimidh* make clear that the position of *dux* is of some considerable importance. For one, it is

³³² Unlike in Anglo-Norman England, where *comes* was the highest ranking noble. In pre-Norman England, *dux* was used to translate *eorl* ('earl'). *Comes* came to replace *dux* after the invasion because in Normandy William had been a *dux*. See C. P. Lewis, 'The early earls of Norman England', in Marjorie Chibnall (ed.), *Anglo-Norman studies XIII* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp 211-15. In twelfth-century Scotland the highest socio-legal rank under the king was labelled *comes*, which can be equated with the Gaelic term *mormaer*. See Taylor, *Shape of the state*, pp 34-6.

³³³ Charles Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, vol. II* (Oxford, 1910), s. xxi, pp 233-4.

the *dux*, not *comes*, that must be inaugurated into his office, like the king. And as the latter text makes clear, it is the *dux*, not the *comes* who must be present at the inauguration of the king.

That the *dux* is of higher standing than the *comes* is also reinforced by Gille of Limerick's *De statu ecclesiae* (c. 1070-1145). Gille makes use of a pyramid as a symbol for the structure of the church hierarchy. At one point in the text, he equates Church positions with their lay equivalents. Thus we see an analogy made between *imperator* (emperor) and *papa* (pope), *rex* (king) and *primatus* (primate), *dux* and *archipontifex* (archbishop), *comes* and *episcopus* (bishop), *miles* (perhaps knight or fighting man) and *sacerdos* (priest).³³⁴ Gille stresses the overall equality between primates, bishops and archbishops. When dealing with the connection between the parish and the monastery with the bishop, Gille uses the Latin *subdicio*, which stresses submission and authority. Conversely, when he speaks of the relationship between members of the hierarchy (the primate, the archbishop, the bishop), Gille uses *subiungo* and *subnecto*, which, as Fleming observes, stresses connection, rather than subjection. So, for Gille, primates, bishops and archbishops are all one and the same; they are all bishops.³³⁵ No doubt, to an extent, our *dux* and *comes* are also one and the same. All are members of the lordly class, clearly distinguishable from the commoners. It is also the case though that a hierarchy of position did exist within Gille's *generalis ecclesiae* or 'universal church' (distinguishable from the 'local church' and, below that, the laity) and thus, by analogy, within the lordly class. It is also significant for our purposes that Gille positioned *dux* above *comes* on this hierarchical structure.

The quandary with which we are presented, then, is that we have on the one hand an apparently hierarchical social structure of king – sub-

³³⁴ Gille, *De statu ecclesiae* in John Fleming, *Gille of Limerick (c. 1070-1145). Architect of a medieval church* (Dublin, 2001), pp 150, 152.

³³⁵ Fleming, *Gille*, pp 86-7. Conversely, when speaking of the relationship between archbishop and primate (and thus, by analogy, of *dux* and king), we see the use of the verb *obediere*: '*duo archiepiscopi...obedient uni primati*' (p. 150). Like *subdicio*, this would imply a greater tone of submission than *subiungo* or *subnecto*.

king – *dux* – *comes* – *baro* (possibly), and, on the other, the fact that a king might have below him on this ladder a subking, termed a subking (perhaps *subregulus*), another king termed a *dux* and yet another king termed a *comes* who seemingly holds a lesser position than the *dux*, who might also be a king. What can be said with certainty is that there existed a conceptual difference between *dux*, *comes*, and ‘baron’ in the minds of many eleventh- and twelfth-century writers. A *dux* can be equated with the Irish *toísech*, and appears to have been a holder of an office; an individual drawn, perhaps from the ranks of the *comites*. We can say much less about *comites* and *barones* than we can of *dux*. We see individuals also adorned with the title of ‘king’ serves as *duces*, but this is not perhaps overly problematic: as a *dux* was an office-holder, it was possible for lesser kings to serve in office at the behest of more powerful overkings.

3. ‘IMPERATOR SCOTORUM’

There is much that is remarkable about the life of Brian mac Cennétig – the man known to us as Brian Bóraime – not least the entry into the ninth-century Book of Armagh which terms him *imperator Scotorum* or ‘Emperor of the Gael’. Aubrey Gwynn, writing in the late 1970s, was perhaps the first to note the similarity of this title to that borne by Otto III of Germany. Otto III, a contemporary of Brian’s, was acclaimed as *imperator Romanorum* or ‘Emperor of the Romans’.³³⁶ More recently, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Seán Duffy have argued that, while Brian might well have been inspired by events in Germany, it is just as likely that he was drawing on contemporary happenings in Anglo-Saxon England as well.³³⁷ What was the significance of this act, though?

³³⁶ Aubrey Gwynn, ‘Brian in Armagh (1005)’, *Seanchas Ardmhacha* 9(1) (1978), pp 44-8.

³³⁷ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru – Ireland’s greatest king?* (Chalford Stroud, 2007), p. 134; Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013), p. 143. Marie Therese Flanagan also suggested that Brian might have borrowed the idea from the royal house of Wessex in her *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin Kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), pp 178-9.

For Ní Mhaonaigh, the adoption of the title ‘is indicative of the confidence that marked out his reign’, and suggested that he ‘rejuvenated’ an ‘Empire’ and was in fact inspired by ‘Imperial ambition’.³³⁸ For Duffy, the significance is two-fold. He argued unequivocally for the idea that the Scottish and Irish were, to borrow Máire Herbert’s phrase, ‘sea-divided Gaels’. Certain peoples of Gaelic Scotland and the Isles ‘were viewed, and viewed themselves’ as Irish, he suggested.³³⁹ As regards the *imperator* side of things, Duffy had the following to say:

‘in claiming that he too was an *imperator*, Brian intended all to know, both at home and abroad, that among the many kings of Ireland he was supreme. He was therefore trying to give expression to a new reality: that while Ireland would continue to have many kings, he – by compulsion or persuasion – was to be king over all the rest.’³⁴⁰

It was, he said, a title ‘unique in Irish history’ and an ‘insight into Brian’s ambition and sense of his own status.’³⁴¹

Ignoring that aspect of the title as relating to a perceived cultural unity that spanned the Irish sea, we may sum up the significance of the title quite concisely:

1. Brian was extremely ambitious;
2. He struggled to find the vocabulary to express both his achievements and ambition;
3. Thus he borrowed from the Anglo-Saxons and Germans a title that could adequately give voice to his ambition;
4. An ambition which might well have had imperial tones.

³³⁸ Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, pp 134, 135.

³³⁹ Duffy, *Battle of Clontarf*, p. 145. For connections with Scotland, see his ‘Ireland and Scotland, 1014-1169: contracts and caveats’, in Alfred P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas. Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 348-56.

³⁴⁰ Duffy, *Battle of Clontarf*, p. 143.

³⁴¹ Seán Duffy, ‘Brian Boru: *imperator Scotorum*’, *History Ireland* 22(2) (2014), p. 10.

But just what exactly did ‘Imperial ambition’ entail? That is to say, how did Brian conceive of ‘empire’ or ‘*imperium*’? Much has been said about the Ottonian concept of ‘empire’, of what Otto I, II and III, and indeed their successor, Henry II, thought about ‘*imperium*’, but very little has been said about what Brian – or, at least, Mael Suthain – considered *imperator* to mean. Furthermore, how does this title – *imperator Scotorum* – relate to the titles of *ard-ri* (high-king), *ri herend* (‘king of Ireland’) or *ri herenn co fressebra* (‘king of Ireland with opposition’)? Does it, in fact, relate to them at all? To what extent was Brian drawing on insular antecedents, rather than simply aping continental contemporaries? After all, Muirchú, as early as the late seventh century, termed Loegaire, pagan king of Tara, ‘*imperator barbarorum*’ in his ‘Life’ of Patrick.³⁴²

3(a.) The concept of ‘empire’ in continental Europe

What follows is a bare-bones discussion of the concept of ‘empire’ or *imperium* in medieval Europe. It does not pretend to be anything near comprehensive; ‘empire’ is worthy of a study all to itself and an exhaustive discussion cannot hope to take place here. The discussion that follows is meant simply to highlight the inadequacy of phrases like ‘imperial ambition’ when applied to Brian’s adoption of the title *imperator Scotorum*.

Obviously, the title had its roots in ancient Rome. It was used, geographically, to apply to lands subject to the Roman people and, later, to the Roman Emperor. It did not, at first, allow for a number of *regna* but, with the invasion of the Germanic tribes, which turned provinces within the Empire into *regna*, the term *imperium* came to imply the

³⁴² This last point was at least acknowledged by Denis Casey and Bernard Meehan in ‘Brian Boru and the Book of Armagh’, *History Ireland* 22(2) (2014), p. 29. However, I think the full significance of this was not fully drawn out, perhaps because of space constraints: the article only ran for two pages. They seemed to argue that the title Mael Suthain afforded Brian may not have been meant in as laudatory a fashion as historians have suggested.

authority of the Emperor over kingdoms.³⁴³ The concept did not die with the Roman Empire in the fifth century, though. It survived in the west, fossilised within the liturgy of the Christian church.³⁴⁴ It survived too in the east, in the form of the eastern Emperor at Byzantium. We are concerned here with the concept of Empire in the west, though of course western rulers often drew upon Byzantine thinking on *imperium* at various times as and when it suited them.

The idea of a western ‘empire’ was to find perhaps its most famous expression in the crowning of Charlemagne in St Peter’s Basilica in Rome on Christmas Day 800. What is important for present purposes, however, is the revival of the concept of *imperium* in the tenth century. Thus we leap forward some one hundred and fifty-five years to the reign of Otto I. Otto was crowned emperor in Rome in 962. Some, however, awarded him the moniker long before events in Rome; Widukind of Corvey, in his *Res gestae Saxonicae*, suggested that Otto was recognised as emperor after his vanquishing of the heathen foe at the Lechfeld in the year 955. In fact, Widukind made no mention of the coronation in Rome at all. In short, there existed a *Roman* imperial idea and a *non-Roman* imperial idea.

The non-Roman imperial idea was nothing new by the tenth century. Actually, the two conceptions of empire had intersected in the events that took place on 25 December 800. The Franks and Pope Leo III had very different ideas about the implications of Charlemagne’s imperial title. For the former, Charlemagne was by no means a specifically *Roman* emperor. For them, the coronation did little more than acknowledge the power he held by virtue of his rule over peoples.³⁴⁵ This might lie behind

³⁴³ Robert Folz, (Ogilvie, Sheila Ann, trans.), *The concept of empire in western Europe from the fifth to the fourteenth century* (Westport, Connecticut, 1969), p. 6.

³⁴⁴ Folz *The concept of empire*, p. 8; Janet Nelson, ‘Kingship and empire’, in J.H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of medieval political thought, c. 350-c.1450* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 230.

³⁴⁵ Nelson, ‘Kingship and empire’, p. 232.

Einhard's claim that Charlemagne was unhappy when the Pope placed the imperial crown upon the former's head.³⁴⁶

What is significant though is that there existed amongst the Franks a conception of empire neither solely dependent on Rome nor the Papacy. It was on this non-Roman imperial idea of empire that Widukind was to draw in the tenth century. As has already been noted, his silence on the coronation in Rome in 962 is surely telling. Central to Widukind's conception of Empire was acclamation as *imperator* by the army after victory (in this case, at the Lechfeld).³⁴⁷ But there was more to the 'non-Roman' idea of empire than the Germanic *Koenigsheil* (which in fact had Roman roots). That the emperor was a king who ruled over other kings, and also, other nations, was of equal importance to Widukind. Significantly, after having conquered the Saxons, Widukind writes that Charlemagne was *imperator quippe ex rege creatus est*. Now, after becoming ruler of more than one people, Charlemagne was to be considered emperor. As when writing about Otto I, Widukind makes no mention of the papal coronation in the year 800. Widukind has the dying Conrad I state: *Ipse enim vere rex erit imperator multorum populorum*. So, for James Brundage, the two essential qualifications that Widukind set down for an emperor are that he must be acclaimed by the army and that he must be ruler over a sizeable territory inhabited by 'several distinct populations or nations', and that he must rule over other kings in that territory.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Robert Folz, (Anderson, J. E., trans.), *The coronation of Charlemagne, 25 December 800* (London, 1974), pp 149-50; Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne: the formation of a European identity* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 116.

³⁴⁷ Eckhard Müller-Mertens, 'The Ottonians as kings and emperors', in Timothy Reuter (ed.), *The new Cambridge medieval history volume III, c. 900 – c. 1024* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 251.; John H. Bernhardt, 'Concepts and practice of empire in Ottonian Germany (950-1024)', in Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean (eds), *Representations of power in medieval Germany, 800-1500* (Turnhout, 2006), pp 145-6; James A. Brundage, 'Widukind of Corvey and the "non-Roman" imperial idea', *Mediaeval Studies* 22 (1960), p. 20; Benjamin Arnold, *Medieval Germany 500-1300. A political interpretation* (London, 1997), p. 75; Folz, *The concept of empire*, p. 49.

³⁴⁸ Brundage, 'Widukind of Corvey', p. 25.

None of this is to say that Roman, and indeed Byzantine, conceptions of empire did not inform Otto I's *imperium*. For Robert Folz, Otto's empire 'while remaining in substance profoundly Frankish, was in the process of adopting the dual tradition, Roman and pontifical'.³⁴⁹ And in fact, Rome-centred concepts of empire gradually gained in importance throughout the period of Ottonian rule, reaching its apotheosis during the reign of Otto III (994-1002). Of utmost importance to the third Otto, whose reign corresponded exactly with Brian's rise to power, was the idea of '*renovatio*'; the *renovatio imperii Romanorum* or 'renewal of the empire of the Romans'. During Otto III's reign, '[e]mperorship, emperor and the whole empire came to be orientated towards Rome'.³⁵⁰ Yet he also borrowed from Byzantine tradition – in investing Boleslaw of Poland as co-adjutor of the empire and bestowing Stephen of Hungary with a royal crown, Otto was mimicking the Byzantine prototype of a hierarchy of rulers beneath the *basileus* or emperor.³⁵¹

Otto III's successor, Henry II, was to row back from the idea of an *imperium Romanorum* and towards that of an *imperium Christianum*. The Roman conception of empire nevertheless contributed to the pool of imperial ideas from which German rulers picked and chose from in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Just as important though was the contribution of non-Roman imperial ideas, which found forceful expression through the writings of people like Widukind of Corvey.

3(b.) Insular conceptions of 'empire'

Post-Roman ideas of empire were not the sole preserve of the Franks. Ecclesiastical writers in the insular world were also thinking about *imperium*, as early as the seventh century. Thus we see Bede speak of *imperium* in his *Historia Ecclesiae*. N. J. Higham has drawn out some of

³⁴⁹ Folz, *The concept of empire*, p. 51; Bernhardt, 'Ottonian Germany', p. 154.

³⁵⁰ Müller-Mertens, 'Ottonians as kings', p. 260.

³⁵¹ Folz, *The concept of empire*, p. 65; Janet Nelson, 'Kingship and empire' in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge history of medieval political thought, c. 350 – c. 1450* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 245. See also D. M. Nicol, 'Byzantine political thought', in *Ibid*, pp 57-8.

the major aspects of Bede's conception of *imperium*. In short, Bede expected his *imperium*-wielding English kings to rule over numerous tribes or peoples and that lesser kings be 'at least as likely to acknowledge the[ir] superior power without fighting as in consequence of military defeat'.³⁵² Significantly, Bede never referred to any of the Anglo-Saxon kings as *imperator*; he only ever spoke of their *imperium*. The latter seemed to imply 'rulership over' – both in the sense of 'overkingship' and also in respect of the relationship between the Anglo-Saxons and other peoples in Britain, namely the domination of the Britons by the *gens Anglorum*.³⁵³ Higham wrote:

'The *imperium*, or 'overkingship', of which [Bede] wrote, was merely Anglo-Saxon kingship taken to the furthest extent of its logical development, so not an institution or office separate from "kingship" and requiring a distinctive terminology. In his attempt to distinguish the greater kings from their lesser neighbours, Bede may have been among the first to equate Latin *imperium* with the powers wielded by them, to our general confusion, but his assumption that such kings, like Roman emperors, ruled over a variety of provinces, and different peoples or races – and particularly the Britons – is fundamental to his use of the term.'³⁵⁴

Thus, for Higham, Bede, in acknowledging that most seventh-century kings in the island of Britain were subordinate to some greater king, and in struggling to find the vocabulary to express the nature of this overkingship, drew an analogy with Britain under Roman rule and borrowed the Latin term *imperium* to do so. Of course, Bede had little

³⁵² H. J. Higham, *An English empire. Bede and the Anglo-Saxon kings* (Manchester, 1995), p. 63.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 47.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22. See also, D. P. Kirby, *The earliest English kings*, 2nd edition (London, 2000; first edn., 1991), p. 17.

real understanding of Roman Britain; ‘his perception of the beginnings of Roman rule rested on a recognition by the various rulers of the British tribes of the military prestige of a particular *imperator*’.³⁵⁵ In fact, his notion of *imperium* was ‘a peculiarly English phenomenon, albeit clothed in the language of the imperial past.’³⁵⁶ Bede then set out a list of seven kings – two pagan, five Christian – who could be said to have exercised *imperium* beyond the realm of the local: Æelle, Ceawlin, Athelberht, Raedwald, Edwin, Oswald and Oswiu. These were termed *Bretwalda* or *Brytenwealda* (‘rulers of Britain’) in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (composed c. 892, though there is some confusion here: *Bretwalda* as opposed to *Brytenwealda* appears in only one recension of the *Chronicle*, the A text, and the scholarly consensus appears to be that we are dealing with a scribal error. Thus the title *Bretwalda*, in the words of David Dumville, ‘becomes a scribal curiosity, no longer a peg on which to hang large hypotheses of English constitutional history... We have no reason to allow that *Bretwalda*, in effect a ghost-word, was an ancient title’).³⁵⁷

Some scholars have sought to downplay the significance of the term *imperium* in Bede’s work. Judith McClure has argued that the word held no special meaning for Bede. Rather, she said, Bede was a ‘stylist’, hungry for variety and, just as when narrating deaths or baptisms, he varied his vocabulary when describing royal rule. In the Roman sources from which he drew, argued McClure, Bede would have found *imperium* and *regnum* used interchangeably and so he followed suit. In his *Historia Ecclesiae*, *imperium* means little more than ‘rule’.³⁵⁸ Patrick Wormald has also attacked the idea that Bede distinguished *imperium* from *regnum*, noting that he used imperial vocabulary for kings like Egfrith and Osred

³⁵⁵ Higham, *An English empire*, p. 29.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁵⁷ David N. Dumville, ‘The terminology of overkingship in early Anglo-Saxon England’, in John Hines (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons. From the migration period to the eighth century: an ethnographic perspective* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 353.

³⁵⁸ Judith McClure, ‘Bede’s Old Testament kings’, in Patrick Wormald (ed.), *Ideal and reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon society. Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), pp 97-8.

of Northumbria, Caedwalla and Ine of Wessex, and Wulfhere and Aethelred of Mercia, ‘few of whom feature even in modern lists of *Bretwaldas*’.³⁵⁹ Others, like Dumville, have noted that Bede only ever used the term *imperium* quite sparingly and that his use of the term in relation to individuals like Egfrith, Aldfrith and Osred is quite consistent in his application of the term to overkingship: these men, rulers of Northumbria, can be said to have held control over Bernicia and Deira, that is, over a number of kingdoms. Furthermore, while *regnum* was sometimes alternated with *imperium* ‘for elegant variation’, the reverse is not the case.³⁶⁰ D. P. Kirby argued along similar lines to Dumville. Bede, he noted, used *imperium* when describing overlordship, that is the power of an individual who wielded authority in more than one kingdom. This *imperium* could be local: kings of Mercia, Wessex and Northumbria could all be held to have exercised a form of ‘local *imperium*’ (here he is echoing Dumville’s argument). But there were also those who could be said to possess a more wide-reaching *imperium* – these were Bede’s seven *Brytenwealda*.³⁶¹ As was mentioned above, Bede’s overkings are only ever termed just that – kings or *reges*. Although their power was described in terms of *imperium* they themselves were never *imperator*.

If Bede was content to speak only of Oswald’s *imperium*, one of the ecclesiastic’s contemporaries, Adomnán, abbot of Iona (r. 679-704) went one step further and, in his *Vita Columbae*, styled the ruler of Northumbria *totius Britanniae imperator a deo ordinatus*. In that same text Diarmait mac Cerbaill, said to have died in the year 565 AD, is described in similar terms to Oswald, though not as *imperator*: ‘*totius Scotiae regnatorem deo auctore ordinatum*’. He stops short of calling Diarmait *imperator* though, and it might be wondered if this is meant to

³⁵⁹ Patrick Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the origins of the *gens Anglorum*’, in Patrick Wormald (ed.), *Ideal and reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon society. Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), p. 108. See pp 107-9 for the entirety of his attack on the idea that *imperium* can be distinguished from *regnum* in Bede’s work.

³⁶⁰ Dumville, ‘The terminology of overkingship’, pp 350-51.

³⁶¹ D. P. Kirby, *The earliest English kings*, Second edition (London, 2000), pp 17-18.

imply anything about Diarmait's standing *vis-à-vis* Oswald. It will also be noted that, in both instances, Adomnán makes use of the verb *ordinare*. Certainly, Michael J. Enright believed this was significant and advanced the thesis that ritual anointing was first conceived of by Adomnán in his 'Life' of Saint Columba. He suggested that Adomnán, using the Old Testament as his template, and in particular the model of kingship set out in the 'Book of Kings', sought to provide a blueprint of sorts for a thoroughly Christian conception of kingship.³⁶² Other scholars have seen the importance of this work in the development of the ideology of kingship from the seventh century onwards.³⁶³ For Francis Byrne, Adomnán provided the 'earliest equivocal statement' of Uí Néill claims to rulership over all of Ireland.³⁶⁴

In doing so, Adomnán remained rather quiet as to the position of Tara. This was not the case with another ecclesiastic writing at around the same time. Muirchú, a churchman from Armagh, in his *Vita Patricii*, styled Loegaire (who is supposed to have died c. 461) as *imperator barbarorum*, with his *caput* at Tara. The motivating factor behind Muirchú's work, and indeed behind Tírechán's *Collectanea* was to lay claim for Armagh to many of the older, 'unattached' churches of Ireland. In the seventh century, Armagh was 'deliberately investigating these older churches with a view to claiming them for Patrick' and sought to gain control of the Patrick cult for Armagh.³⁶⁵ But much as with Adomnán and the *familia* of Colum Cille, Muirchú sought to forge a connection between the politically ascendant Uí Néill and Armagh.³⁶⁶ Both ecclesiastical centres seemingly award pre-eminence in Ireland to

³⁶² Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons. The origin of the royal anointing ritual* (New York, 1985)

³⁶³ J.M. Picard, 'The purpose of Adomnán's *Vitae Columbae*', *Peritia* 1 (1982), pp 160-77; F.J. Byrne, *Irish kings and high kings* (Dublin, 2001), p. 260.

³⁶⁴ Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 97.

³⁶⁵ Charles Doherty, 'The cult of St Patrick and the politics of Armagh in the seventh century', in Jean-Michel Picard (ed.), *Ireland and northern France, AD 600-850* (Dublin, 1991), pp 53-94, esp. p. 94.

³⁶⁶ For more on the struggle between Iona and Armagh to forge an alliance with the Uí Néill and to establish primacy in Ireland, see Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells, and Derry. The history and historiography of the monastic familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988)

the Uí Néill – Adomnán, by terming one of the descendants of the southern Uí Néill ruler of all Ireland, Muirchú through forging a link between Tara and the title *imperator*. Buoying Uí Néill claims to hegemony is the motivating factor here, of course, but what exactly are we to read into the use of terms like *imperator*? To what extent were they, like Bede, struggling to express the nature of overkingship? It is surely significant that Muirchú expressly termed Loegaire *imperator*, and held that Tara was his *caput*. For Tírechán, Tara appears as a *civitas*, itself a term with imperial connotations. As Edel Bhreathnach has noted, for medieval kings on the continent, old Roman capitals or *civitates* often held some importance, and these kings used these capitals as a means to support their own political ambitions (something, we shall see, that was not lost on Edgar in tenth-century England).³⁶⁷ In a similar way, Tara was central to Uí Néill political claims – a claim to overlordship over the entire island of Ireland. The title *rex Temro* clearly ‘denoted some form of supremacy in Ireland’.³⁶⁸

What is noteworthy is that two of these Irish writers – Adomnán and Muirchú – were happy to go one step further than Bede when trying to convey the authority wielded by the greatest kings. Bede’s *reges* might well have possessed *imperium*, but they were not *imperatores*. For Adomnán and Muirchú, those individuals who could be said to possess hegemony over the entire island of Britain (Oswald) or Ireland (Loegaire) were, it seems, to be called *imperatores*. There is much that remains murky here, but what can be said with reasonable confidence is that overkingship was, by the early eighth century, being equated with *imperium* and maybe, at least for some writers, those whose rule could be said to be greater than all others, might reasonably be called *imperator*.

3(c.) The tenth century

³⁶⁷ Edel Bhreathnach, ‘Temoria: caput scotorum?’, *Ériu* 47 (1996), p. 77.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 88. However, as the work of Denis Casey has suggested, perhaps Bhreathnach goes too far in her argument for Tara’s special status being incontrovertibly accepted by many of the Munster kings and men of learning.

In the second half of the tenth century, several western rulers began to style themselves *imperator*, and it would be surprising if, as perhaps with Brian in 1005, they were not to draw inspiration from one another. We first see Æthelstan styled *Basileus Anglorum et equae totius Bryttaniae orbis curagulus* in a charter dated from 935. Later, Eadwig (r. 955-59) was described as *gentis Anglorum caeterarumque per gyrum nationum basileus*. Then follows the reign of Edgar (955) who bore a number of titles, including both *Rex Anglorum* and *totius Britanniae basileus gubernator et rector*.³⁶⁹ Edgar is most famous though for his ‘delayed’ or ‘deferred’ coronation of 973. As Janet Nelson has convincingly argued, in this coronation at Bath we see the expression of imperial ideas.³⁷⁰ Surely, she said, Bath, with its Roman buildings, was deliberately chosen to conjure up images of an imperial past.³⁷¹ It will be recalled that, just a few short years earlier, Otto I had been crowned emperor in Rome, in 962 (though he had been regarded by some as emperor since 955). And it will also be recalled that central to Otto’s conception of empire was rulership over kings and peoples. Nelson suggested that all of this directly influenced events in England in 973 given the close contact between the Ottonian court and English kings. She also notes that, in the middle of the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon monarchy was coming to be regarded by clerical authors as something which possessed an ‘imperial’ element; he was no mere king but one who ruled over a plurality of peoples. Thus as early as the 940s we see Archbishop Oda speak of Edgar’s father, Edmund’s own *regalis imperium*, to which ‘all peoples (*gentes*) are subject’.³⁷²

It might therefore be significant that, in the *Annals of Ulster* for the year 980 we find our first contemporary usage of the term ‘high-king

³⁶⁹ James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon state* (London, 2000), pp 40-41; P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon charters. An annotated list and bibliography* (London, 1968), p. 175, no. 430.

³⁷⁰ Janet Nelson, ‘Inauguration rituals’, in P. H. Sawyer and I. N. Wood (eds), *Early medieval kingship* (Leeds, 1979), p. 69.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

of Ireland'. It is reported that, in this year, Domnall ua Néill, *ardri Erenn*, died in Armagh (*post penitentiam i nArd Macha obiit*).³⁷³ He is not universally hailed as such, though. In the *Annals of Inisfallen* he is styled *rig Temrach* or 'king of Tara', as is the case in the *Chronicon Scotorum*.³⁷⁴ It has long been thought that the Irish law tracts, most of which can be dated to the eighth century, make no mention of a high-king of Ireland though they did acknowledge a hierarchy of kingship. For example *Críth Gablach* sets out three divisions of kingship – *rí benn*, *rí budein* and *rí bunaid cach cinn* – in terms that seem to imply varieties of overkingship.³⁷⁵ The *Críth Gablach* explains that the *rí bunaid cach cinn* is a 'king of kings' (*Ise ríi rurech insin*). As appears to have been the case in Anglo-Saxon England, a multiplicity of lesser kings seem to have been ruled over by an over-king (that phenomenon that Bede described in terms of *imperium*). Such a view may not be entirely correct, however. Liam Breatnach has drawn attention to two instances of the term *ardrach* in the law texts, of which he says 'there can be little doubt that [this] form represent[s] the genitive singular of a compound of *ard* and *rí*'.³⁷⁶ The term used in 980 itself is not a new construct. It is nevertheless significant that we see its first contemporary usage in the annals at this time.

It seems quite plausible that the styling of Domnall ua Néill as *ardri Erenn* was influenced by events in England and in Germany. Certainly in terms of timing it fits perfectly. It might also be significant that we find our first contemporary usage of this title in the *Annals of Ulster*, which have a definite northern – in particular, Armagh – bias. Armagh, after all, had, since the seventh century, been anxious to push

³⁷³ AU 980.2.

³⁷⁴ AI 980.2, CS 978.

³⁷⁵ Historians have equated these titles with king of a petty tuath, a king over several tuaithe, and a king of overkings. Mac Neill literally translated them as a 'king of peaks', a 'king of troops' and 'a king of the stock of every head'. The *AL* translates them as a 'king of hills', a 'king of companies', and a 'king the source of every head'. See Eoin Mac Neill, 'Ancient Irish law. The law of status or franchise', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 36C (1923), p. 301; *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), pp 329, 331; *CIH* 2 568.9.

³⁷⁶ Liam Breatnach, 'Ardri as an old compound', *Ériu* 37 (1986), p. 192.

the idea of the Uí Néill as kings of Ireland, and had once done so through the use of terms like *imperator*.

It is surely no coincidence either, then, that it is at Armagh, in 1005, that Brian Bóraime is styled *imperator Scotorum*. In many ways, this seems to be the culmination of a process that began with the likes of Adomnán and Muirchú, but perhaps found new impetus in the tenth century with events in Germany and in England. While the imperial coronation of Edgar in 973 was influential (and, as Seán Duffy has stressed, Brian succeeded to the kingship of Munster just three years later), and while there is indeed a close similarity between the title of *imperator Scotorum* and *imperator Romanorum*, it is important to remember that this was no mere aping of fashionable European trends; the idea of an Irish king-of-kings had been slowly cultivated in Armagh for centuries. This much, at least, has been recognised by Byrne in *Irish kings and high kings*. He, in fact, put the case most lucidly of all:

‘Brian Bóruma did not create a high-kingship of Ireland: he built on foundations that had been laid over the preceding centuries by the Uí Néill, north and south. His claim to be *imperator Scottorum*, inscribed by his notary Máel Suthain in the Book of Armagh on his visit there in 1005, may indeed have implied overlordship not merely of Ireland but also of the Gaelic realm in Britain, and such wider authority is implied in the unusually fulsome obituary accorded him by the Armagh annalist’.³⁷⁷

What might be novel is the insistence that Brian ruled over peoples; and not merely the Irish. His obituary, in the *Annals of Ulster*, describes him both as ‘king of Ireland’ (*righ nErenn*), and ‘over-king of the Irish of Ireland, and of the foreigners and of the Britons, the Augustus of the

³⁷⁷ F.J. Byrne, ‘Ireland and her neighbours, c. 1014 – c. 1072’, in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.) *A new history of Ireland volume I. Prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), p. 862.

whole of north-west Europe’ (*ardrí Gaidhel Erenn ocus Gall ocus Bretan, August iartair tuaiscirt Eorpa uile*).³⁷⁸ The inclusion of the ‘foreigners’ – by virtue of their very title not considered to be Irish – indicates that the moniker afforded Brian in the Book of Armagh was not designed solely to convey cultural affinity in the context of the Irish Sea world, that is, with the peoples of modern Scotland. Those Vikings established in Ireland were not considered to be Irish in perhaps the same way certain inhabitants of Scotland were. In fact their very ‘otherness’ was essential to later texts, like the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*. Nor can we overlook their inclusion in Brian’s obit. The annalist that composed this entry was claiming that Brian actually exerted rulership over these peoples. Whether he did or not, or whether they considered Brian an overlord, is to miss the point. Rulership over peoples was a fundamental aspect of the German and English conception of ‘empire’. So it was with Ireland. References to the Britons and so forth imply more than a mere interest in these areas shown by Brian. They are an essential prop to his claim to be *Imperator Scottorum*, which we might read rather as something like *rex Scotiae, imperator*. For Brian was not claiming to be an ‘emperor of the Irish’ per se, but rather an Irish emperor, who ruled over many peoples – Irish, the ‘Gaill’ and the Britons.

There is no use of the term *imperator* in Brian’s obit in the *Annals of Ulster*, nor is there any use of the Irish rendering of that term, *impire* or *impere*, which we find in some of the annalistic entries for earlier centuries. Conversely, we do see Brian termed *impire Éireann* in the *Leabhar Oiris*, but this is a much later text.³⁷⁹ It did draw heavily on older texts though, in particular the twelfth-century *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*.³⁸⁰ Still, there is no reference to *imperator* or *impire* in that text

³⁷⁸ AU 1014.

³⁷⁹ Meidhbhín Ní Úrdáil has suggested that the text was compiled in the early part of the eighteenth century: ‘...tráchtas staire Muimhneach a teaglaimíodh, is cosúil, sa chéad cheathrú den ochtú haois déag, a bhunús’. See eadem., ‘Annála Inse Faithleann an Ochtú Céad Déag agus Cath Chluain Tarbh’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 20 (2005), p. 108. See also Colm O Lochlainn, ‘Poets on the battle of Clontarf II’, *Éigse* 4 (1945), p. 36.

³⁸⁰ Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, p. 123.

either, although the *Leabhar Oiris* does seem to borrow from it when it calls Brian *Ochtifin Iustiat na n-Gaoidheal* (the *Cogad* terms him ‘Octavian’ also).³⁸¹ Terms like this are important, though, because while we might not see any references to *impire* in AU 1014, we do see Brian termed the ‘Augustus’ of north-west Europe, heavily implying his imperial status (‘Augustus’ here relates, axiomatically, to ‘Augustus Caesar’).

3(d.) The portrayal of Brian in the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*

It was once believed that the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, most likely a twelfth-century production, was written at Muirchertach Ua Briain’s request, and that we might therefore view the portrayal of Brian therein as a paradigm for Muirchertach, Brian’s great-grandson.³⁸² Recently, though, this view has been challenged by Denis Casey. Casey noted that Brian’s son Tadc, Muirchertach’s ancestor, was entirely absent from any surviving versions of the *Cogad*. In fact we only hear mention of another son of Brian, Donnchad, the ancestor of a rival branch of the Uí Briain. This suggests, argued Casey, that the *Cogad* was actually produced not for Muirchertach, but as propaganda for a rival branch of the dynasty, possibly at the behest of Brian Gleanna Maidhir in support of his claims to the kingship of Munster.³⁸³ Thus, Brian, in the *Cogad*, cannot be viewed as a paradigm for Muirchertach, nor should he necessarily be viewed as a paradigm for anybody else either. It is suggested, though, that Brian is portrayed in imperial terms in this text.

The obit given to Brian in the *Cogad* is quite effusive – he is Augustus, he is Octavian, ruling over many peoples. Brian, it is said in his

³⁸¹ R. I. Best, ‘The *Leabhar Oiris*’, *Ériu* 1 (1904), p. 90. ‘Octavian’ was of course the name of the first Augustus Caesar.

³⁸² Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘*Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*: some dating considerations’, *Peritia* 9 (1995), pp 354-77; Seán Duffy, ‘“The western world’s tower of honour and dignity”: the career of Muirchertach Ua Briain in context’, in Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the twelfth century: reform and renewal* (Dublin, 2006), pp 69-70.

³⁸³ Denis Casey, ‘A reconsideration of the authorship and transmission of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 113C (2013), pp 139-61.

panegyric towards the end of the text, had won many battles. ‘He was the beautiful, ever-victorious Octavian, for the prosperity and freedom of his country and his race (*Rob ésin in tOctauin aobhda ilbuadhach imshochar, ocus imsaordhacht a atharrdha ocus a chineoil*). He was the strong, irresistible, second Alexander (*rob é an tAlaxandar tailc, talcair tanaiste ar treoir*), for energy, and for dignity, and for attacks, and for battles, and for triumphs. And he was the happy, wealthy, peaceable Solomon of the Gaedhil. He was the faithful, fervent, honourable, gallant David of Erin, for truthfulness, and for worthiness, and for the maintenance of sovereignty. He was the magnificent, brilliant Moses, for chastity, and unostentatious devotion’.³⁸⁴

While the deposition of twenty ounces of gold at the altar in Armagh is mentioned in the *Cogad*, there is no use of the title inscribed in the ‘Book of Armagh’ in the relating of this event. Still, it might be significant that, very shortly after this event, we hear of Brian drawing tribute from various peoples:

‘He sent forth after that a naval expedition upon the sea, viz., the Gaill of Ath Cliath, and most of Port Lairge, and of the Uí Ceinnselaigh, and of the Uí Ethach of Mumhain, and of almost all the men of Ireland, such of them as were fit to go to sea; and they levied royal tribute from the Saxons and Britons, and the Lemhnaigh of Alba, and Airer-Gaedhil, and their pledges and hostages along with the chief tribute (*gur tobhaigsiot an cíos rioghda Shaxan ocus Bretan, ocus Lemnaigh, ocus Alban, ocus Airer Gaoidhel uile, ocus a mbraighde ocus aneidire, maille le moir chíos*). Brian distributed all the tribute according to rights, viz., a third part of it to the king of Ath Cliath; and a third to the warriors of Laighin and of the Uí Eathach of Mumhain; and another third

³⁸⁴ CGRG, p. 205.

to the professors of sciences and arts, and to every one who was most in need of it.’³⁸⁵

The levying of tribute from a population group was indicative of the payer’s submission and of the payee’s overlordship. The object of this passage then is to show Brian’s overlordship of different peoples; on the face of it, the English, the Welsh, and the Scots; as stated an essential element in non-Roman notions of empire. Attention should be drawn, however, to Seán Duffy’s excellent recent biography of Brian. There, Duffy argues convincingly that references to *rioghda Shaxan ocus Bretan* do not refer to the English and the Welsh, but rather, to people of Anglian origin in Lothian, the Cumbrians of Clydesdale, the Lennox around Loch Lomond and the Cowal peninsula – a much less expansive geographic area. This was no ‘vast pillaging of England, Wales and Scotland’, said Duffy but ‘a localised raid on the multi-ethnic communities who could be reached via the Firth of Clyde’.³⁸⁶ Brian could count Domnall mac Eimhin mic Cainnigh, the earl of Marr (*mormhaer Marr i nAlbain*) amongst his number at the battle of Clontarf, as has been highlighted by Seán Duffy.³⁸⁷ This might well be indicative of some influence wielded in Scotland. What this passage makes clear is that Brian was attempting to exert his rule over many peoples, over certain territories in modern Scotland and, as has been said, the ‘foreigners’ of Ireland’s Viking towns.

There are also parallels drawn between Brian and the Dál Cais and the very embodiment of the medieval emperor, Charlemagne, in the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*. That text equates the county Clare dynasty with the Franks ‘ ‘They were the Franks of ancient Fodhla (Ireland)’, it proclaims, ‘in intelligence and pure valour’ (*Frainc na Fofla fonndairdi, ar glicus, ocus ar glangaisced*).³⁸⁸ More recently, some historians have

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 137.

³⁸⁶ Duffy, *Battle of Clontarf*, p. 149.

³⁸⁷ AU 1014.2; CS 1012.

³⁸⁸ CGRG, p. 161.

argued that Asser's life of Alfred the Great, which itself drew on Einhard's 'Life of Charlemagne', served as an exemplar for the *Cogad*. Without suggesting too much here, one might certainly draw some comparisons between Einhard's text and the 'War of the Irish with the Foreigners'. Einhard praised Charlemagne's learning and patronage of the arts. Charlemagne, he says, 'cultivated the liberal arts most studiously and, greatly respecting those who taught them, he granted them great honours' (*Artes liberales studioissime coluit, earumque doctores plurimum venerates magnis adificiebat honoribus*).³⁸⁹ In the *Cogad*, Brian too is, in similar terms, portrayed as a pillar of learning: 'He sent professors and masters (*saoithe ocus maigistreacha*) to teach wisdom and knowledge; and to buy books beyond the sea, and the great ocean...and Brian, himself, gave the price of learning and the price of books to every one separately who went on this service.'³⁹⁰ Both the Carolingian ruler and the Irishman are held up as lovers of religion and of the Church. Charlemagne 'practised the Christian religion' with 'great piety and devotion'. Einhard explains that it was '[f]or this reason he constructed a church of great beauty at Aachen and adorned it with gold and silver and lamps, and with railings and portals made of solid bronze. Since he could not procure columns and marble from anywhere else he took the trouble to have them brought from Rome and Ravenna' (*...ac propter hoc plurimae pulchritudinis basilicam Aquisgrani exstruxit auroque et argento et luminaribus atque ex aere solido cancellis et ianuis adornavit. Ad cuius structuram cum columnas et Marmora aliunde habere non posset, Roma atque Ravenna devehenda curavit*).³⁹¹ Brian Bóruma is also portrayed as a builder of churches: 'By him were erected also noble churches in Ireland and their sanctuaries...Many works, also, and repairs were made by him. By him were erected the church of Cell Dálua, and the

³⁸⁹ Einhard, 'Life of Charlemagne', ch. 25. See David Ganz (ed. & trans.), *Two lives of Charlemagne* (Harmondsworth, 2008), p. 36; O. Holder-Egger (ed.), *Vita Karoli magni. MGH SRG XXV* (Hanover, 1911), p. 30.

³⁹⁰ CGRG, p. 139.

³⁹¹ Einhard, 'Life of Charlemagne', ch. 26. See Ganz, *Two lives*, p. 36; Holder-Egger, *Vita Karoli*, pp 30-1.

church of Inis Cealtra, and the bell tower of Tuaim Greine, and many other works in like manner. By him were made bridges and causeways and high roads'.³⁹² It might also be significant that, in the passage relating to Charlemagne's ascent to the imperial title, he is said to bestow the church with copious amounts of gold and silver. Just before the inscription of the *imperator Scotorum* title in the 'Book of Armagh', Brian, we are told, deposits twenty ounces of gold at the altar, though perhaps this is to read a little too much into things and, as already mentioned we do not see any mention of the title *imperator Scotorum* in the *Cogad*. However, we have at least one explicit comparison made between the Franks and the Dal Cais – they were said to be alike in intelligence and valour.

The comparison with David in the *Cogad* might also have imperial connotations. Brian was said to be 'the faithful, fervent, honourable, gallant David of Erinn, for truthfulness, and for worthiness, and for the maintenance of sovereignty.'³⁹³ A sarcophagus at St Andrews, which has been associated with Óengus, king of the Picts, includes an image of David killing the lion. David appears to be wearing a very unusual neck-piece which has been interpreted as a *Kaiserfibel*, like that worn by Justinian on a mosaic in San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. Surviving examples of the *Kaiserfibel* include those given to barbarian rulers but also barbarian imitations. Charles-Edwards has argued that the neck piece adorning David on the relief is an example of just that – a barbarian imitation. For Charles-Edwards, the image of David on the St Andrews sarcophagus 'was thus imperial and embodied a typological perception of [Óengus's] authority found...in Bede.'³⁹⁴ Images of David were used elsewhere in an imperial context, particularly in Byzantine tradition, but it is surely significant that we see it used in a similar sense in the insular

³⁹² CGRG, pp 139, 141.

³⁹³ CGRG, p, 205.

³⁹⁴ T.M. Charles-Edwards, ' "The Continuation of Bede", s.a. 750: high-kings, kings of Tara and "Bretwaldas"', in Alfred P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas. Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne* (Dublin, 2000), pp 142-3.

world too. There is every chance therefore that the reference to David in the *Cogad* is yet another strand in the creation of a claim to ‘empire’ for Brian Bóruma, though we cannot say conclusively that this is so.

3(e.) Further evidence for the imperial idea

Set out above is a considerable body of evidence which suggests that Brian’s ‘power’ was being written about in imperial terms; by Mael Suthain most explicitly, but also by annalists and the composer of the *Cogad Gáedel* almost one hundred years after Brian’s death. There is some evidence to suggest that it was not just Brian’s power that was being conceived of in such a fashion. In the annals, the term ‘Augustus’ (which, suggested above, has imperial overtones) is applied to Brian certainly, but also to Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair (d. 1156) and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn (d. 1166), both of whom laid claim to the overkingship of all-Ireland. Diarmait Mac Máel na mBó (d. 1072) is called ‘king of the Welsh’ in his annalistic obit, and we might begin to view Muirchertach Ua Briain’s transmarine politicking in a new light, given all that has been discussed above.

Seán Duffy, in a number of important articles on the Irish Sea region highlighted the important role Dublin came to play in post-Clontarf politics. Other kings had, of course, claimed to possess hegemony over the city, not least Brian himself. It was Diarmait Mac Máel na mBó, though, who took the ‘unprecedented’ action of making himself king of Dublin in 1052.³⁹⁵ Diarmait would go on to make his son, Murchad, *rí Gall* or ‘king of the Foreigners’, and Murchad would then use this as a springboard to launch an invasion of the Isle of Man in 1061 and take tribute there.³⁹⁶ Diarmait was not the last to do this, and, in fact, every subsequent claimant to the high kingship seems to have followed suit, appointing their son to the kingship of Dublin. Tairdelbach Ua Briain appointed his son, Muirchertach; it seems likely that Domnall

³⁹⁵ Seán Duffy, ‘Irishmen and Islesmen in the kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052-1171’, *Ériu* 43 (1992), pp 94-5.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 100.

Gerrlámhach, Muirchertach's son, was appointed king of Dublin; Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair installed his son as king in 1126. 'This rather neglected phenomenon', said Duffy, 'can hardly be a coincidence, and surely reveals a great deal about the position of Dublin in the Irish polity'.³⁹⁷ Duffy set out his case most clearly in a shorter article the following year, and it is worth citing this passage in full. Mac Máel na mBó, he said:

'caused a minor revolution in Irish politics. It cannot be a coincidence that over the next seventy-five years, each of the three successful claimants to the kingship of Ireland emulated him and appointed their intended heirs to rule Dublin. The conclusion seems inescapable: to assume the high-kingship it was necessary to gain control of Dublin. *More was involved than the exploitation of its military resources or its wealth* (my emphasis). In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the status of Dublin in the Irish polity grew apace. While the kingship of Tara had held (or was believed by contemporaries to have held) a special place in the Irish body politic, the myth became hard to square with reality when the province of Mide lost its former greatness, and Tara became the scene of petty local squabbles. At the same time, Dublin rose in importance, both economically and symbolically'.³⁹⁸

Duffy is right to stress that there was more to Dublin's importance than simple economics; this has, perhaps, been how many historians have viewed the significance of Dublin and the other Viking towns.³⁹⁹ While no doubt an important consideration for greedy kings, this was not the

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³⁹⁸ Seán Duffy, 'Pre-Norman Dublin: capital of Ireland?', *History Ireland* 1 (4) (1993), p. 18.

³⁹⁹ Charles Doherty, 'Ireland in the Viking age', *History Ireland* 22 (2) (2014), p. 17; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland 400-1200* (London, 1995), p. 274; Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 268.

only, nor even the most important consideration. The matter has somewhat less to do with the diminishing importance of Tara though; rather, Dublin takes on a new symbolic importance as it is not, nor is it considered to be, right up until the English invasion, an ‘Irish’ town. The significance of Dublin lies in its very ‘otherness’. Its inhabitants, and the inhabitants of other Viking towns, are consistently termed *Gall* – foreigners. Their otherness lies at the very heart of the *Cogad Gáedel* (more on this in chapter 3). Seán Duffy noted the significance of Dublin in brokering peace between Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and Tairdelbach Ua Briain in 1150; until that point such a role had been the preserve of high-ranking ecclesiastics: ‘it seems to imply that the Dubliners could be regarded as honest brokers in the contest for the national kingship. By their very birth they were disqualified from taking part in that race’.⁴⁰⁰ That developing trend, of claimants to the high-kingship exercising suzerainty over Dublin, usually through the appointment of their sons as *rí Gall*, which Duffy draws attention to is, it is submitted, further evidence for the prevalence of imperial ideas in pre-invasion Ireland.

Dublin was not the only Viking settlement in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, though. An interesting commentary, which most likely dates from the late-eleventh or early twelfth century appears on the eighth-century *Senchas Már* law text.⁴⁰¹ This commentary lays down the criteria that are to be met before one is entitled to the title of *rí Érenn cen fresabra* or ‘king of Ireland without opposition’. In short, an individual might possess such a claim ‘when the estuaries are under him, Dublin and Waterford and Limerick besides’ (*in tan bít na hinbir fuí, Áth Cliath 7 Port Láirge 7 Luimniuch olchena*).⁴⁰² Again, it is essential for our purposes that it is possession of the Viking settlements (which comprised

⁴⁰⁰ Duffy, ‘Irishmen and Islesmen’, p. 124.

⁴⁰¹ Katharine Simms, ‘The contents of later commentaries on the Brehon law tracts’, *Ériu* 49 (1998), p. 33. See also Liam Breatnach, ‘The king in the Old Irish law text *Senchas Már*’, in Folke Josephson (ed.), *Celtic language, law and letters. Proceedings of the tenth symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica* (Göteborg, 2010), p. 124.

⁴⁰² *AL*, vol. II (Dublin, 1869), pp 225, 224; *CIH* 5 1779.27.

of a majority non-Irish population) that are so closely bound to the high-kingship; indeed they are said to be an absolute essential.

That rule over kings *and* over nations formed so focal a part of late-tenth and eleventh-century ideas of ‘empire’ means the involvement of people like Diarmait Mac Maél na mBó and Muirchertach Ua Briain in transmarine politics takes on a new resonance. Diarmait involved himself in Welsh politics to such an extent that one set of annals saw fit to term him ‘king of the Welsh’. His lengthy obit in the Welsh chronicles suggests that he had some involvement in Wales, and probably held some considerable status there.⁴⁰³ Muirchertach, no doubt hoping to emulate the achievements of his great-grandfather, involved himself in Scottish, Welsh and English politics. Muirchertach, most memorably, received a camel from Edgar, the Scottish king.⁴⁰⁴ Anthony Candon has suggested that the camel was brought by a diplomatic delegation as part of an attempt by the Scottish king to reach some agreement with the Irish king as regards the latter’s activities in the Scottish kingdom.⁴⁰⁵ It might well have been the case that the camel was intended purely as an instrument of good will, designed to impel Ua Briain to stop treating with disaffected Scottish elements. For the ambitious Muirchertach, such a gift might easily be interpreted or misrepresented as an indicator of submission and, by implication, of overlordship on Ua Briain’s part. There is also some evidence that Muirchertach managed to assert himself to some extent in Galloway.⁴⁰⁶ Muirchertach Ua Briain, and his father Tairdelbach, also received and sheltered a number of Welsh nobles and offered them military support. Tairdelbach Ua Briain supplied a Waterford contingent

⁴⁰³ Duffy, *Middle Ages*, pp 37-8.

⁴⁰⁴ AI 1105.7: ‘Isin bliadain sin tucad in camall, quod est animal mírae magnitudinis, o ríg Alban do Muircetach U Briain’.

⁴⁰⁵ Anthony Candon, ‘Muirchertach Ua Briain and naval activity in the Irish sea, 1075 to 1119’, in Gearóid Mac Niocaill and Patrick F. Wallace (eds), *Keimelia. Studies in medieval archaeology and history in memory of Tom Delany* (Dublin, 1988), pp 408, 413.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 397-515; Duffy, ‘Ua Briain in context’, pp 56-73; *Ibid*, ‘Ireland, c. 1000 – c. 1100’, in Pauline Stafford (ed.), *A companion to the early middle ages. Britain and Ireland, c. 500 – c. 1100* (Oxford, 2009), pp 294-98.

at the battle of Mynydd Carn, in Wales, in 1081, and, when Rhys ap Tewdwr was expelled from the Welsh kingdom of Deheubarth in 1088 he fled to Ireland and assembled a fleet there. When he was killed in 1093 his son spent the next twenty-two years of his life in Ireland, only returning to Wales in 1115. Later, in the aftermath of the Norman invasion of Anglesey, Owain ap Cadwgan fled to Ireland where he was received by Muirchertach Ua Briain. Indeed, Owain, like Rhys ap Tewdwr, used military support received in Ireland to launch attacks in Wales.⁴⁰⁷

When we come to those two latter individuals that are awarded the title of ‘Augustus’ by the annalists, one is struck by their more limited involvement outside of the island of Ireland as compared with people like Muirchertach Ua Briain and Diarmait Mac Máel na mBó. On the face of it, then, the styling of Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn as ‘Augustus of all north-west Europe’, and the styling of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair in similar terms, is problematic.⁴⁰⁸ Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn, it is true, hired a fleet from the Norse kingdoms of Man, Galloway and Kintyre to fight a naval battle with Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair; an engagement in which he was defeated.⁴⁰⁹ The *Annals of the Four Masters* are quite explicit though; these fleets were hired, which seems to suggest that they were mere mercenaries. This same set of annals states that a certain Mac Scelling was in command of this foreign fleet. A ‘Mac Scilling’ is listed amongst the Irish forces that set out to raze Hugh de Lacy’s ‘castel’ at Trim, which was under the command of Hugh Tyrrell, in the ‘Deeds of the Normans in Ireland’ (*La geste des Engleis en Yrlande*).⁴¹⁰ This

⁴⁰⁷ Seán Duffy, ‘The 1169 invasion as a turning point in Irish-Welsh relations’, in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland 900-1300. Insular responses to medieval European change* (Cambridge, 1999), pp 100-102.

⁴⁰⁸ AU 1166.10; AT 1154.6

⁴⁰⁹ AT 1154.6; AFM 1156.7.

⁴¹⁰ Evelyn Mullally (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland. La geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as The song of Dermot and the earl* (Dublin, 2002), l. 3252. Seán Duffy, ‘The prehistory of the gallowglass’, in eadem (ed.), *The world of the gallowglass. Kings, warlords and warriors in Ireland and Scotland, 1200-1600* (Dublin, 2007), pp 7-8.

suggests that Irish kings probably held some form of suzerainty over certain families in these parts around the time of the English invasion. In any case, the lack of overseas involvement by Ua Conchobair and Mac Lochlainn is only a problem if we ignore the fact that Dublin was perceived as ‘foreign’ and different by the Irish.⁴¹¹ If anything, the grandiose titles given to Mac Lochlainn and Ua Conchobair in their obits, given their lack of overseas involvement relative to those that had gone before them, serves to strengthen the argument that the inhabitants of Dublin were seen as a different ‘nation’. Their monikers only make sense in this reading. By ruling over the foreigners of Dublin, and by ruling over many kings, they too can be held to have met the imperial criteria that made up non-Roman conceptions of empire.

3(f.) Concluding remarks

Allowing for a ‘pre-history’ of an imperial or proto-imperial idea, cultivated in Armagh, is not to completely disavow the debt Brian, or perhaps, more accurately, Máel Suthain, owed to Edgar and to Otto. It is merely being suggested that this centuries-old idea gained a new impetus – perhaps even found a new meaning – from contemporary developments. Insular ideas of overkingship, often described by reference to *imperium*, began to be melded with non-Roman imperial ideas about rule over nations. It is also argued that Máel Suthain, and perhaps also, many Irish kings, would have understood just what the imperial title entailed, namely, to be king of kings and king of peoples. They, and those ecclesiastics composing Brian’s obit in the *Annals of Ulster* would have understood this, and they would have understood that it was the *sine qua non* of *imperium*. Those references to the Scots, the Irish and the Vikings are perhaps some of the clearest evidence we have of Brian’s imperial ambitions.

⁴¹¹ Though Mac Lochlainn and Ua Conchobair were unable to harness the Norse towns effectively in order to establish themselves as players in the Irish sea. See Marie Therese Flanagan, ‘After Brian Bóraime’, pp 233-4.

Nor did the dream of empire die with Brian. Why would it? After all, it had already undergone a long period of gestation in Armagh. It had roots. The very fact that the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, it has been argued here, continued to expound Brian's imperial credentials some one hundred years after his death suggests that the idea of empire was still very much *au courante* in the twelfth century.

It is not enough to merely point to the Ottonians and to Edgar and suggest that the Irish kings drew inspiration from the actions of their European counterparts; we must flesh out the full implications of this mimicry. Given the claims to hegemony over the Vikings and the Scots in Brian's obit and in the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, it is clear that the Irish men of learning – and the greater Irish kings themselves – knew just what the imperial title entailed. We must, therefore, see these claims to some form of overlordship over non-Irish peoples for what they were – the setting out of a claim to *imperium*.

Hitherto, insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that it is in 980 that we see the first contemporary use of the title *ardri Erenn* or 'high-king of Ireland' in the annals (see above, section 3c.). In recent years, historians have been eager to point to the fact that Brian was probably inspired by Edgar's actions in England, in 973, given the proximity of this event (both in space and time) to Brian's succession to the kingship of Munster. Similarly, it can hardly be a coincidence that, seven years after Edgar's coronation and sandwiched between the imperial coronations of Otto I and Otto II, we see for the first time in contemporary usage a new term to describe Domnall ua Néill's overkingship. As with Brian, the story does not begin or end with Domnall ua Néill; as has been discussed above, the term *imperator* had, already by the seventh century, been used in relation to Irish overkingship. We must see the use of *ardri Erenn*, Mael Suthain's inscription in the Book of Armagh and the use of 'Augustus' in annalistic obits as different manifestations, variants even, of the same idea, all drawing on an insular pre-history and all drawing on continental developments. What is clear, as Seán Duffy has observed, is that Dublin

became increasingly important in the post-Clontarf struggle for the high-kingship, and not solely for economic reasons. Why might this be so?

The title of *imperator Scotorum* might well have been dreamed up by Mael Suthain, and by he alone; certainly we do not find it used anywhere else, not in the annals, not in the *Cogad*.⁴¹² Even so, the idea that those who struggled for the high-kingship might be viewed in terms of *imperium* was not the product of his over-active imagination. The portrayal of Brian Bóruma in the *Cogad*, its use of ‘Octavian’ and the use of ‘Augustus’ and so forth in annalistic obits, suggests that this was clearly not the case. The Irish would have understood that an important aspect of the concept of ‘empire’ was rule over kings, but also rule over different peoples. This explains the importance of Dublin in the post-Clontarf era. In order to stake one’s own claim to the imperial mantle, overlordship of multiple kings and multiple peoples had first to be established. This could be done through involvement in Scotland, Wales or Man, or, closer to home, in Dublin.

4. CONCLUSION

The evidence set out in this chapter strongly suggests that our old ‘accepted convention’ of disappearing petty kingships does not hold any weight. Surveys conducted both by the present author and Katherine Megan McGowan, and indeed by Paul MacCotter, all indicate that the petty kingdoms of medieval Ireland were as much a feature of the immediate pre-invasion centuries as they were at the time of Patrick.

Part of the problem has been the tendency to stretch the view that we see, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a process of centralisation of sorts, beyond its acceptable limits. While there is much to recommend

⁴¹² Though he himself might have been drawing, at least in part, on the reference to *imperator* in Muirchú’s text as Casey and Meehan have suggested. It is not the belief of this author that Mael Suthain was using it in a pejorative sense, however. Rather, if this was indeed the case, and Mael Suthain was drawing on Muirchú, it goes some way to further highlighting the debt our tenth- and eleventh-century actors owed to long-standing insular ideas, and we cannot dismiss the use of the expression as the jottings of a pedant. For more on this, see Duffy, *Battle of Clontarf*, pp 141-2.

seeing at least some form of centralising process in the post-Clontarf world, that this process entailed the downgrading of our petty kings to mere lords is a reading that the sources simply do not allow. Part of the problem might lie in the influence of the historiography of Anglo-Saxon England. Historians of this time-period have postulated the disappearance of the petty kings of both Mercia and England as a whole, and the emergence of an English monarchy. In England, '[g]overnment became overtly territorial, a kingdom of England rather than a kingdom of the English, or of tribal units among the English.'⁴¹³ Perhaps some have been too willing to see a virtually identical process take place in Ireland.

Ireland, on the eve of the invasion, remained a land of many kings, and of a hierarchy of kings. The words of Pauline Stafford in relation to England bear repeating here: 'Difficulty in defining contemporary ideas of rule cannot be an excuse for our importing the concept of deliberate unification, nor of administrative or centralizing views of unity, and certainly not for imposing such views indiscriminately on all political actors of the day.'⁴¹⁴ Difficulty in interpreting the changes that were happening in the realm of overkingship can in no way excuse the now dated, but oft-repeated, suggestion that the petty kingships were being swallowed up.

One way of perhaps better understanding the centralising processes of the late-tenth through to the late-twelfth centuries is offered by the argument for *imperium*, set out above, in section three of this chapter. There is some strong evidence to suggest that the most powerful overkings at this time were thinking about their power in terms of *imperium*, not least Brian Bóruma himself and his great-grandson, Muirchertach Ua Briain. Such a conception of their power would allow for the persistence of a hierarchy of kings, but would also demand of them rulership over peoples other than the Irish, though this criterion might be fulfilled by establishing rule over Dublin and the *Gaill* who

⁴¹³ H.R. Loyn, *The governance of Anglo-Saxon England, 500-1087* (London, 1984), p. 81.

⁴¹⁴ Pauline Stafford, *Unification and conquest. A political and social history of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries* (London, 1989), p. 36.

lived therein. In fact, the concept of *imperium* lends itself quite naturally to Ireland's political structure. The eighth-century law tracts acknowledge the rule of kings over kings of lesser standing. Indeed it was this reality – the existence of multiple kingships under an overking – that Bede first tried to explain by recourse to *imperium*. That a *rex totius Hiberniae* could exist alongside a plurality of kings seems to be more of a problem for the modern historian of medieval Ireland than it was for our Irish kings themselves.

Chapter 3: Regicide in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

The period between the rise of Brian Bóruma in the late tenth century and the arrival of the English in the late twelfth century is perceived to be a time of great change in Irish politics, although the period ‘remains one of the most neglected in Ireland’s history’.⁴¹⁵ Certainly, in this period, the actions of Brian and his successors precipitated the destruction of the Uí Néill political hegemony that had prevailed on the island for the past number of centuries. Historians have also seen, in the 150 years or so between the Battle of Clontarf and the English invasion, a growth in the powers of Irish kings. Indeed, many saw in this ‘increasing royal power’ a swing towards feudalism in the style of continental polities.⁴¹⁶ Feudalism as a concept has come in for some criticism since the late 1970s of course, and certainly the likes of Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and Donnchadh Ó Corráin were not altogether clear on what they meant by ‘feudal’ or ‘feudalism’. Mercifully, albeit somewhat late in the day, such imprecision has been noted, by Marie Therese Flanagan. ‘The lack of consensus as to what constitutes “feudalism”, in effect, nullifies its use without very precise definition’, wrote Flanagan, as she decried attempts by Irish historians ‘to posit an ill-defined process of feudalization.’⁴¹⁷ As has been discussed already, ‘feudalism’ is not the only term that has been uncritically employed by historians of Irish history - so too has power - and, as has also been suggested, resistance to ‘power’ can be a useful means of shedding some light on it. Hitherto, when discussing the power of Irish kings in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the discussion has centered on increased taxation, military innovations, an enhanced role in law-making, the growth of superior kingships at the expense of petty kingships, and so forth. There has been relatively little discussion of the

⁴¹⁵ Seán Duffy, ‘Irishmen and Islesmen in the kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052-1171’, *Ériu* 43 (1992), p. 93

⁴¹⁶ Francis John Byrne, *Irish kings and high kings* (Dublin, 1978), p. 269.

⁴¹⁷ Marie Therese Flanagan, ‘After Brian Bóraime: the high-kingship and the kings of Connacht’, in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin volume XVI* (Dublin, 2017), p. 43.

ways in which kings were resisted or opposed. The aim of this chapter and the next, therefore, is, through their discussions of regicide and revolt respectively, to bring into sharper focus the fissures of royal power in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland.

1. A RIGHT TO RESIST IN LEGAL AND ADVICE TEXTS?

It is, at this point, something of a platitude to note the impact of the writings of Isidore of Seville on early medieval Ireland. His writings, as other scholars have observed, reached this island sooner than they did most other European countries; his *Differentiae* and *De ortu et obitu partum* were quoted by Irish authors before the year 661.⁴¹⁸ As J.N. Hillgarth has observed, Isidore is ‘omnipresent’ in the Irish writings of the late seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries and this might account for that penchant for etymology possessed by Irish lawyers from about 700 onwards.⁴¹⁹ Yet Isidore’s contribution to Irish writing and Irish thought lay not solely in style but also in substance. Isidore, in Book IX of his *Etymologiae*, a work composed in the first quarter of the seventh century, had much to say on the subject of kingship. Kings, Isidore explained, are so called from governing, just as priests are named from sacrificing (*Rex* from *regere*, ‘to govern’ or ‘to rule’, but also ‘keep straight’, ‘lead correctly’). He does not govern, continued Isidore, who does not correct (*corrigerere*): ‘therefore the name of king is held by one behaving rightly and lost by one doing wrong. Hence among the ancients such as the proverb: “You will be king if you behave rightly; if you do not, you will not”’.⁴²⁰

There is evidence to suggest that Isidore’s etymological explanation of kingship informed the thinking of Irish lawyers and churchmen. *Críth*

⁴¹⁸ J.N. Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain and early Christian Ireland’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 62C (1962), p. 185. See also J.N. Hillgarth, ‘Ireland and Spain in the seventh century’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp 1-16.

⁴¹⁹ Hillgarth, ‘Visigothic Spain’, p. 189; T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Review article: the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*’, *Studia Hibernica* 20 (1980), pp 147-8.

⁴²⁰ Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof (eds), *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), bk. IX, s. iii, 4.

Gablach, a law text composed, most probably, in the very early eighth century, posed the question ‘*Ri cid ara neper?*’ or ‘A king, why so called?’ Answering the question - and here is an example of that etymological style so beloved of the early Irish jurists - the text continued: ‘*Ar indí riges chumac[h]tui cunnrig[h] for a t[h]uatai.*’ This line has been translated in many different ways by many different commentators. Of most significance here is the meaning of the word ‘*cunnrigh*’. In *Ancient Laws of Ireland, volume IV* the line is rendered as follows: ‘Because he possesses the power of binding over his people.’⁴²¹ Eoin Mac Neill translated the passage as follows: ‘The king, why is he so called? Because he exerts the power of correction over the members of his tuath.’⁴²² Eugene O’Curry suggested we translate the passage as ‘Because he possesses the power of castigation over his territories’, while, most recently, Bart Jaski has offered the following translation of the text: ‘Because he rules over his peoples with coercive power’. The term ‘*cumachtui cunnrigh*’, then, has been held to mean ‘power of binding’, ‘power of correction’, ‘power of castigation’, and ‘coercive power’.

Juliana Grigg favoured Mac Neill’s translation for two reasons. Firstly, she observed, the *Dictionary of the Irish language* translated ‘*cuindrech*’ as ‘act of correcting, chastising, controlling; control, correction’, the term being a verbal noun of *con-dirig*, for which the following translations are offered: ‘checks, controls, reproves’ and ‘adjusts, defines (a territory)’. Secondly, Grigg noted, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* posed the question ‘*Sed qualiter alios corrigere poterit qui proprios mores ne iniqui sint, non corrigit?*’ [‘how would he [the king] be able to correct others, [he] who does not correct his own morals so that they are not unjust, if he is not correct?’.⁴²³ For Grigg, this suggests that ‘*cunnrigh*’ in *Críth Gablach* should be understood as

⁴²¹ *AL, vol. IV* (Dublin, 1879), p. 321; *CIH* 2 568.8-9.

⁴²² Eoin Mac Neill, ‘Ancient Irish law. The law of status or franchise’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 36C (1923), p. 300.

⁴²³ Juliana Grigg, ‘The just king and *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*’, *Parergon* 27(1) (2010), p. 40.

‘correction’ rather than coercion.⁴²⁴ The influence of the *Etymologiae* on *De duodecim* is clear to see; the Latin verb *corrigerere* is, quite obviously, employed in both. The matter is more complicated when we turn to the Irish *cunnrigh*. *Cuindrech* can, of course, mean ‘correcting’ or ‘chastising’; however according to the *Dictionary of the Irish language* a similar term, ‘*con-rig*’ refers more to ‘constraining’ and ‘binding together’, *à la* the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* translation. However, as Grigg has noted, the fact that *De duodecim* does seem to borrow from the *Etymologiae* is probably significant. As the passage was known to Irish clerical writers, and they saw fit to draw from it in *De duodecim*, it seems plausible that it was this same passage that was being referred to in *Crith Gablach*. While there is some ambiguity as to the precise meaning of *cunnrigh*, on balance it is suggested that it should be translated as ‘correct’ or ‘chastise’ rather than ‘bind’ or ‘constrain’.

It is fair to say then that underpinning the Irish conception of kingship - or at least the conception of kingship propagated by the learned and literate elites - was a conceptualization of kingship familiar to ecclesiastical writers on the Continent. Kingship as presented in the law tracts and advice texts was less the product of pre-Christian survivals and more in keeping with a very Christian world-view; it was but another expression of the Christian kingship known across western Europe. In recent years, the general trend has been for historians of medieval Irish history to emphasise the ‘Christian’ as opposed to the ‘pagan’ nature of early Irish kingship, and the impact Christian texts - like the Old Testament - had on texts produced in Ireland. Bart Jaski, by way of example, has highlighted the influence the Old Testament had on early Irish tracts relating to succession.⁴²⁵ The issue was first broached in the 1980s by Liam Breatnach, Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Aidan Breen. They were amongst the first to note the very ‘Christian’ nature of texts

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Bart Jaski, ‘Early medieval Irish kingship and the Old Testament’, *Early Medieval Europe* 7(3) (1998), pp 329-44.

produced in medieval Ireland.⁴²⁶ There is, therefore, nothing too revolutionary about downplaying the pre-Christian or ‘pagan’ nature of Irish kingship in the eleventh and twelfth century. Rather, at the heart of that kingship presented in the law and advice texts we find the writings of Isidore of Seville. Isidore’s pronouncements on kingship found in his *Etymologiae* served as the intellectual bedrock upon which the learned Irish understanding of kingship was built.

Isidore, while noting that the position of king is held by one ‘doing rightly’, added the caveat ‘and lost by one doing wrongly’. For Isidore the title or position of ‘king’ was not one that would be held for life; at least in theory, one’s tenure as king was predicated on one’s ‘doing rightly’. In *Crith Gablach* at least, there is no explicit reference to losing the kingship through improper behaviour. The *Etymologiae* also drew a distinction between a king and a tyrant. For the ancients, Isidore explained, there was no distinction between a king and tyrant; however he went on to explain that ‘[n]ow in later times the practice has arisen of using the term for thoroughly bad and wicked things, kings who enact upon their people their lust for luxurious domination and the cruellest lordship.’⁴²⁷

Such a distinction, between king and tyrant, is lacking in Irish legal texts. The advice text *Audacht Morann*, an early example of the *speculum principum* or ‘mirror of princes’ genre, does set out a fourfold division of rulership though: *Apair fris, ní fil inge cethri flathemna and : firflatih 7 ciallflaith, flaith congále co clógaib 7 tarbflaith* [Tell him there are only four rulers: the true ruler and the wily ruler, the ruler of occupation with hosts, and the bull ruler].⁴²⁸ This may be a scale of kingship, moving from best to worst; it is not entirely clear. What can be said with confidence is that the ‘true ruler’ (rather unsurprisingly) constitutes the ‘best’ type of kingship, the ‘bull ruler’ constitutes the worst. The ‘true ruler’ is a lover of truth, the ‘bull ruler’ invites war and tumult –

⁴²⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, and Aidan Breen, ‘The laws of the Irish’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), pp 382-438.

⁴²⁷ Barney et al., *Etymologies*, Bk. IX, s. iii, 19-20.

⁴²⁸ Fergus Kelly (ed.), *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin, 1976), s. 58.

‘[a]gainst him there is always bellowing with horns.’⁴²⁹ The bull ruler ‘strikes [and] is struck, wards off [and] is warded off, roots out [and] is rooted out, attacks [and] is attacked, pursues [and] is pursued’.⁴³⁰ The bull ruler’s actions will engender corresponding reactions, many of which would serve to shorten a reign. The description of the rule of the bull king in *Audacht Morann* strongly implies that failure to act justly or rightly will signal the end of a king’s reign; however, there is nothing quite so stark as Isidore’s warning in the *Etymologiae*. In short, while the correlation that Isidore draws between kingship and ‘correcting’ or ‘chastising’ serves as a basis for the Irish conception of kingship, his further adumbrations on tyranny and the loss of kingship are not so obviously absorbed.

Does this mean that - theoretically - Irish kings had free rein to do as they pleased? Did the men of letters, in their musings, proscribe the king in any way? Certainly *Críth Gablach* does appear to circumscribe his room for manoeuvre in some respects. Certain actions taken by the king may only be done provided they are for the ‘good’ or ‘interests’ of the *tuath*. Three things only are held to be proper for a king to pledge his people to - a pledge for hosting, a pledge for right, and a pledge for interterritorial regulations. Why these three things? ‘For all these things are for the good of the *tuath* (*ar it lieisa tuathai huili insin*)’.⁴³¹ Later, *Críth Gablach* states that a king may have a retinue of twelve men who are to be sustained by the *tuath* at its expense, when the king is acting for the good of the kingdom (*Rii tuaithe, di feraib déacc do lessaib tuaithe folloing tuath fadessin fria taiscedhi*).⁴³² The implication is that any actions deemed not to be in the interests of the *tuath* should not be undertaken. Nowhere though is there any indication as to what might happen should the king pledge his people to something other than the three prescribed situations; that is what might happen if the king did not

⁴²⁹ Ibid, ss. 59, 62.

⁴³⁰ Ibid, s. 62.

⁴³¹ *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), p. 333; Mac Neill, ‘The law of status’, p. 306; *CIH* 2 569.5-.6

⁴³² *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), p. 339; Mac Neill, ‘The law of status’, p. 306; *CIH* 2 570.27-.28.

act ‘for the good of the *tuath*’ (at least, not in the legal texts).

There is, though, an allusion to what might happen in *Audacht Morann*. An explicit warning, like that given in the *Etymologiae*, is, as just noted above, absent. It is important to recall to whom Morann’s advice is being dispensed, though. The stated addressee in *Audacht Morann* is Feradach Find Fechnach who was born and raised in Alba because misrule on the part of his predecessors - namely, overly burdensome taxation - saw the *aithectuatha* rise up and slaughter the nobles of Ireland. Indeed, Feradach, it seems, never did heed Morann’s advice, and he too was butchered by those he ruled. It is surely significant that this text on just and proper rulership was addressed to a man who was impacted not once but twice by the consequences of misrule, and this point cannot have been lost on contemporaries.

If the theoretical foundation of kingship, at least that presented in *Críth Gablach*, has, as its intellectual underpinning, Isidore’s ‘to be king is to correct’ mantra, it eschews his king-tyrant dichotomy and his unambiguous warning that the kingship is lost by one doing wrong. *Audacht Morann* exhorts a king to rule justly and mercifully, and it lays down a fourfold typology of kingship, but it contains nothing quite so stark as Isidore’s warning. The bull ruler can expect resistance, it seems, and we might expect much of the ensuing trouble to bring an end to his kingship; however, nowhere is it explicitly stated: ‘you will not be king if you behave as the bull ruler does’ (my wording, not Isidore’s!). That being said, *Audacht Morann* probably does make Isidore’s point in a more subtle way, by virtue of its reference to Feradach Find Fechnach. *Críth Gablach* prescribes certain exceptional actions the king may take because these are held to be ‘for the good of the *túath*’, and, furthermore, he cannot undertake any actions that are not ‘for the good of the *túath*’. Nowhere, though, does it state the consequences of deeds done *male fides*, and one may wonder whether such proscriptions held any weight beyond the learned literati.

2. RESISTANCE AND REGICIDE IN THE SAGA LITERATURE

If the negative consequences of failing to act justly and mercifully, of failing to act ‘for the good of the *tuath*’ are to be inferred in *Críth Gablach* and the *Audacht Morann*, they are made altogether more explicit in some of the saga literature. Two tales which deal with this issue in particular are *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*. As the latter tale has been referenced already, we shall deal firstly with it.

A number of extant copies of *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* remain. Ralph O’Connor has identified three recensions.⁴³³ In short, *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* is a story of a revolt by the *aithechthúatha* or ‘vassal peoples’ against the nobles. There was ‘a great murmuring (*fodord mór*) amongst the vassal tribes of Ireland in the time of the three kings of Ireland’, namely Fíachu Findolaig, Feic mac Fideic Caích and Bres mac Fírb (*Bai fodord mór ic aithechthúathaib Érenn i n-aimsir trí rí g n-Érenn .i. Fíacho Findolaig 7 Feic mac Fideic Caích 7 Bres mac Fírb*).⁴³⁴ This ‘murmuring’ occurs in response to onerous taxation on the part of the nobles. So, the vassal peoples, with evil on their minds, host a great feast for the nobles, at the end of which they murder all the attendees, including the high-king Fíachu. Only Fíachu’s unborn child and two further unborn princes survive, when their mothers escape across to Britain. As these princes mature in Alba, Ireland is ruled by Cairpre ‘Cat Head’. However, since Cairpre is not the rightful king, scarcity and dearth ensue; the land is not fertile.⁴³⁵ As a consequence of this, upon Cairpre’s death the *aithechthúatha* invite Fíachu’s son, Feradach Finn Fechnach, back to Ireland to reign as king.⁴³⁶ Prosperity returns along with

⁴³³ Ralph O’Connor, ‘Searching for the moral in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*’, *Ériu* 56 (2006), pp 117-43. The F recension exists in the fourteenth century Book of Fermoy, in folios 35a-37a (RIA MS 23 E 24 (1134)). The second recension, H, is a paper MS, written about the year 1700 (TCD H 3.18 (1337) fols 761-4). The language of this recension, according to O’Connor, suggests an eleventh or twelfth century floruit. O’Connor identified a third recension, which exists in four texts - B, Lec, Lis and E - *Scél ar Chairbre Cinn Cait*. See pp 119-20, 121.

⁴³⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, ‘Morands Fürstenspiegel’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 11 (1917), p. 60.

⁴³⁵ R.A.S. Macalister, *Lebor gabála Erenn part V* (Dublin, 1956), s. 7, p. 482.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, s. 8, p. 482.

Feradach, and the land is bountiful once more.

Let us turn now to the other tale mentioned above, *Cath Maige Tuired*. In contrast with *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*, only one extant copy remains, and it exists in an early sixteenth-century manuscript, Harleian 5280. *Cath Maige Tuired* is itself a product of the eleventh or twelfth century; however, as Flower, O'Brien and Murphy have noted, it does seem to be based on older, ninth-century materials. Liam Breatnach, too, has dated the text to the ninth century with later forms 'arising in the course of transmission.'⁴³⁷ Utilised here is Elizabeth Gray's occasionally problematic 1982 translation, in conjunction with Breatnach's observations. The story proceeds as follows. Bres was king of the Túatha Dé - a compromise king, whose claim lay through his mother's line. This, as will be discussed below, is problematic, in and of itself. Bres had not ruled for long when there began 'a great murmuring against him among his maternal kinsmen the Túatha Dé' (*Buí fodhord móar imbe lie máthruil la Túaith Déi*).⁴³⁸ His men, it appears, were unhappy with the lack of generosity shown by the king as '[h]owever frequently they might come, their breaths did not smell of ale.'⁴³⁹ Furthermore, warriors were made to perform tasks not suited to their station, such as carrying bundles of firewood from Clew Bay; a task made all the more difficult because of weakness from want of food.⁴⁴⁰ Accordingly, 'neither service nor payment from the tribes continued; and the treasures of the tribe were not being given by the act of the whole tribe.'⁴⁴¹ It seems that the decision was made to withhold payment or renders to the king, and that this was a decision taken by the entire *túath*. Or so says Gray. Breatnach has convincingly argued for a different translation of '*Ní roan trá fochnom nó éraic dona túathaib; [ocus] ní taprdis séoit na túaithe a foicidh na túaithe*

⁴³⁷ Liam Breatnach, 'The lord's share in the profits of justice and a passage in *Cath Maige Tuired*', *Celtica* 28 (2013), p. 4.

⁴³⁸ Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maige Tuired. The second battle of Mag Tuired* (Naas, 1982), s. 36, p. 33.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*, s. 37, p. 33.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid*, s. 38, p. 33.

oli.’ He rendered it as follows: ‘Neither [the rendering of] service nor penalty-payment by the [individual] kingdoms ceased; the chattels of one kingdom used not to be given [in compensation] for an offence against another kingdom.’⁴⁴² There are, argued Breatnach, ‘no grounds for seeing in this passage a show of resistance to Bres on the part of the Túatha Dé Danann, as it has previously been interpreted.’⁴⁴³ Ultimately though, things got even worse for poor Bres, and a satire was made against the king by the poet Coirpre son of Étaín - the first satire that was made in Ireland, no less! ‘Now after that’ the Túatha Dé went to talk to Bres and ‘they did not regard him as properly qualified to rule from that time on.’ In the end, resistance raised its head. Thereafter, the duplicitous Bres, reluctant to relinquish his kingship, tried to stall for time in an underhanded attempt to keep hold of the kingship; he gave them ‘restoration of the kingship’ provided he could remain as king for seven years. “You will have that” the assembly of men - or *oirecht* - agreed. However, it was all just a ruse; Bres had no plan to give them ‘restoration of the kingship’ and he used the time to travel to the Otherworld, where he enlisted a host of supernatural warriors to his cause. A great battle ensued, with much death and destruction on both sides, but the Túatha Dé ultimately emerged victorious.

The causes of the revolt in this case should be obvious. The king has imposed hardship on his people, asking them to perform tasks that are both onerous and demeaning. He is miserly. His reign is one characterised by dearth and disorder, both of which indicate to the audience that Bres is not the true or rightful king as, indeed, does the fact that his claim to the kingship rests upon his matrilineal descent.

In *Cath Maige Tuired*, as in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*, the ruled erupt in revolt after abuses on the part of the ruler. There are similarities between both tales. In both cases, people feel oppressed in some way by the ruler. Accordingly, they begin to ‘murmur’ before then taking

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 12.

decisive action - in *Cath Maige Tuired* an *oirecht* is convened and they ask Bres to step aside; in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* a feast is thrown and the nobles are massacred at it. Thereafter the stories diverge. Upon the defeat of Bres, bounty and fertility come to Ireland. The slaughter of the nobles has quite the opposite result in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*. The accession of Cairpre to the kingship results in scarcity and dearth, and the land becomes plentiful again only after the return of Feradach Finn from Alba. Why the discrepancy? We can speculate, of course. It might have something to do with the status of those rebelling. In *Cath Maige Tuired* it is nobles and warriors of the Túatha Dé that begin to murmur and that eventually lead the charge against Bres. Furthermore, they do not kill Bres - they go and ask him to step aside. Bres is not even killed during the battle - his life is spared. In *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* the rebels are of lesser standing - they are vassal peoples. Furthermore, they bypass any request that the king step aside and go - quite literally - straight for the jugular. Indeed, as O'Connor has noted, it is through the vivid description of the ensuing violence that the narrative sympathy seems to switch from the vassals to the slain nobility:

‘In this tale, narrative sympathy had begun firmly on the side of the vassals; in the passage about the feasting, we may see the narrator veering between an appreciation of the vassals’ ingenuity and the pathos of the nobles’ helpless and unsuspecting state; but here, with a sudden rise into lyrical hyperbole, colouring in a single-moment with a welter of vivid images, he seems to try to compel sympathy for the nobles.’⁴⁴⁴

It could, then, have been the resort to violence that swung narrative sympathy from the *aithechthúatha* to the nobility, although O'Connor’s observation - that the tale endorses the rightfulness of noble rule - is, it is

⁴⁴⁴ O'Connor, ‘BMDR’, p. 128.

submitted, a correct one.⁴⁴⁵ - However, the tale also turns on the impropriety of regicide; as O'Connor observed, 'that deed is presented as a monstrous act tantamount to king-slaying. But the action of the story implies that the tyrant can expect no peace.'⁴⁴⁶ - Conversely, it is quite probable that the basis of Bres's and Fíachu's respective claims to the kingship is not without its significance. Bres, as noted, was a compromise king, but his claim to the kingship was founded on his maternal kinship; whereas in matters of inheritance and succession, it was the paternal kin that mattered. This surely is significant, as Neil McLeod has highlighted.⁴⁴⁷ - Fíachu's claim to the kingship lay (presumably) in his paternal line of descent and therefore his kingship, in contrast with that of Bres's, was 'more' legitimate.

Bruiden Meic Da Réo in no way appears to advocate regicide; indeed the killing of the high-kings and the nobility is a source of opprobrium. Tyranny, and what to do with a tyrant, was, O'Connor argued, the focal theme of *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* and other tales like it - Recension II of *Togail Bruidne da derga*, *Aided Diarmata meic Cerbaill*, *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca*, and *Immram Snédgusa ocus Maic Riagla*. In these tales 'the burning questions of the age - questions about the ethical limits of strong rule and the conflicting duties of a king - were deliberately and suggestively explored rather than categorically answered...[the issue of tyranny] was frequently on the minds of late eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish writers, when land alienation and the unwelcome imposition of kings from outside was becoming increasingly prevalent.'⁴⁴⁸ -

If indeed O'Connor is correct, and the impropriety of regicide is the

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 134.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 142.

⁴⁴⁷ Neil McLeod, 'Irish law and the wars of the Túatha Dé Danann', in Liam Breatnach, Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Damian McManus and Katherine Simms (eds), *Proceedings XIV International Congress of Celtic Studies. Maynooth 2011* (Dublin, 2015), pp 75-94.

⁴⁴⁸ O'Connor, 'BMDR', pp 138, 141-2. The idea of *tyrannus* was also explored by Isidore and we can Isidorean influence in the German pro-papal polemic and Saxon propaganda at the time of the 'Investiture contest'. See R.W. & A.J. Carlyle, *A history of mediaeval political theory in the West, vols III and IV* (London, 1928, 1932), pp 131-4.

‘moral’ to be derived from *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*, then one might draw certain parallels between it and the work of the English ecclesiastical author, John of Salisbury, namely his *Policraticus*, composed about the year 1159. This work has been interpreted in different ways by different commentators. John of Salisbury, depending on who is to be believed, either condones or condemns tyrant-slaying in his work of the mid-twelfth century. Jan van Laarhoven has argued that the *Policraticus* contains no theory of tyrannicide but rather, John elaborates a theory about tyrants which concludes that tyrants met an untimely and horrific end: ‘The real sense is not “You, murderer, have to kill”, but “You, tyrant, will be slain”. In this sense, it ought to be done, and it will be done, surely and absolutely, for God wins... The whole accent is on the tyrant, not his eventual murderer.’⁴⁴⁹ Cary Nederman, however, followed a more ‘orthodox reading of John’s doctrine of tyrannicide’ and suggested that John did indeed ‘conclude that – at least under fixed conditions – it is right and proper to employ force against a tyrant.’⁴⁵⁰ While, ideally, the tyrant is to be ‘endured’, this is only so provided his rule does not endanger ‘the communal welfare’; ‘he must be slain as soon as it is apparent that his tyrannical behavior imperils the ability of his subjects to live according to virtue and religion.’⁴⁵¹ Indeed, Nederman wrote, for John, tyrannicide is an obligation or a duty that rests with every member of the community, and those who fail in their duty are tantamount to ‘accessories to tyranny’.⁴⁵²

We perhaps see an echo of Salisbury’s work in the ‘Life’ of St Munna, elements of which have been dated to the twelfth century (see above, chapter 2, s. 2(a.) for more on this ‘Life’). In this text, we hear of an individual, Guaire son of Eogan, who is said to have tormented the *plebs* of St Barraidh, taking away their livestock and plough-animals for

⁴⁴⁹ Jan van Laarhoven, ‘Thou shalt *not* slay a tyrant! The so-called theory of John of Salisbury’, in Michael Wilks (ed.), *The world of John of Salisbury* (Oxford, 1984), p. 328.

⁴⁵⁰ Cary J. Nederman, ‘A duty to kill: John of Salisbury’s theory of tyrannicide’. *Review of Politics* 50(3) (1988), p. 367.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 379.

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, p. 369.

himself. When St Munna hears of the plight of these *plebs* he is greatly saddened and his monks rebuke this Guaire. In doing so, they expressly term him a ‘tyrant’ (*tyrannus*). Ultimately, not heeding the warnings of the churchmen, Guaire is killed by his enemies: *Illes siquidem eos et sua verba despexit, et in quinto die, sicut prophetauit beatus Munnu, ille tyrannus occisus est ab inimicis suis et decollates*.⁴⁵³ In this Irish text, we have a ‘tyrant’ who, like the tyrants of the *Policraticus*, meets a violent end. One is tempted to say that we might see the *Policraticus*, this section of the ‘Life’ of Munna, and our saga literature as part of one and the same trend.

The Irish men of letters, in the law tracts, advice texts, and saga literature, sought to set out certain parameters within which a king should properly function, but also desired to highlight the terrible consequences that might follow from improper behaviour. However, they sought to counsel rather than condone, and there is little in the texts mentioned above that seeks to promote the overthrowing of kings.

3. REGICIDE

Of course, the murder and deposition of kings was not confined to the fictional works of the Irish literati; they were a fact of life in medieval Ireland. Resistance was something most Irish kings could expect to face at some point, and it took many forms. We turn firstly to explore the issue of regicide. The Irish annals frequently make for rather grisly reading. The removal of tongues and eyeballs, decapitation, drowning, hanging, immolation, suffocation are not altogether uncommon, and we even hear mention of an individual being beaten to death with a leg of beef!⁴⁵⁴ Indeed, it has become somewhat commonplace to draw attention to the

⁴⁵³ ‘Life of St. Munnu’ in Charles Plummer, *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, volume II* (Oxford, 1910), s. xv, p. 232.

⁴⁵⁴ Removal of tongues – ALC 1251.11. Blinding – AU 864.1, 919.2, 997.4, 1000.6, 1009.4, 1010.7, 1018.2, etc. Decapitation – AU 878.3, 883.8, 884.5, 891.3, etc. Drowning – AT 743.4, 739.6, 1131.5, etc. Hanging – AU 746.11, 1175.8, 1197.2; ALC 1196.18, CS 1129. Burning – AI 642.1, 1128.7, 1165.10. Suffocation – AU 1059.2, AU 1063.5. Bludgeoning with beef – AT 1066.2. These are given by way of illustration only, countless more examples abound.

violence contained therein. They are replete with violent acts, done to and by kings. Irish kings and lords, it seems, were engaged in a perennial game of exceptionally violent tit-for-tat; for every cattle-raid and church burning there appears to be a corresponding reaction. If Group A raze the territory of Group B, one can regularly expect to find notice of a retaliatory raid the following year. The annalistic sources also make mention of the occasional revolt or deposition of a king. There are, too, certain entries in the annals that, at least ostensibly, differ from the usual reports of internecine warfare. These are the ‘*a suis*’ references, whereby a king is said to be killed ‘by his own’ family, brothers, associates, people, or, occasionally, slaves.

If indeed it is a platitude to draw attention to the violence contained in the Irish annals, it is surely equally banal to regurgitate the ‘trembling sod’ line contained in the *Annals of the Four Masters*.⁴⁵⁵ Just what are we to make of statements such as this, though? The general consensus amongst modern scholars (in addition to our contemporary annalists) has been that Ireland, after Clontarf, became increasingly violent and anarchic. Such were the levels of violence in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that G. H. Orpen saw, in the arrival of the English, the beginning of a *Pax Normannica*.⁴⁵⁶ Orpen, of course, had his biases and his *Ireland under the Normans* was very much of its time. Writers even closer to our own time, though, such as John Gillingham, have compared Ireland unfavourably with England (and, later, Wales and Scotland). England, Scotland and Wales, he argued, ‘joined Europe’ – that is, became more chivalrous – but Ireland did not.⁴⁵⁷ In Ireland, Gillingham asserted, political elites were more likely to suffer a violent end – or at the

⁴⁵⁵ The levels of warfare were so great in the mid-twelfth century that we see recorded: ‘Great war in this year, so that Ireland was a trembling sod’ (AFM 1145.13).

⁴⁵⁶ Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, volume II* (Oxford, 1911), pp 323-4.

⁴⁵⁷ John Gillingham, ‘Killing and mutilating political enemies in the British Isles from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century: a comparative study’, in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland 900-1300. Insular responses to medieval European change* (Cambridge, 1999), pp 121, 125, 128.

very least, a mutilation of sorts – than their ‘European’ counterparts.⁴⁵⁸ Katharine Simms has suggested that between the eleventh and twelfth centuries Ireland saw a shift away from killing towards mutilation; however, Gillingham quipped, if this was indeed the case it was a trend which had hardly got under way by the early fourteenth century.⁴⁵⁹

The consensus amongst historians also seems to be that the kings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were able to draw on economic and financial resources beyond the wildest dreams of their predecessors.⁴⁶⁰ This allowed Irish kings to engage in more protracted military campaigns; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has spoken of the ‘economic expansion on which such developments were based.’⁴⁶¹ Historians have also noted a shift in the terminology used to describe military conflict in the Irish annals. There was a switch from *cath* to the rather more grandiose *cogadh*. F.J. Byrne spoke of the ‘undoubted anarchy of twelfth-century Ireland’, though he questioned whether we could call it ‘tribal’ anarchy and suggested that Ireland was, in some respects, not much worse than its European neighbours: ‘It is undoubtedly true that warfare and assassination were prevalent in the Ireland of the time, as they were throughout Europe. England was perhaps more peaceful than most of its neighbours, or at least English historians, following a tradition established by Bede, have agreed to make it appear so.’⁴⁶² Seán Duffy has characterised the eleventh and twelfth centuries as ‘a period that witnessed great warfare in Ireland, but not senseless violence’ and noted that the period was one of ‘ubiquitous power struggles.’⁴⁶³ In short, the consensus seems to be that increased economic resources, coupled with ambitions stoked by Brian Bóruma’s actions in the early part of the eleventh century, led to bigger battles and, as a consequence, more violence. It is the aim of this chapter

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 125.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid; Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp 50-51.

⁴⁶⁰ Seán Duffy, *Ireland in the middle ages* (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 34.

⁴⁶¹ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London, 1995), p. 274.

⁴⁶² F.J. Byrne, ‘The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169’, in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland II: medieval Ireland 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1987), pp 5, 1.

⁴⁶³ Duffy, *Ireland in the middle ages*, pp 40, 42.

to explore this broad thesis through an examination of quantitative data gleaned from annalistic sources.

There are methodological difficulties, which shall be dealt with in turn, but a further issue arises with the term ‘violence’ and it is with this that we must first concern ourselves. The term ‘violence’, of course, encompasses a very broad range of actions – from a drunken brawl to a pitched battle, from rape to the mutilation of animals. The problem we have is that many acts of violence, particularly violence perpetrated against non-elite members of society, will seldom permeate through into the historical record. There are only very occasional references to rape in the annals of the eleventh and twelfth century but it goes without saying that this does not mean that rape did not occur. The *Triads* set out three ‘darknesses into which women should not go’, namely the darkness of mist (*ciach*), the darkness of night (*aidche*), and the darkness of a wood (*fedá*).⁴⁶⁴ Rape is nowhere explicitly stated, but one can make an educated guess as to what is being alluded to in this warning. *Audacht Morainn* names three legal exemptions from violence at an *óenach*, one of which includes the ale-house.⁴⁶⁵ Nor is this the only legal exemption that applies to the ale-house. A woman who is raped there when not accompanied by her husband may not sue for compensation (unless it is ‘forcible’ rape, to borrow Fergus Kelly’s translation).⁴⁶⁶ Slaves too must have suffered sexual violence at the hands of their masters.⁴⁶⁷ These passing references to exemptions from violence and the ‘darkness’ of the wood indicate that sexual violence and drunken brawls were a fact of life. We seldom see reference made to them in the annalistic record, however. Without court records and the like we have no real way of calibrating the overall levels of violence in pre-invasion Irish society. Something we do see noted in

⁴⁶⁴ Kuno Meyer, *The triads of Ireland*, s. 100.

⁴⁶⁵ Fergus Kelly, *Audacht Morainn* (Dublin, 1976), s.28; Bart Jaski, *Early Irish kingship and succession* (Dublin, 2002), p. 51.

⁴⁶⁶ Fergus Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin, 1988), p.135.

⁴⁶⁷ John Gillingham, ‘Women, children, and the profits of war’, in Janet L. Nelson, Susan Reynolds, and Susan M. Johns (eds), *Gender and historiography. Studies in the earlier middle ages in honour of Pauline Stafford* (London, 2012), pp 61-74.

the annals is violence against animals. Quantifying such violence, though, is no easier than quantifying the levels of sexual violence. Such violence probably formed a part of everyday life though, and the killing and mutilation of cattle and other livestock was a central feature of Irish politics in the middle ages. This passage contained in the *Annals of Inisfallen* is surely representative: ‘Áth Truim in Mide, including church, people, and cattle, was burned by Conchobar, son of Mac Lochlainn, in revenge for the undeserved slaying of his fosterbrother by Ua Caindelbáin.’⁴⁶⁸

Violence, then, covers actions far wider than homicide alone, and yet it is homicide that is perhaps the most useful means of measuring violence ‘because regardless of how the people of a distant culture conceptualize a crime, a dead body is hard to define away.’⁴⁶⁹ A homicide is also more likely to find its way into the historical record than a dog kicked in anger or a battered wife.⁴⁷⁰ Not all homicides are equal, of course; elite homicides were far more likely to have been recorded than

⁴⁶⁸ AI 1128.7.

⁴⁶⁹ Steven Pinker, *The better angels of our nature. The decline of violence in history and its causes* (London, 2011), p. 62. Since ‘violence’ does encompass a very broad range of actions, there remain a number of avenues for further research. The annals naturally lend themselves to a study violence done to élites of course, and an inquiry into non-élite violence would of course be a difficult thing indeed. Even so, further work needs to be done on changes in élite violence after the arrival of the English. Still more work can be done on violence in medieval Ireland. If quantitative studies cannot possibly be conducted for each and every form of violence, qualitative can. In other words, if this thesis has been concerned with levels of violence, we might also ask in what ways was medieval Ireland violence? In what ways was violence seen as laudatory, as destructive, as necessary? What was said to be ‘violent’ behaviour? What triggered violence; how was violence combatted? How was violence represented in our sources? How did violence manifest itself in homes, in communities, between communities? What about emotional violence – how did people respond to experiencing violence? What of ritual violence? Studies of violence in medieval Ireland have, understandably in many respects, focused on warfare – the changing practices in warfare after Clontarf, the use of foreign mercenaries, or the conflicts of the ‘land of war’ (H.S. Sweetman, *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland, 1252-1284* (London, 1877), no. 930, p. 160; James Lydon, ‘A land of war’, in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume II: medieval Ireland, 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1986), pp 240-274.) Or ritual violence has been looked at in an earlier period – the killing of kings and the like. Though, as always, we are limited by our sources, more work remains to be done on the subject of violence in pre- and post-invasion Ireland.

⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, she might not have suffered violence at the hands of a husband, but rather, at the hands of a *cétmuintir* if she was a secondary wife or concubine. See Fergus Kelly (ed.), *Marriage disputes. A fragmentary Old Irish law-text* (Dublin, 2014), p. 87.

those of unfortunates of lower standing. Every laconic reference to pillaging, razing, and devastation hides dozens, if not hundreds, of deaths. The ambitions of Irish kings could only be satiated with the blood of butchered innocents, with families torn apart, with burning homesteads, with broken hearts.

Even so, quantifying homicides – even if they are overwhelmingly elite homicides – in the Irish annals might give us some insight into the levels of violence in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland generally. Ted Robert Gurr, in 1981, charted homicide rates in England from about the year 1200 and his findings suggested that homicides declined quite significantly between the thirteenth and twentieth century.⁴⁷¹ Gurr's findings - which produced considerable shock in academic circles – were the basis for further works on historical rates of violence, many of which went on to corroborate his findings.⁴⁷² One piece worthy of particular mention is a 2003 article by Manuel Eisner, which synthesised many of the subsequent studies of historical homicide in Europe. Taken together, 'the empirical evidence suggests a continent-wide gradual decline of serious interpersonal violence', Eisner wrote, although from the sixteenth century we do begin to see regional differences emerge and a clear 'center-periphery dimension characterized the geographic distribution of lethal violence across late-nineteenth century Europe.'⁴⁷³ More recently, Eisner examined regicides in Europe between 600 and 1800 AD. Eisner's data suggested a 'long downward trend in the frequency of regicide across the European continent over a period of 1,200 years. It starts with about 2,500 murders per 100,000 years in office in the seventh century... It gradually declines to about 200 per 100,000 years in office in the eighteenth century.'⁴⁷⁴ Eisner's data also suggests that 'a significant

⁴⁷¹ Ted Robert Gurr, 'Historical trends in violent crime: a critical review of the evidence', in N. Morris and M. Tonry (eds), *Crime and Justice* 3 (1981), pp 303-4, 313.

⁴⁷² Pinker, *Better angels*, p. 60.

⁴⁷³ Manuel Eisner, 'Long-term historical trends in violent crime', *Crime and Justice* 30 (2003), pp 98-104.

⁴⁷⁴ Manuel Eisner, 'Killing kings. Patterns of regicide in Europe, AD 600-1800', *British Journal of Criminology* 51 (2011), pp 568-9.

proportion of the regicide decline occurred between the Early and the Late Middle Ages' and this 'supports the notion of a substantial movement towards more pacified and courteous behaviour amongst the highest political elites long before the first English Eyre court records of around 1200 give the earliest glimpse into the crimes of the masses.'⁴⁷⁵ Indeed, previously, in his 2003 piece, Eisner had concluded that the 'transition to lower overall levels of interpersonal criminal violence...was accompanied by an overproportional withdrawal of the elite from the use of physical aggression to seize and defend their interests.'⁴⁷⁶

Discerning rates of regicide – or, indeed, homicide – is not the aim of this chapter; it would be, in all probability, something of an impossibility to advance with any real certainty a rate or rates of homicide or regicide for eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. My aims are altogether more modest, namely, to quantify the number of regicides and homicides in the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of Inisfallen*, *Mac Carthaigh's Book*, the *Annals of Loch Cé*, and the *Cottonian Annals* (the Annals in Cotton MS. Titus A. XXV, formerly styled as the *Annals of Boyle*).

3(a.) Methodology

Something similar has been done before, except that it was Viking raids rather than regicides that were being quantified. In 1972, Kathleen Hughes, drawing on A.T. Lucas' dataset, quantified the number of Viking raids contained in the Irish annals and the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* and concluded that the raids got 'heavier' in the 830s but eased off in the late 870s 'and there is about forty years of comparative calm...880 to 920'.⁴⁷⁷ In 1982 Peter Sawyer suggested that Viking raids were heaviest between 820 and 850 and declined thereafter. Colmán Etchingham, however, took

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 569.

⁴⁷⁶ Eisner, 'Long-term trends', p. 118.

⁴⁷⁷ Kathleen Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: introduction to the sources* (London, 1972), p. 157. See pp 155-58.

issue with the methodology of all involved. The problem was, Etchingham noted, that Sawyer and Donnchadh Ó Corráin assumed all too readily that the changes in the documented volume of raids mirrored reality in an accurate fashion.⁴⁷⁸ Doing this failed to take into account changes in the practice of annal-writing over time, even over short periods.⁴⁷⁹

Etchingham therefore adopted as his control ecclesiastical events excluding obits. The average incidence up to the year 840 is almost double that of the period 731-70 (up from 9.5 to 17.6 occurrences per decade). There is a notable decrease after 840, with only an average of 6.4 per decade, and then a recovery after 890. In other words, the drop, and subsequent rise in ecclesiastical events excluding obits approximates with a similar decline and recovery in recorded Viking raids.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore, said Etchingham,

‘The inescapable conclusion would seem to be that the extant annals include appreciably fewer instances of a whole range of ecclesiastical occurrences, apart from plain obits, after the mid-ninth century than before... The conclusion, from the much reduced incidence of Viking raids on churches in the annals for the second half of the ninth century, that such raiding, as distinct from the reporting of raids, underwent a real decline, is simplistic. One must take account of trends in the reporting of other ecclesiastical events if a true picture is to emerge.’⁴⁸¹

Etchingham, it might be noted, did allow that ‘the figures do suggest that there was probably some reduction’ in raiding though they give no clue as

⁴⁷⁸ Colmán Etchingham, *Viking raids on Irish church settlement in the ninth century* (Maynooth, 1996), p. 10.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 11-12.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

to the absolute scale of the decrease.⁴⁸² Conscious of Etchingam's insights, we proceed.

Firstly, who is to be included and excluded in our list of regicides? Included here is anyone explicitly termed 'king' (*rí, rex*) by the annalists. Anyone termed *dux, tigerna* or *toisech* (all can be translated as 'lord') has not been included, nor has anybody titled *rígdamna*, the interpretation of which has no agreed consensus although it does seem to imply an individual with kingly potential. Further, a king need not necessarily be named: 'the king of X' or something like 'there was a slaughter of the X, and multitudes of them fell there, including their king', would suffice. Kings must, of course, have been *killed*, it is not enough that they simply *die*. To report such violent deaths annalists habitually used the Latin terms *occidit/occisi sunt*, and *iugulatus est* and Irish phrases such as *do marbad do/la* ('was killed by') and [*dú*] *i torcair* ('[in which] fell' X). The figures in the following tables also include, in many cases, those who have drowned (*do báduid/do bathadh*) or burned (*do loscud*). The terms used for a non-homicidal death include *quieuit/quieuerunt*, *dormiuit/dormierunt*, and *mortuus est/mortui sunt*. Of course, this is not without its problems; one can be 'killed' by a falling tree, a riding accident, disease, an accidental drowning, an enraged animal (wild or domesticated), a flash of lightning, a simple fall, or any other such misfortune. Take, by way of illustration, the following entry from the *Annals of Tigernach*: 'Two people were killed by lightning at Termonkeelin' (*Díass do marbadh do thenidh gelan a Termannd Chaelaind*).⁴⁸³ Here we are told how the individuals are killed – by lightning. The problem lies in the phrase *do marbad(h) do*. It was stated above that the term *do marbad do/la* was used by annalists to denote violent death – and this is largely the case; 'X *do marbad do/la* Y' is the formula we typically find. As this entry from the *Annals of Tigernach* shows, though, there are exceptions to the rule. This complicates matters

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, p. 16.

⁴⁸³ AT 1108.

slightly – what are we to make of particularly brief entries like ‘Three of the Uí Maíl Doraid were killed’ (*Tri h-Uí Mael Doraid do marbad*) and ‘The cleric ua Conchobhair was killed’ (*In Cleirech H. Conchobhair do marbad*).⁴⁸⁴ The three unfortunates of the Uí Maíl Doraid and ua Conchobhair might not have been murdered; they could have been killed in an accidental fire, a heavy hail shower, or (as happened to one near contemporary) after having fallen off a bridge in a drunken stupor.⁴⁸⁵ The annals, famously terse, simply do not tell us. Where such a formula arises – ‘X, King of Y, was killed’ (or some variant thereof), it has, rightly or wrongly, been included. Other problematic entries occur. In the same set of annals, in an entry for the year 1126, is written the following: ‘Domhnall the Fair Ó Dubhda, king of Uí Amalgaidh, Uí Fiachrach and Cera, a man who never gave refusal to anyone, was drowned in driving a prey out of Tyrconnell.’⁴⁸⁶ Was Domhnall actively killed by those undertaking the raid, or was his drowning an accident? Here, it was opted to include Domhnall’s death (it is submitted that AI 1126.12 suggests that his death was no mere incidental occurrence). Conversely, both battle deaths and murders have been included as, in many cases, given the laconic style adopted by the annalists, it cannot be known in many instances whether a king was killed in battle or murdered ‘in cold blood’. One wonders whether this mattered, conceptually speaking, to contemporaries; the end result was the same.

Each regicide included in my list here is unique: if a killing is recorded in more than one set of annals, it is included but once. For example, the murder of Muircertach ua Lochlainn in 1166 is recorded in all six annal collections, but comprises one entry on my list. There are no duplicates.

As noted above, the writer examined six annal collections: the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of Inisfallen*, *Mac Carthaigh’s Book*, the *Annals of Loch Cé*, and the *Cottonian Annals*. It

⁴⁸⁴ AU 1037; AU 1044.

⁴⁸⁵ AT 1163.

⁴⁸⁶ AT 1126.4

was decided to exclude from this study the *Annals of the Four Masters* and the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*. As has been discussed previously (in chapter two), the compilers of the *Annals of the Four Masters* demoted, as a matter of course, minor kings to the status of lords. For this reason, they have been excluded. The problem with the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* lies in the fact that they survive only in an English translation of seventeenth-century provenance.⁴⁸⁷ Furthermore, their translator, Conell Mageoghagan, might also have demoted some of the lesser kings to ‘lords’, though if he did so, he did it ‘in a rather haphazard fashion.’⁴⁸⁸ Due to these complications, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* were also excluded from this study.

As for ‘homicides’ (of both royal and non-royal persons), an individual must, as always, have been killed, and here, too, all of the same caveats set out above, apply. An individual need not be named, though. Take, by way of illustration the reference to two horsemen (*marcach*) in AU 1197.6.⁴⁸⁹ Maelruanaigh ua Fercomais, chief of Clann Dianann was killed along with two of his horsemen. Both of these horsemen are also included in the dataset because a precise number is given. Similarly, something like ‘eight foreigners’ or ‘his wife’ or ‘five chiefs of the Fernmag’ is included. Where a precise number is given, but this number is greater than ten (for example the ‘twenty-four Uí Ocáin’ mentioned in AT 1151.3 or the 120 mentioned in AU 1187.3), it is not included in tables 3.3 or 3.4. Where those slaughtered are not precisely enumerated by the annalist – for example, something like ‘X king of Y was killed, and many more besides – there are not included in the dataset (though the ‘X king of Y’ would be).

⁴⁸⁷ Gearóid Mac Niocaill, *The medieval Irish annals* (Dublin, 1975), p. 14.

⁴⁸⁸ Katherien Megan McGowan, *Political geography and political structures in earlier medieval Ireland: a chronicle-based approach*, Unpublished PhD (Cambridge, 2002), p. 13.

⁴⁸⁹ E.G. Quinn (ed.), *Dictionary of the Irish language* (Dublin, 1990): ‘marcach, o.m., a rider, horseman’.

3(b.) The Data

We turn, now, to our figures. The writer counted 317 regicides for the eleventh century, and 218 regicides for the twelfth century. This means that there is a 31% decrease in the number of regicides recorded in the twelfth century as opposed to the eleventh.

Table 3.1: Eleventh century regicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

DECADE	RECORDED REGICIDES
1000s	29
1010s	41
1020s	36
1030s	46
1040s	32
1050s	27
1060s	29
1070s	31
1080s	21
1090s	25
TOTAL:	317

There are problems with this data, of course; however, as will be suggested, it does not seem that this apparent decline in regicides is little more than a ‘trick’ played by our sources. The reduction is no mere chimera; it is real and it is significant.

Table 3.2: Twelfth century regicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

DECADE	RECORDED REGICIDES
1100s	33
1110s	13
1120s	27
1130s	31
1140s	13
1150s	20
1160s	20
1170s	33
1180s	19
1190s	9
TOTAL:	218

The first difficulty lies in the fact that one could reasonably attribute this apparent decline to the twelfth-century annalistic lacunae. We are missing years from 1132-1155 in the *Annals of Ulster*, from 1138-1170 in the *Annals of Loch Cé*, from 1130-1159 in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, and from 1184-1170 in *Mac Carthaigh's Book*. This is offset slightly by some eleventh-century lacunae; there is a gap from 1003-18 in the *Annals of Tigernach*, the records for the eleventh century in the *Cottonian Annals* can be described as fragmentary as best, and *Mac Carthaigh's book* simply does not cover the eleventh century.

The Irish annals all have, as their basis, the lost 'Irish World Chronicle' which drew upon an 'Iona Chronicle', the Eusebian chronological tables, the annals of Ammianus Marcellinus, Propser of Aquitaine's *Chronicon*, Bede's World Chronicle and the *Liber Pontificalis* (a book of the history of the Popes).⁴⁹⁰ A version of the 'Irish

⁴⁹⁰ Katharine Simms, *Medieval Gaelic sources* (Dublin, 2009), p. 21.

World Chronicle' probably existed at Armagh in the tenth century, and a copy of the text was also probably brought to Clonmacnoise in the tenth century. The annals as they come down to us today survive in manuscripts that date between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; however the date of contemporary annal-writing is controversial.⁴⁹¹ There does seem to be something resembling a consensus, however, that 'the earliest body of Irish annals received their first contemporary entries about the middle of the sixth century'.⁴⁹² Each set of annals, though copying from others, would also have drawn on local sources too. Take, by way of illustration, the *Annals of Inisfallen*. Entries of Munster interest were retrospectively added into the version of the 'Irish World Chronicle' copied at Clonmacnoise. Entries based on events recorded contemporaneously in Munster began towards the end of the tenth century, and would have drawn on local sources of information. From 950 to 1065 the Munster entries are amalgamated with material from the Clonmacnoise annals, but a fully independent Munster account emerges from 1066, and continues up until 1092.⁴⁹³ Since the annal writers no doubt often relied on personal connections with other monasteries for information, and there was also quite a bit of textual borrowing, the 'gaps' are not as troubling as they might appear. Of course, references to more 'regional' events will be lost to us; however we do still have, at the very least, every year between 1000 and 1200 covered by at least one set of annals.

Could it be the case that record keeping was on the downturn, as was the case between 880 and 920 as Etchingam's essay suggests? It will be recalled that the apparent reduction in Viking raiding was something of a chimera produced by the annalistic sources as the number of recorded non-obit ecclesiastical events also fell in the same period. It seems unlikely that this is the case here, however. In fact, we see the

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, p. 22.

⁴⁹² A. P. Smyth, 'The earliest Irish annals: their earliest contemporary entries, and the earliest centres of recording', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 72C* (1972), p. 18.

⁴⁹³ Simms, *Sources*, p. 28.

number of total homicides (that is, *anybody* killed between 1000 and 1200) actually increase in the twelfth century. There is a 22% increase in the number of homicides recorded in the twelfth century.

Table 3.3: Eleventh century homicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

DECADE	RECORDED HOMICIDES
1000s	54
1010s	98
1020s	65
1030s	104
1040s	67
1050s	60
1060s	58
1070s	50
1080s	67
1090s	56
TOTAL:	679

Table 3.4: Twelfth century homicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

DECADE	RECORDED HOMICIDES
1100s	84
1110s	64
1120s	72
1130s	86
1140s	43
1150s	135
1160s	81
1170s	106
1180s	87
1190s	71
TOTAL:	829

It is also the case that annal entries relating to dearth or famine, disease, weather and what we might call the ‘supernatural’ remain the same for both the eleventh century and the twelfth century. Fifty-three such entries were counted for both the eleventh and the twelfth century.

Table 3.5: Dearth, disease, weather and the supernatural in the eleventh century

DECADE	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
1000s	2
1010s	9
1020s	5
1030s	6
1040s	3
1050s	5
1060s	3
1070s	3
1080s	2
1090s	15
TOTAL:	53

Table 3.6: Dearth, disease, weather and the supernatural in the twelfth century

DECADE	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
1100s	13
1110s	9
1120s	3
1130s	4
1140s	1
1150s	3
1160s	2
1170s	13
1180s	2
1190s	3
TOTAL:	53

Included here are any entries that relate to weather – lightning strikes, hot summers, snow, the drying up of rivers, rain – disease (whether it afflicted cattle or humans), periods of famine and supernatural occurrences, like the moving of lakes, the dropping of blood from shrines, balls of fire, visions, mermaids and giant men thrown up from the sea. Also included are any references to eclipses and comets. The writer chose to exclude any references to the illness of an individual, for example, Muirchertach Ua Briain’s infamous bout of sickness and any deaths attributed to a saint, or God, or a poet.

Finally, any annal records that refer to church burnings, synods, church building, visitations and the installation of new churchmen, the emptying or vacating of churches, damage wrought to churches by the elements, pillagings, peace councils and the desecration of relics were totalled and tabulated. The table below includes any instances of churches being burned, damaged (both as a result of human action and natural or weather-related occurrences) or raided, the consecration of new churches or the building of a new church or any part thereof – lime-kilns,

doorways, lead roofs and the like. As regards devastation wreaked by freak weather occurrences, only damage done to buildings is included in the table below. So, the ‘violent wind’ that laid low six oak trees in Derry in 1178 is not included.⁴⁹⁴ It was decided to include fires and destruction wrought by natural occurrences because, where the annal entry is more terse – for example in AU 1084: ‘Glenn dá Locha with its churches was burned’ – we cannot know for sure what started the fire. It makes more sense to include *all* instances of damage caused to church buildings, howsoever caused. Only included here are events that occurred in Ireland – events like the capture of Jerusalem or Pope Alexander’s ‘*generalis sinodus*’, both recorded in the *Annals in Cotton MS* – are not, therefore, included.

Table 3.7: Eleventh century church burnings, synods, visitations, church building & installation of ecclesiastics

DECADE	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
1000s	4
1010s	15
1020s	20
1030s	18
1040s	27
1050s	15
1060s	20
1070s	7
1080s	19
1090s	21
TOTAL:	166

⁴⁹⁴ AU 1178.4.

Table 8: Twelfth century church burnings, synods, visitations, church building & installation of ecclesiastics

DECADE	NUMBER OF ENTRIES
1100s	22
1110s	30
1120s	22
1130s	27
1140s	6
1150s	12
1160s	30
1170s	55
1180s	16
1190s	21
TOTAL:	241

Once again, as with homicides, the number of non-obit ecclesiastical events (to borrow from Colmán Etchingham) recorded in the twelfth century exceeds the number recorded in the eleventh century. Taken together, the data set out above in tables 3.1-.8 suggest that the decline in regicides recorded in the annalistic material is no mere chimera. The lacunae in the twelfth century annals of Ulster, Inisfallen, Tigernach and Loch Cé cannot explain away the decline in recorded regicides. Despite the lacunae, the number of recorded homicides and non-obit ecclesiastical events actually increases in the twelfth-century annals. We do not see a decline in events relating to dearth, famine, the weather and the supernatural, as we might also have expected as a consequence of the problematic lacunae. Nor does there seem to be a decline in record-keeping generally. As has been argued already, in chapter two, it is simply not the case that there are fewer kings either. The number of kings

and kingships seems to have remained fairly stable between the time of Brian Bóruma and the arrival of the English in 1169. It is argued, therefore, that the decline in *recorded* regicides reflects a *real* decline in regicides. We cannot determine the exact rate of decline – that is, most likely, forever unknowable – although it is suggested that the decline is quite considerable.

3(c.) Causation

All of this brings us to the issue of causation – how do we account for this decline in Irish regicides in the twelfth century? The first point worth noting is that the declining rate of regicides is not a peculiarly Irish phenomenon; we see a decline in the number of regicides committed throughout Europe from around the year 1200, as has been noted above. This is significant. It suggests that the causal factor or factors need not be peculiar to Ireland but, rather, we are searching for a European-wide phenomenon. Eisner, in his article on European regicides, suggested a number of possible causal factors, including increasingly coherent laws of succession, an increased aura of sacrality surrounding kingship, the adoption of a code of chivalry, the ‘civilizing of royal behaviour, and more effective crime prevention strategies.’⁴⁹⁵ Others, in varying contexts, have suggested a link between declining violence and economics. It is worth taking a look at each putative cause in turn.

We turn firstly to succession. Across western Europe, between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, rules of succession increasingly became codified and fixed and were based on male primogeniture. There is little to suggest that Irish succession rules became more coherent or fossilised between 1000 and 1200. Certainly, the ‘customary regulation of succession was never transformed into a standardised law which limited succession to one or a small number of candidates.’⁴⁹⁶ Bart Jaski has written of a ‘customary rule of succession’ centred on seniority; seniority,

⁴⁹⁵ Eisner, ‘Killing kings’, pp 571-2.

⁴⁹⁶ Jaski, ‘Old Testament’, p. 342.

he wrote ‘was a basic principle which determined the order of succession if the senior candidate was not clearly unfit for the office or the junior’s qualifications were not clearly better.’⁴⁹⁷ What does this last caveat entail? Simply put, the expectation was that a senior son would eventually succeed his father unless a junior son could mount a serious claim by showing that he was in some way better qualified than the older claimant.⁴⁹⁸ The *Senchas Már* seems to equate this with wealth and status: *Ní tí sinnsear ria nosar muna forcratar* (The senior does not go before junior, unless he is wealthier).⁴⁹⁹ While *Senchas Már* proclaims that ‘*Focrena aos la feine; ar in aire do comcenel bes cutruma feib ocus tocus, ocus in ti bes sine isé do féd*’ (Age is rewarded by the Feini, for where there are two chiefs of the same family who are of equal dignity and property, the senior shall take precedence), it also states the ‘Qualification is nobler than age’ (*Sruithem feib aos*).⁵⁰⁰ Of course, the precedence given to seniority had a practical side, as Jaski observed, for he would usually be the first to embark on a career, which would make him the obvious choice.⁵⁰¹ Ultimately, as Jaski rightly noted, a junior candidate and his supporters could resort to violence in order to claim a right to succeed, although, he continued, even in such circumstances, the likelihood is that the senior candidate was considered unworthy or the junior had superior political connections.⁵⁰² *Febas* (‘qualification’ or ‘dignity’, ‘worth’), according to Immo Warntjes, over time, came to replace seniority as the primary criterion in determining succession. And one could prove one’s *febas* by establishing military power. Contenders for the kingship could strengthen their claim by raids into neighbouring kingdoms or by attacking (and killing) the over-king.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁷ Jaski, *Succession*, pp 169-70.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 279.

⁴⁹⁹ *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), p. 376/7.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp 372/3; 374/5.

⁵⁰¹ Jaski, *Succession*, p. 170.

⁵⁰² *Ibid*, p. 280.

⁵⁰³ Immo Warntjes, ‘Regnal succession in early medieval Ireland’, *Journal of Medieval History* 30(4) (2004), pp 377-410.

The point is that *febas* actually encouraged king-slaying. What better way to prove one's military prowess than by killing and slaying? Not that this resulted in a free-for-all. Hereditary right, social status, age, independence from the father and the status of the mother were all important, albeit to varying degrees. Only when a candidate ticked all of the above boxes could he launch his campaign to succeed.⁵⁰⁴ Thus a potential candidate had to belong to the *aire forgill* grade, he had to be 'of age', and he had to be the son of either a *cétmuintir*, *adaltrach airnadma*, or a *ben aititen*.⁵⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the Irish 'customary rule of succession' allowed for the establishment of competing claims, which could result in – perhaps even encourage – violent conflict. Irish kings were killed for myriad reasons and of course not all of those reasons were tied to the issue of succession, but the *febas* caveat undeniably encouraged violent opposition.

What about economic change? Might this have precipitated a decline in the number of regicides that took place. There is the sense amongst historians of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland that the economy of this island was evolving. There are some indications of a nebulous market economy. Michael Kenny has noted the significance of a number of silver hoard finds, many located many kilometres from Viking Dublin, in the heartland of Clann Cholmáin territory. These silver hoards from the 'Irish arc' located 30-70 km from Dublin cannot be explained away as mere war booty as the dates of these coins do not correspond with any known raids on the Viking town. Their presence around Lough Ennell may, therefore, be the result of commercial activity and tribute-taking.⁵⁰⁶ Kenny rejects the view of the Irish as a 'coinless people' and suggests that part of the problem lies in viewing Ireland – rather erroneously – as a single economic entity.⁵⁰⁷ It could be the case that

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ Michael Kenny, 'The geographical distribution of Irish viking-age coin hoards', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 87C (1987), pp 507-25, esp. pp 512-13, 515, 516.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

‘contact with the Vikings created a heightened awareness of coins and coin usage in Meath, Brega and north Leinster.’⁵⁰⁸ Furthermore, while coin hoards were most common in the territories just mentioned, object hoards were more prevalent in Ulster and Munster / south Leinster. In fact, object hoards were virtually non-existent in the main ‘coin belts’. The distinct patterns, argued Kenny, ‘suggest substantial regional differences in trading practices amongst the Irish’ and there ‘is a strong possibility that the coin and coin / ingot finds may represent a particular phase of development, a transitional or half-way stage between bullion and coin usage proper.’⁵⁰⁹ Tenth-century hoards found in other parts of northern Europe – principally the Slavic kingdoms and Scandinavia – are also a collection of silver coin and hack silver, something which suggests that metal measured by weight rather than coin which served as the medium of exchange.⁵¹⁰ The economy of these Baltic territories can be contrasted with the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and Islamic Spain (which used monometallic silver coins) and with Islamic Africa, Syria and Byzantium, where gold was the predominant metal of exchange, but where there were also coinages of silver and copper in use.⁵¹¹ The same might be true of Ireland; a coin-based economy may have flourished in Viking towns like Dublin, Limerick and Waterford, and their surrounding hinterlands, whilst an economy that was at least familiar with metal as an token of exchange (and not just coinage) existed in parts of Munster, south Leinster and Ulster. Elsewhere in the island, the use of metals might have been extremely limited or non-existent.

Silver was being mined in Ireland, along with copper, and was being used to pay certain fines and payments already by the time the law texts were being composed.⁵¹² The *Cáin iarraith* states that a foster father

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 519

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 518.

⁵¹⁰ Peter Johaneck, ‘Merchants, markets and towns’ in Timothy Reuter (ed.), *The new Cambridge medieval history, volume II c.900-c.1024* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 66.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 66.

⁵¹² *Cetharslicht Athgabála*, in *AL*, vol. I (Dublin, 1865), p. 185.

must make a payment to his son upon the son leaving his care, and that some of this payment may be in silver.⁵¹³ The ‘*Lebor Aicle*’ or *Bretha Étgid* also allows for certain fines in silver, not least the ‘payment of the honour-price of kings’.⁵¹⁴ We also hear of a number of payments and fines being paid in silver in the annalistic material. In 947 the Cenél nEógain paid silver to Armagh.⁵¹⁵ The following entry in the *Annals of Ulster* suggests that, at least in some instances, silver was the preferred form of payment to cattle: ‘[t]he circuit of Ossory was made by the successor of Colum-cille, namely, by Flaithbertach ua Brolcháin: that is, seven score oxen [*were given*]: but it is their value that was presented there – namely, four hundred and twenty ounces of pure silver: to wit, three ounces for every ox.’⁵¹⁶ This entry from 1161, just a few short years before the English invasion, might just highlight the fact that, over the course of the three centuries or so since 900, the Irish economy was transforming and bullion was in the process of becoming the preferred method of payment. Evidence is somewhat limited for this though, and while we hear mention of ‘gold and horses’ from foreign lands being due from the king of Leinster, it is, nevertheless, goods like mantles, cattle, cups and boats that remain the preferred currency of tribute in the early twelfth-century *Lebor na Cert*.

Coins, however, seem to be a different story altogether. The Vikings engaged in international trade on a scale not practised by the native Irish, and, by 997, they were even minting their own coins in Dublin. Perhaps, as Kenny suggested, these coins were being used at least in some regions of Ireland from the tenth century onwards. And perhaps, as Benjamin Hudson has suggested, after Cnut managed to negotiate the abolition of tolls charged on the journey to Rome, silver began to flow

⁵¹³ *Cáin iarraith*, in *AL*, vol. II (Dublin, 1869), p. 193; *CIH* 5 1769.41-1770.2.

⁵¹⁴ ‘*Lebor Aicle*’, in *AL*, vol. III (Dublin, 1873), p. 151; *CIH* 2 390.8.

⁵¹⁵ AU 947

⁵¹⁶ AU 1161.

into the Irish Sea region from the Holy Roman Empire via England.⁵¹⁷

Does all of this mean that Ireland's economy was moving away from one centred on land (a zero-sum economy) to one based around the selling of surpluses (a positive-sum economy)? There is evidence that Dublin was supplied with the agricultural surplus of its hinterland, and that grain was exported overseas in the eleventh century. No doubt many rural people living around Dublin continued to be self-sufficient, but there was a 'growing reliance on trade' over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵¹⁸ What about the rest of the country, though? The extent of Ireland's internal market economy has been long debated. As Kenny, Nancy Edwards, and others have noted, though, the idea that Ireland was comprised of 'completely self-sufficient farming communities' is, by now, quite outdated.⁵¹⁹ That is well and good, but we have no such broad agreement when it comes to the *extent* of Ireland's urbanity. Charles Doherty, argued that we might reasonably view the large monastic centres as proto-towns, where commercial activity was carried out on a regular basis. Mary Valante has dismissed such claims, however 'good intention[ed]' they might be.⁵²⁰ While she accepted that urbanization was spreading in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, and some secular site was evolving into focal points around which towns later developed, it was not until the arrival of the English that urbanization truly took off in Ireland. Accordingly, she argued, 'the time has come to admit that even though monasteries were involved in local trade and manufacturing in a limited way, they were not the 'hub of a redistributive

⁵¹⁷ Benjamin T. Hudson, 'The changing economy of the Irish Sea province: AD 900-1300', in Brendan Smith (ed.), *Britain and Ireland 900-1300. Insular responses to medieval European change* (Cambridge, 1999), pp 42-3.

⁵¹⁸ Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterton, *The Dublin region in the middle ages. Settlement, land-use and economy* (Dublin, 2010), p. 467.

⁵¹⁹ Nancy Edwards, 'The archaeology of early medieval Ireland, c.400-1169: settlement and economy' in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume I: prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), p. 295; Kenny, 'Viking-age coin hoards', p. 516.

⁵²⁰ Mary A. Valante, 'Reassessing the Irish "monastic town"', *Irish Historical Studies* 31 (121) (1998), pp 17-18.

system’, ‘proto-urban’, nor any sort of ‘town’.⁵²¹ More recently, Howard Clarke drew similar conclusions to Valante. Taking Kilkenny, Trim, Derry, Armagh and Tuam as his sample studies (as the *Irish Historical Towns Atlas* had published works on these towns by the time Clarke was writing), he concluded that ‘these monastic and episcopal...sites were not primarily towns’.⁵²² His characterisation was one based on functionality, and ‘a monastery of monks and sometimes nuns of the Irish type existed primarily to provide the highest level of religious devotion and observance, with a support system shared to some extent with those of both the village and town’.⁵²³ Like Valante, Clarke argued that urbanisation only came after the arrival of the English – with the exception of Tuam – and in ‘every case, a powerful aristocratic family of foreign origin was the agent of change’.⁵²⁴ Even in Tuam, the ‘primary dynamic towards genuine urbanization’ was the growth of a secular centre around a castle, as opposed to the older monastic centre.⁵²⁵

Dismissing the claims of some of the larger monastic settlements to be considered as ‘monastic’ towns or ‘proto-‘towns, like Glendalough, Clonmacnoise and Kildare, Valante seems to allow that references to a ‘town’ at Cashel in the twelfth century may hold some weight, although it was probably the result of Uí Briain royal patronage rather than the presence of a monastery at Cashel that led to the creation of this market.⁵²⁶ Others have posited the development of an urban settlement at Killaloe, co. Clare ‘under the aegis of the kings of Munster’.⁵²⁷ If indeed some urban centres were sprouting, cultivated by royal patrons, then this

⁵²¹ Ibid, p. 18; Mary A. Valente, *The Vikings in Ireland. Settlement, trade and urbanization* (Dublin, 2008), p. 160.

⁵²² Howard B. Clarke, ‘*Quo vadis? Mapping the Irish “monastic town”*’, in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Princes, prelates and poets in medieval Ireland. Essays in honour of Katharine Simms* (Dublin, 2013), p. 276.

⁵²³ Ibid, p. 277.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid, p. 278.

⁵²⁶ Valante, ‘Monastic towns’, pp 14-15.

⁵²⁷ Edwards, ‘Settlement and economy’, p. 296; John Bradley, ‘Killaloe: a pre-Norman borough?’, *Peritia* 8 (1994), pp 170-9.

is entirely in keeping with the development of towns elsewhere in northern / Baltic Europe. Unlike in Italy, and the Mediterranean region more generally, which drew on its rich history of urbanism, economic centres in the north were stabilised by strong lordships. Towns emerged where markets or trade were linked with centres of power (be they secular or ecclesiastical).⁵²⁸

3(c.)(i.) The 'Civilizing Process'⁵²⁹

Why does all of this matter, anyway? Norbert Elias posited two exogenous causes for his 'civilizing process'. One is the establishment of a leviathan, the other relates to an economic shift from an economy centred on land to one that has as its basis the selling of surplus. But it might make more sense to start at the beginning and explain what exactly the 'civilizing process' is. Elias observed the impulsiveness of more 'primitive' peoples. They were prone to outbursts of aggression and of cruelty, to sexual licentiousness, and so forth. 'The expressions of medieval people were,' he wrote, 'more spontaneous and unrestrained than in the following period.'⁵³⁰ Through his examination of, amongst other things, books on manners, Elias observed a change in what was

⁵²⁸ Johanek, 'Merchants', p. 92.

⁵²⁹ One might object to the use of the word 'civilizing', a problematic term now, but particularly when used by a writer of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Norbert Elias, at least, has this to say about 'civilization': 'But when one examines what the general function of the concept of civilization really is, and what common quality leads all these various human attitudes and activities to be described as civilized, one starts with a very simple discovery: this concept expresses the self-consciousness of the West. One could even say: the national consciousness. It sums up everything in which Western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or "more primitive" contemporary ones. By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of: the level of *its* technology, the nature of *its* manners, the development of *its* scientific knowledge or view of the world, and much more.' (Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process* (Oxford, 2000; revised edn., p. 5). There seems to be, therefore, an awareness on his part of the problems with using the term 'civilizing' or 'civilization'. Further, we should not lose sight of what really concerns us, and what really concerns Elias: this adapted ability, over time, to restrain. Europeans were learning restraint, to suppress impulsiveness. Whether or not 'restraint' is a measure of 'civility' is in some respects another matter, but quibbles over the use of the term 'civilizing' should not blind us to the real value of Elias' work.

⁵³⁰ Elias, *The civilizing process*, p. 181.

deemed to be acceptable behaviour over the course of the centuries. So, while in the fifteenth century people were being urged to pass wind silently when at the dining-table, by the eighteenth century it was (for better or for worse) deemed inappropriate to break wind at the table, audibility not excepting. This is because, over the course of time, people learned to self-constrain. For Elias, ‘self-constraint’ involved the ‘conversion of “external” social constraints...into a more or less habitual and automatic individual self-regulation of drives and affects.’⁵³¹ In short, Elias argued, over time, human beings become ‘more complex’:

‘Each man, as it were, confronts himself. He “conceals his passions”, “disavows his heart”, “acts against his feelings”. The pleasure or inclination of the moment is restrained in anticipation of the disagreeable consequences of its indulgence; and it is, indeed, the same mechanism as that by which adults – whether parents or other persons – increasingly instil [sic] a stable “super-ego” in children. The momentary drive and affect impulses are, as it were, held back and mastered by the for-knowledge of the later displeasure, by the fear of a future pain, until this fear finally opposes the forbidden behaviour and inclinations by force of habit, even if no other person is directly present, and the energy of such inclinations is channelled into a harmless direction not threatened by any displeasure.’⁵³²

This is not, Elias was quick to point out, the development of a new organ or substance, an ‘understanding’ or ‘reason’ which has not hitherto existed within the person, from ‘within’. What changes, he says, ‘is the way in which people are bonded to each other’ or human relationships.⁵³³

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, p. 383.

⁵³² *Ibid*, p. 399.

⁵³³ *Ibid*, p. 402.

He also points out that there is no ‘zero-point’, that is a total absence of self-restraint. The completely unrestrained individual is a ‘phantom’.⁵³⁴

As noted above, Elias did propose two triggers to set the whole process of impulse inhibition in process: the consolidation of a leviathan and economic revolution. Collectively, we might term this the tightening or intensifying of ties of interdependence. We turn firstly to the consolidation of a central power with a monopoly on violence and taxation. It might be noted that Weber’s ideas were influential on Elias’s conception of the monopoly of violence; however, whereas Weber was more concerned with the ‘State’, Elias traces the process of state formation.⁵³⁵ Put succinctly, Elias noted that where there is no strong central power, there is no-one ‘to compel people to exercise restraint’; however, ‘[o]nce the monopoly of physical power has passed to central authorities, not every strong man can afford the pleasure of physical attack. This is now reserved to those legitimized by the central authority.’⁵³⁶ The growth of the leviathan, the crawl towards a monopoly over violence and taxation, began in earnest in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Elias believed, ‘when territorial dominions consolidated themselves and a number of people, particularly less favoured knights, were forced to go to the greater and lesser courts to seek service.’⁵³⁷ At court, violent impulses and uncouth behaviour were to be constrained in order to curry favour and, as stated, these external constraints eventually convert into self-restraint so that behaviour which may at its root be pleasurable, becomes associated with displeasure and anxiety.⁵³⁸ Over time these standards expected of the upper classes began to trickle down to the bourgeoisie. This begins to happen when the lower classes come to be more important in the web of interdependence. The nobility were, on

⁵³⁴ Ibid, pp 181, 403.

⁵³⁵ Jonathan Fletcher, *Violence and civilization. An introduction to the work of Norbert Elias*. (Malden, MA, 1997), pp 32-3.

⁵³⁶ Elias, *Civilizing process*, p. 169.

⁵³⁷ Elias, *Civilizing process*, p. 392.

⁵³⁸ Ibid, pp. 383, 172.

the whole, ‘functionally...little dependent’ on the unarmed peasantry.⁵³⁹ As the barter economy came to be replaced by a monetised one, the upper classes become more dependent on the middle as they are drawn more tightly into the web of interdependence:

‘...[O]ne can see that the sharp contrasts between the behaviour of different social groups – like the contrasts and sudden switches within the behaviour of individuals – are steadily diminishing. The moulding of drives and affects, the forms of conduct, the whole habitus of the lower strata in the more civilized societies, is, with the growing importance of these strata in the entire network of functions, increasingly approaching that of other groups, beginning with the middle class. This is the case even though a part of the self-constraints and taboos among the latter, which arise from the urge to “distinguish themselves”, the desire for enhanced prestige, may initially be lacking in the former...’⁵⁴⁰

It follows then that the nobility also experienced pressure from below. Elias imagined them trapped in a type of pincer:

‘The courtly nobility, the vanguard of “*civilité*”, was gradually compelled to exercise a strict restraint of the affects and an exact moulding of conduct through its increasing integration in a network of interdependencies, and which was given expression in this case by the pincer formed of monarchy and bourgeoisie in which the nobility was trapped.’⁵⁴¹

Elias considered the transition of ‘warriors to courtiers’ (a process he

⁵³⁹ Ibid, p. 391.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 383.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid, pp 386-7. See also pp 421-35.

terms ‘courtization’) to be ‘one of the most decisive transitions’ in every major civilizing process.⁵⁴² This is because the

‘co-existence of a number of people whose actions constantly intertwined, compelled even the warriors who found themselves thus in closer interdependence to observe some degree of consideration and foresight, a more strict control of conduct and – above all towards the mistress of the house on whom they depended – a greater restraint of their affects, a transformation of their drive economy.’⁵⁴³

As to economic change, Elias also saw the stirrings of economic revolution as early as the eleventh and twelfth century with the growth of towns.⁵⁴⁴ By c. 1200, society had expanded and become more differentiated. With the increasing differentiation of work, larger markets formed and with the process of exchange over larger areas came the need for a mobile means of exchange.⁵⁴⁵ At the beginning of the eleventh century, there was little in the way of large-scale money transactions; however, all this had come to change by the mid-thirteenth century.⁵⁴⁶ Then,

‘[w]hile money circulation grew and commercial activity developed, while bourgeois classes and the revenue of the central authority rose, the income of the nobility fell... The monopoly control of weapons and military power passed from the whole noble estate into the hands of a single member, the prince or king who, supported by the tax income of the whole

⁵⁴² Ibid, p. 389.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 220-1.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 221.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 223.

region, could afford the largest army.’⁵⁴⁷

Elias argued that it was in the person of the monopoly ruler that ‘all the threads of a major network of interdependencies r[a]n together’ even long-distance trade links which, without the protection of strong and stable authorities, ‘never prove lasting.’⁵⁴⁸

It is important to note that his work was not based on quantitative research like others after him (and like this chapter is). Rather, Elias examined, as Steven Pinker put it, the ‘textures of life’ of past societies.⁵⁴⁹ Quantitative research conducted since then (by Gurr, Eisner and a whole host of regional studies) has strongly indicated that homicide rates declined in Europe from about the twelfth century onwards.⁵⁵⁰ In this way, as Pinker quipped, it has passed ‘a stringent test for a scientific hypothesis: it made a surprising prediction that turned out to be true.’⁵⁵¹ The work has had its fair share of critics, of course, but it remains, nevertheless, hugely influential.

Ted Robert Gurr accepted that a ‘plausible explanation for the long-

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 193. See also, p. 393.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 388.

⁵⁴⁹ Pinker, *Better Angels*, p. 65.

⁵⁵⁰ There are some dissenting voices. Siniša Malesević has held that ‘...violence does not disappear with the progression of modern order, it mutates and transforms into violence directed outwards...The modern nation-state does not erase violence; it only fosters its transformation through its externalisation’ (Idem, *The sociology of war and violence* (Cambridge. 2010), p. 129). Malesević was quite taken with dealing in absolute numbers: Alexander the Great, we are told, ‘lost only seven hundred men’ whilst in the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian War the Athenians lost 5,470 hoplites and 12,600 thetes (Ibid, p. 98). He makes no attempt to discern what percentage of the population lost lives in these or other conflicts. Occasionally, Malesević stresses that much of the bloodshed came *after* the battle or not on the battlefield at all – most casualties during the Crusades ‘were the result of the indiscriminate killing of civilians and prisoners’ and ‘one of the key features of feudal wars was that more soldiers died during the retreats than in the battles’ (p. 107). To this writers’ mind, they are as equally dead if killed during the retreat than if they had been killed during the battle itself. Malesević seems to frequently equate violence with ‘collective’ or ‘organised’ violence; which ignores non-collective violence, domestic violence, violence done to animals and so forth (Ibid, pp 98, 116, 118). Unfortunately, Malesević makes no mention of the quantitative studies done by Eisner, Gurr, Carter Wood or Spierenburg (mentioned above); accordingly no attempt is made to distinguish their findings. For all of these reasons, the present writer finds Malesević’s work unconvincing.

⁵⁵¹ Pinker, *Better Angels*, p. 78.

term decline in interpersonal violence is what Norbert Elias calls “the civilizing process” and all that it implies about the restraint of aggressive impulses and the acceptance of humanistic values.’⁵⁵² Manuel Eisner has noted the empirical observations of historians of crime ‘fit surprisingly well’ with Elias’s work, although just how far his ‘civilizing process’ theory goes towards explaining the long-term decline in violence is open to debate.⁵⁵³ Elsewhere, however, Eisner argued that ‘cultural norms embedded in social institutions...sometimes successfully control and marginalize the pleasures of violence’ and that ‘the best evidence for this effect is long-term change in the sensitization to violence that historians of violence have documented in great detail, and that Norbert Elias described as a civilizing process.’⁵⁵⁴ Peter Spierenburg came out strongly against Elias’s detractors. He accepted that ‘a few details’ of Elias’s book had (quite naturally) failed to stand the test of time, but the significance of any minor tweaks that might be necessary is vastly outweighed by all of the data that has since been produced which is compatible with his theory.⁵⁵⁵ John Carter Wood’s work on violence in nineteenth-century England, too, is strongly influenced by the work of Elias. Indeed, wrote Carter Wood, ‘I believe that Elias’s concepts remain among the most fruitful of conceptual frameworks for the study of violence.’⁵⁵⁶ Most recently, James Sharpe, in seeking to account for declining rates of violence in England from the Middle Ages to 1800 accepted that while there was ‘no single or easy answer’, ‘it’s tempting to turn to Elias and his civilizing process for clues.’⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵² Gurr, ‘Historical trends in violent crime’, p. 342.

⁵⁵³ Eisner, ‘Long term trends’, p. 87.

⁵⁵⁴ Manuel Eisner, ‘The uses of violence: an examination of some cross-cutting issues’, *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 3(1) (2009), p. 53.

⁵⁵⁵ Peter Spierenburg, ‘Violence and the civilizing process: does it work?’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 5(2), p. 45.

⁵⁵⁶ John Carter Wood, *Violence and crime in nineteenth-century England. The shadow of our refinement*. (London, 2004), p. 471.5. See also, *Ibid*, ‘Self-policing and the policing of the self: violence, protection and the civilizing bargain in Britain’, *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés* 7(1) (2003), pp 109-38

⁵⁵⁷ James Sharpe, *A fiery and furious people. A history of violence in England* (London, 2016), p. 136.

All, of course, had various points and nuances to make of their own. It is significant though that so many influential criminologists, sociologists, and historians of violence make use of Norbert Elias's 'civilizing process' theory in attempting to account for the decline in western European violence between c.1200 and the present. A few caveats though – the time-frame for this study is altogether shorter (two centuries) and, indeed, this is not an attempt to account for a decline in *overall* violence, as, simply put, there was none (it shall be recalled that all recorded homicides actually increased in the twelfth century, see tables 3.3 and 3.4 above). We are looking only at a decline in violence directed towards those that sat at the top of Irish society. Furthermore, any attempt at explaining a reduction in regicides must also account for the continuation of regicides in, frankly, huge numbers.

We begin, though – or return to – the matter of decline. One of Elias's exogenous catalysts for the civilizing process was, as stated, economic change. People became less violent because it was in their best interests to do so. As has been noted above, there are some slight suggestions that Ireland was moving in the direction of, at the very least, an easily transportable metallic economy. There are also some suggestions that town-like sites were developing under royal patronage. In theory, then, a shift in Ireland's economy, towards a coin-based market-centred one might have brought about a reduction in regicides as political stability would allow for the growth of markets and towns under royal patronage, something from which everyone stood to gain materially. This seems unlikely though: the number of 'towns' flourishing under royal control is negligible; economic change in this regard was too slight to engender a reduction in regicides, it is submitted.

What about the church as a driver of change? Eisner observed that social institutions ('the relatively permanent arrangements of behaviors, roles, norms, and values that structure human activity in patterned ways' like schools, the family, the state, the police and, indeed, the church) 'can selectively cultivate or contain the personality characteristics and abilities

associated with violence.⁵⁵⁸ Peter Spierenburg, noting that the ‘civilizing process’ was blind and undirected, argued that a ‘civilizing offensive’, or a concerted, conscious inculcation of norms, could form part of the broader, blind, process.⁵⁵⁹ Here, the church may have had a role to play.

3(c.)(ii.) *The Peace and Truce of God*

The problem lies in the church’s often ambivalent views on violence. Pinker discounts religion as a driver of a long-term decline in violence, although he does allow that ‘*particular* religious movements at particular times in history *have* worked against violence.’, but ultimately the beliefs and practices of religions respond to their intellectual and social currents, he says.⁵⁶⁰ So a religion is as bloodthirsty as the society in which it exists (though we must not totally discount the role of the church as a driver of intellectual currents). The God of medieval Ireland and medieval Europe more generally was a bloodthirsty one indeed and medieval literature is full of examples of this.⁵⁶¹ The Irish annals are replete with instances of divine vengeance. ‘In Torc’, king of Ulster, was killed ‘*tria nert Dé [ocus] Patraicc*’ (‘through the power of God and Patrick’), Muiredach son of Matudán acting as God’s terrestrial butcher here.⁵⁶² In 1044, after Clonmacnoise was plundered by the Conmaicne, ‘God and St Ciarán inflicted vengeance for it upon them, and the greater part of their cattle died’ (‘*Chuain Maic Nóis do argain o Conmacnib, co tard Dia [ocus] Cíaran digal forro ind, corm arb urmór a n-dáine [ocus] a n-índile*’).⁵⁶³ In the *Vision of Tnugdál* God’s exhibits ‘mercy’ by having Tnugdál be grabbed by white-hot tongs, thrown on a furnace, impaled on a trident, and hammered on an anvil.⁵⁶⁴ Churchmen, too, were not above

⁵⁵⁸ Eisner, ‘The uses of violence’, p. 48.

⁵⁵⁹ Spierenburg, ‘Violence and the civilizing process’, pp 29-30.

⁵⁶⁰ Pinker, *Better angels*, pp 677-78.

⁵⁶¹ Sharpe, *Fiery and furious people*, pp 83-4.

⁵⁶² AU 1007.8.

⁵⁶³ AT 1044.7.

⁵⁶⁴ Jean-Michel Picard (trans.), & Yoldane de Pontfarcy (intro.), *The vision of Tnugdál* (Dublin, 1989), p. 133.

bloodshed. In 1032 Étrú ua Conaing, *ríghomna Muman*, was killed by the community at Emly (*‘occisus est o muintir Imleacha’*).⁵⁶⁵ Twenty-three years later, the coarb of Patrick fought the coarb of Finnén and Colum Cille in the battle of Martarthech, and ‘many fell there’ (*‘dú i torchradur ili’*).⁵⁶⁶ Two years after that, in 1057, the successor of St Barre was slain by his own community whilst coming from nocturne. In 1124 Ardgarr, *ríghomna Ailigh* was killed by the community of Derry ‘for the honour of Colum Cille’ (*‘do marbadh la muinnter Daire I n-ainech Coluim Cille’*).⁵⁶⁷ Saints were hardly better. A *scolóc* who refused to join a band of reapers is later found dead in his bed, killed through the intercession of an angry St Ciarán.⁵⁶⁸ Strongbow, it was claimed, died of an ulcer on his foot, bestowed on him by St Brigit and St Colum Cille (*‘In t-Iarla Saxanach do éc i n-Ath Cliath do bainne aillsi ro gab ar a chois tria mírbuilibh Brighti [ocus] Coluim Cille [ocus] na noemh archena, isa cellar o mhíll’*).⁵⁶⁹ Colum Cille also caused Domnall ua Canannáin to slice open his own foot with his axe, a wound from which he ultimately died (*‘Domnall h-Ua Canannan do letradh a choisí dia tuaigh féin I n-Daire ig gait asclainne connaidh [ocus] a éc de tria mírbail Coluim Cille’*).⁵⁷⁰ When one of the king of Ireland’s three stewards killed a friend of St Ciarán of Saighir whilst collecting dues, the Saint tracks the youth – Crónán – down. Ciarán is not in a forgiving mood, and orders the king of Éile to ‘Arrest that criminal, and burn him afterwards in revenge for the evil which he did without cause.’⁵⁷¹ Canon law placed greater emphasis on the death penalty than the secular texts.⁵⁷² The law tracts also dealt severe punishments for those that killed a clergyman; the *Miadshlechta*

⁵⁶⁵ AU 1032.5.

⁵⁶⁶ AU 1055.4.

⁵⁶⁷ AU 1124.7.

⁵⁶⁸ Charles Doherty, ‘Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history’, *Peritia* 1 (1982), p. 320.

⁵⁶⁹ AU 1178.8.

⁵⁷⁰ AU 1188.2.

⁵⁷¹ Charles Plummer (ed.), ‘The Life of old Ciaran of Saighir’, *Bethada Náem nÉirenn* (Dublin, 1940), p. 105.

⁵⁷² Fergus Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin, 1988), p. 216.

states that the appropriate punishment for killing a celibate bishop be ‘that three guilty persons be hanged for every hand that slays him’ (*‘n.ī, tri cimidh a crocha cache laime nodgoin’*).⁵⁷³

Royal advice texts, though they often urged caution and restraint, particularly as regards violence – *Apair fris, ní mār n-airlise n-imderga* (‘Tell him, let him not redden many fore-courts’) – also allowed for violence in certain circumstances, and, in some cases, encouraged it.⁵⁷⁴

‘It is through the justice of the ruler that he dispatches (great) battalions to the [territories] of hostile neighbours’ proclaimed the same text, *Audacht Morann* (*‘Is tre f. fl. Ath- (mór)cathu fri crícha comnámat-cuirethar’*).⁵⁷⁵ In the *Tecosca Cormac*, Carbre is urged to ‘crush criminals’ (*‘Báded bidbadu’*) and raid territories (*‘Forrána dar crícha’*).⁵⁷⁶ Carbre is also told to kill evildoers (*‘Marbad ulcu’*).⁵⁷⁷ The idealised youth of a king involved raiding, murder, and combat.⁵⁷⁸ We see further examples of legitimate violence in the (probably twelfth-century) *Sermo ad reges*.⁵⁷⁹ A king is justified who:

‘condemns and restrains wicked men, and who hangs and kills them, if he cannot restrain them by the other ways in which their chastisement is lawful, i.e. by spoliation and depriving them of their wealth, by exile and prison, by fetters and pit, and even by mutilation of their limbs.’

‘Uair in ri dámnas [ocus] timair ces na droch-doine, [ocus]

⁵⁷³ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, & Aidan Breen, ‘The laws of the Irish’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), p. 391.

⁵⁷⁴ Fergus Kelly (ed.), *Audacht Morann* (Dublin, 1976), s. 29, p. 10.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid*, s. 15, p. 6.

⁵⁷⁶ Kuno Meyer (ed.), *The Instructions of King Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin, 1909), s. 1, p. 4.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid*, s. 2, p. 2.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid*, s., p. 18.

⁵⁷⁹ Marie Therese Flanagan, *The transformation of the Irish church in the twelfth century* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 204; G. MacEoin, ‘Observations on some Middle-Irish homilies’, in Próinséas Ní Catháin and Michael Richter (eds), *Irland und Europa im Frühen Mittelalter: Bildung und Literatur/Ireland and Europe in the early middle ages: learning and literature* (Stuttgart, 1996), p. 210.

*no-s-crochand [ocus] marband mi-na fhetu a timorcain chena
o na modaib aile, o ndlegar a cuindrech .i. tria n-a n-arcaim
[ocus] breth a n-indmais dib, [ocus] tria longais [ocus]
carcair [ocus] cepp [ocus] cuthi [ocus] tescand a mball fa-
deóid.*⁵⁸⁰

In fact, should the king *fail* to slaughter murderers and robbers, he will invoke God's displeasure:

‘For, in very truth, the king who holds back his sword from the blood of the sinner deserves no blessing from the Lord; for it is not to be accounted as cruelty nor as violence in the king when he hangs and slays the cruel oppressors whom he cannot restrain in any other way. The king who spares wicked men inflicts damage on good men; for it is not pleasing to God that the king show such compassion or mildness as to spare and have mercy on any inveterate criminal who harms society.’

*‘Uair ní dligend bennachtain iar fír o’n choimdid in rí
tairmiscas a cloidem o fhuil in pechthaig; uair ni hármithe ar
cródacht na ar chóraidecht do’n ríg crochas [ocus] marbus
na córadu cróda na fetann do timorcuin o nach mod aile.
Erchótig do na deg-dóinib in rí choicles do na droch-dóinib;
uair ni toltnaigend do Dia in chondircle-sin no in chenna do
dénum do’n ríg .i. cocill [ocus] oircisecht do n-aen duine
bith-bin ech malartus in sochaidi...’⁵⁸¹*

Even so, it is surely significant that the king is to ‘hang and slay’ only when all other attempts at restraint fail (some of which also involve the use of violence). Ultimately, despite God's apparent lust for blood, a

⁵⁸⁰ Robert Atkinson (ed.), *The passions and the homilies from Leabhar Breac: text, translation, and glossary* (Dublin, 1887), pp 158, 408.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp 158, 409.

litany of saints that were quick to anger, and the use of violence by churchmen in furthering very earthly aims, the church sought to curtail violence in society. It was not that violence in all circumstances was frowned upon – that clearly was not the case. Violence was permissible provided it was for a sort of ‘greater good’, namely, the glory of the church. This should scarcely come as a surprise given that this period saw the beginning of the crusading movement. Indeed, with the calling of the first crusade, war, ‘a worldly activity, and the Christian life c[a]me together in a previously unknown relationship, no longer opposed to one another.’ The essence of this new integration was that the warrior now no longer fought for fame and glory, but for his fellow man, ‘that fundamental Christian virtue through which he expressed his love of God.’⁵⁸² Nevertheless, Burchard of Worms in his *Decretum* of the eleventh century refused to accept the excuse that one had taken up arms on a prince’s orders. If you killed at the behest of a legitimate ruler you still had to do penance, although the punishment was diminished.⁵⁸³ A similar theme is explored in the twelfth-century *Vision of Tnugdál*. The *Vision* was written in 1149 in Regensburg by an Irish monk, Brother Marcus.⁵⁸⁴ It recounts the vision of Tnugdál, a wicked knight from Cashel, who fell into a coma whilst collecting a debt from a friend. Tnugdál’s soul is met by an angel, who guides him along the road to hell, where they encounter many types of punishment being meted out to the sinful. They come to souls that are made to ‘melt like cream’ on a ‘red-hot metal plate’, before then being sieved down onto burning charcoal for yet more pain and suffering. Tnugdál’s soul asks the angel what these souls did to warrant such horrific punishment. The angel then explained that: ‘[t]hese are the homicides, parricides and fratricides. This is the first punishment⁵⁸⁴ for the perpetrators of such crimes and for those conniving

⁵⁸² Ernst-Dieter Hehl, ‘War, peace and the Christian order’, in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds), *The new Cambridge medieval history, volume IV c.1024-c.1198, part I* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 186.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid*, pp 186-7.

⁵⁸⁴ Picard & Pontfarcy, *The vision of Tnugdál*, p. 11.

with them, and after this they will be led to places of greater punishment...'.⁵⁸⁵ Not even generosity shown to the church and the poor can completely absolve one from punishment in the case of homicide. Tnúgdal and the angel encounter Cormac mac Carthaig who, though in heaven, must wear a coarse hair shirt for three hours a day as he ordered a vassal of his to be killed near the altar of St Patrick (additionally, he had also, in that same three-hour period, to stand up to his waist in fire for sullyng the sacrament of marriage).⁵⁸⁶

We also see churchmen involve themselves to a greater extent in the brokering of peace agreements in the twelfth century. Thus we see the successor of St Patrick (the head of Armagh) negotiate peace ten times between 1097 and 1128. In 1097 Domnall, *comarba Patraic* prevented Muirchertach Ua Briain and Leth Mogha from engaging in battle with Domnall Ua Lochlainn and the north of Ireland at Fid Conaill (Leth Mogha refers to the southern half of Ireland; 'Mug's half').⁵⁸⁷ Domnall negotiated a peace between those two parties again, two years later, this time at Sliab Fuait.⁵⁸⁸ In 1102 Ua Briain and Ua Lochlainn gave hostages to Domnall as surety for a year's peace.⁵⁸⁹ Three years later, Domnall travelled to Dublin to make peace between the two. There, Domnall fell ill, was anointed, and brought to Duleek where he died.⁵⁹⁰ His successor, Cellach, was to prove just as active a diplomat, and he took up where Domnall left off, brokering a year's peace between Ua Briain and Ua Lochlainn in 1107.⁵⁹¹ He did so again in 1109.⁵⁹² In 1113 Cellach 'made a year's peace' between Ua Briain and Ua Lochlainn at Cluain Caín.⁵⁹³ Here again we see evidence of the ambiguous views of the church in

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 117.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 144-5; Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish church*, p. 171.

⁵⁸⁷ AU 1097.6.

⁵⁸⁸ AU 1099.7.

⁵⁸⁹ AU 1102.8.

⁵⁹⁰ AU 1105.3.

⁵⁹¹ AU 1107.8.

⁵⁹² AFM 11095.

⁵⁹³ AU 1113.8.

regard to violence: Muircherach Ua Briain's army was composed of 'both laity and clergy' ('*eter loech [ocus] cleiriuch*').⁵⁹⁴ He also brought about a peace between Ua Lochlainn and Donnchad ua hEochada that year.⁵⁹⁵ So great was the level of violence in 1126 that 'the successor of Patrick had to be away from Armagh for a month and a year pacifying the men of Ireland, and bringing everyone, both laity and clergy, to uprightness and good conduct' ('*Anfad cocaidh mhoir i nErinn corbo ecen do chomarba Patraic bith mi for bliadhain fri hArd macha i n-echtair oc sithugadh fer nErenn [ocus] oc tabairt riaghla [ocus]sobhesa for cach eter tuaith [ocus] ecluis*').⁵⁹⁶ In 1128 a year and a half's peace was made between Connacht and Munster.⁵⁹⁷ In 1134 peace is made between Leth Mogha and Connacht by Muiredach ua Dubthaigh, 'archbishop of Ireland'.⁵⁹⁸ The coarb of Patrick was involved in arranging a year's peace between Munster and Leinster.⁵⁹⁹ We see the holding of a peace council ('*comdhál shíodha*') in 1141 and 1144, and, while the term is not specifically used in the sources, one could probably refer to the peace arrangements made in 1133 and 1140 as 'peace councils' also.⁶⁰⁰ The *Annals of the Four Masters* tell us that the *comhdhál shíodha* of 1144 was attended by both the clergy and the laity ('*laochaibh, cleirchibh*'). This seems to be in line with continental developments too; according to Adehamar of Chabannes, the Peace gatherings at Limoges were attended by the *principes, nobiles* and the *vulgaris plebs*.⁶⁰¹ In 1165, Muirchertach Ua Lochlainn, in an attempt to prevent recurrent unrest in Ulaid, placed Eochaidh Mac Duinnsleibhe in the kingship thereof, apparently in the presence of the coarb of Patrick and a number of relics. For when ua Lochlainn blinded

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ AU 1113.7

⁵⁹⁶ AU 1126.8.

⁵⁹⁷ AU 1128.9.

⁵⁹⁸ MCB 1134.5; AT 1134.3.

⁵⁹⁹ AFM 1139.11.

⁶⁰⁰ AFM 1141.13; AFM 1144.9, AT 1144.8; AFM 1133.14; AFM 1140.5.

⁶⁰¹ H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Peace and Truce of God in the eleventh century', *Past and Present* 46 (1970), p. 46.

Eochaidh later that same year, *Mac Carthaig's Book* says that he did so 'in violation of the protection of Patrick's coarb, the *Bachall Ísu, Clog an Udhachta, Soisgéala Mártain, Miosach Cairnigh*, the three shrines in Teampall ua Sgrín, together with the relics of the north of Ireland'.⁶⁰² All of this ultimately led to Ua Lochlainn's deposition and death. Conversely, we see again the sometimes ambiguous views on violence held by the church; an annalist records his murder in the following terms:

'A great marvel and wonderful deed was done then: to wit, the king of Ireland to fall without battle, without contest, after his dishonouring the successor of Patrick and the Staff of Jesus and the successor of Colum-cille and the Gospel of Martin and many clergy besides [by blinding Mac Duinnsleibhe Ua Eochadha]. Howbeit, his body was carried to Ard-Macha and buried there, in dishonour of the successor of Colum-cille with his Community and Colum-cille himself and the head of the students of Daire fasted regarding it,—for his being carried to [Christian] burial.'

Marie Therese Flanagan has attributed this increase in peace-making activity to the reform movement of the twelfth century, and to the related 'peace and truce of God' movements.⁶⁰³ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has also seen evidence of the influence of the peace of God movement in twelfth-century Ireland.⁶⁰⁴ The peace of God movement had its genesis in the council of Le Puy in 975. Similar councils were held at Charroux (989 or 990), Narbonne (990), Le Puy (c.990-3), Limoges (994), Poitiers (c. 1011-14), Charroux (1027-8), Limoges (1028), Poitiers (1029-31), Bourges (1031), and also at Verdun-sur-le-Doubs (1019-21) and Anse

⁶⁰² MCB 1165.2

⁶⁰³ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish church*, pp 170-71, 177.

⁶⁰⁴ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru – Ireland's greatest king?* (Chalford Stroud, 2007), pp 77-9.

(1025).⁶⁰⁵ Quite simply, the peace of God sought to protect the vulnerable from the ravages of war.⁶⁰⁶ The truce of God is agreed to have first appeared in 1027, at the council of Toulouges.⁶⁰⁷ It sought to curtail violence on certain days and at certain times of the year.⁶⁰⁸ There was more to these movements than simply the limiting of violence, important though this was. People sought deliverance from natural disaster too – storms, famine, disease.⁶⁰⁹ Important in this respect was the cult of saints’ relics. The movements sought to restore the peace and unity Christ left humankind.⁶¹⁰ The *cáin ocus rechtge* issued by Donnchad mac Briain in 1040 takes on a new resonance when viewed in this context. Essentially, the law declared that no-one should steal cattle, fight, or work on a Sunday: ‘A law and ordinance, such as was not enacted in Ireland from Patrick's time, was made by Brian's son, to the effect that none should dare to steal, or do feats of arms on Sunday, or go out on Sunday carrying any load; and furthermore, that none should dare to fetch cattle within doors’ (*‘Cáin & rechtge do dénam oc mc. Briain innas na dernad ó ré Patraicc I n h-Érind conna laimthe gait do dénam na h-enggnam Domnaig na h-imthecht nach aire ar muin i n-Domnuch; ocus dano na laimthe míl innille do thabairt hi tech’*).⁶¹¹ Sunday was one of the days on which the Truce of God movement sought to prohibit violence. Donnchad passed another law in 1050, retraining ‘every injustice from small to great’ (*‘gach indlighidh o bhiucc co mór’*).⁶¹² This law, the annalists tell us, was passed against a background of bad weather and food shortages, which, in turn, precipitated social breakdown:

⁶⁰⁵ Cowdrey, ‘Peace and Truce of God’, pp 43-4.

⁶⁰⁶ Christopher Tyerman, *God’s war. A new history of the Crusades* (London, 2006), p. 43.

⁶⁰⁷ Cowdrey, ‘Peace and Truce of God’, p. 44.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 44; Tyerman, *God’s war*, p. 43.

⁶⁰⁹ Cowdrey, pp 48-9.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 52.

⁶¹¹ AI 1040.6.

⁶¹² AFM 1150.16.

‘Much inclement weather happened in the land of Ireland, which carried away corn, milk, fruit, and fish, from the people, so that there grew up dishonesty among all, that no protection was extended to church or fortress, gossiped or mutual oath, until the clergy and laity of Munster assembled...’

‘Doinend mhór do thiachtain h-i t-tír Ereann, co rucc ith, & bliocht, & mess, & iascc ó dhaoibh, co ro fhás eisionnracus h-i cach, co ná h-aincedh ceall na dún na cairdes Criost na comluighe, go ro tionólsat cléirigh Mumhan...’⁶¹³

As has just been mentioned above, the peace of God movement sought to provide deliverance from more than human violence – it aimed to prevent the blights of storms, famine, disease; it sought to ‘prop up a crumbling social order’. According to Adhemar, the peace council convened at Limoges in 994 met because of an outbreak of St Anthony’s fire (ergotism).⁶¹⁴ Donnchad’s 1050 law must be seen in this context: not solely concerned with limiting human-on-human violence, this convention of clergy and laity at Killaloe sought to stave off the worst ravages of natural disaster and to combat social collapse, aims very much in keeping with those of the continental peace of God movement.

We see evidence for the influence of the peace and truce of God movements elsewhere too. At the Synod of Kells in 1152, at which there was a strong reformist presence, violent crime – ‘robbery and rape, bad morals and evils of every kind’ – were condemned.⁶¹⁵ This, it must be said, was the exception rather than the rule at synods of this kind, like

⁶¹³ *ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ Cowdrey, ‘Peace and Truce of God’, pp 48-9.

⁶¹⁵ Geoffrey Keating, *Foras feasa ar Éirinn, volume III*, Patrick S. Dineen (ed.), (London, 1908), p. 356: ‘ré cosc gada is éigin druise is doibéas is gac uilc ó soin amach’; See also Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *The Irish Church, its reform and the English invasion* (Dublin, 2017), pp 91-6.

Cashel in 1101 and Rath Breassail in 1111, though this might have something to do with the rather patchy survival of decisions reached at these councils. Overwhelmingly though, the churchmen in attendance seem to have been more concerned with the division of territories into dioceses and marriage reform than with violence.⁶¹⁶

Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has argued – rightly, it is submitted – that we see clear evidence of the peace and truce of God movements in the twelfth-century propagandistic text *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*. ‘[T]he moral justification provided for the victorious encounter [in the *Cogad*]’, she argued, ‘resonated with contemporary thinking on the philosophy of war.’⁶¹⁷ Homicide, it will be recalled, was not condoned, however pious the individual (the example of Cormac mac Carthaig in the *Vision of Tnúgdal*, discussed above, springs to mind here). The prevailing ideology throughout the tenth century remained that, however lawful or legitimate an act of conflict was perceived to be, fighting remained a sin.⁶¹⁸ Yet the peace established by the peace of God movement had, ultimately, to be preserved by military means and so the church began to permit war against those who disturbed the peace.⁶¹⁹ Indeed, in the eleventh century it was the reformers and reforming papacy who came most vociferously to support the concept of a holy war.⁶²⁰ In the second half of the eleventh century, sins came to be measured not by the action but by the mentality of the sinner himself, and this included killing. In particular, a Lenten canon of Pope Gregory VII in 1080, with its emphasis on inner dispositions, played a major role here.⁶²¹ Indeed, in his crusading appeal of 1 March 1074, Gregory claimed that warring against the heathen Turks

⁶¹⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *The Irish Church*, pp. 65-75; Aubrey Gwynn, (O’Brien, Gerard, ed.), *The Irish Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Dublin, 1992), pp 156-69, 180-92.

⁶¹⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru*, p. 77.

⁶¹⁸ Tyerman, *God’s war*, p. 43.

⁶¹⁹ Hehl, ‘War, peace and the Christian order’, p. 189; Hans Eberhard Mayer (John Gillingham, trans.), *The Crusades* (Oxford, 1965; second edn.; Oxford, 1972), p. 16.

⁶²⁰ Mayer, *Crusades*, p. 16.

⁶²¹ Hehl, ‘War, peace and the Christian order’, p. 197; H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-85* (Oxford, 1998), pp 655, 658.

would fulfil Christ's command to love thy neighbour.⁶²² Bishop Bonizo of Sutri, a papal propagandist writing in the decade after the death of Gregory VII, extolled those who, for 'the common good', fought heretics and excommunicates and who protected the vulnerable as members of a warrior class or '*ordo pugnatorum*' in his *Liber de Vita Christiana*.⁶²³ The church ultimately came to fully condone war against the heathen and it is this idea that we see in the *Cogad*. The 'pagan' nature of the 'Danars' is mentioned throughout the text. The Irish, it was claimed, suffered oppression 'from these valiant, wrathful, foreign, purely-pagan people' ('*on droing angbaid anniarta allmarda glain-gentligi sin*').⁶²⁴ It is suggested at one point that the Vikings employed pagan magic to unearth wealth buried in the ground; they discovered them 'through paganism' ('*tre geintlidecht*').⁶²⁵ The description of the Viking troops at Clontarf is far from flattering:

'shouting, hateful, powerful, wrestling, valiant, active, fierce-moving, dangerous, nimble, violent, furious, unscrupulous, untamable, inexorable, unsteady, cruel, barbarous, frightful, sharp, ready, huge, prepared, cunning, warlike, poisonous, murderous, hostile Danars; bold-hearted Danmarkians, surly, piratical, foreign, blue-green, pagan; without reverence, without veneration, without honour, without mercy, for God or for man.'

'Batar imorro, dun darna leit in catha sin glaim glonmar, gusmar, gleac, galac, gnimac, gargbeoda, dunabrig, dian, demnietac, dasactac, diceillid, docoisc, docomuind, becda, borb, barbarta, boadba, ath, athlum, anniartaca, urlam,

⁶²² Hehl, p. 198.

⁶²³ Tyerman, *God's war*, p. 47.

⁶²⁴ James Henthorn Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh. The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill* (London, 1867), pp 50-51.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 114-15.

*angbaid, irgalac, nemnec, niata, namdemail danair; dana, durcraideca, anmargaidh, anbli, allmarda gaill, gormglasa, gentlidi; can cagaill, can cadlus, can aitin, can comarci do Dia no do dum.*⁶²⁶

The lack of reverence that the Vikings have for God can be contrasted with the actions of Mathgamhain, older brother of Brian Bóruma, upon his murder in 976. Seeing the blade descend upon him, Mathgamhain tossed away the Gospel of Barri, which was caught by a priest, as he did not want his blood to splatter it: ‘*ar dáig na rised an fuil é*’.⁶²⁷ Ní Mhaonaigh also notes the significance of the comparison drawn between the Irish and the Franks and the Israelites, and the comparison between Brian and Solomon, David and Moses.⁶²⁸ Clontarf, in keeping with church thinking on war, was presented as a battle between Christians and heathens.

It should, of course, be acknowledged that Ireland had its own tradition of church-brokered peace, immunities and exemptions. The most famous example of this is Adomnán’s ‘Law of Innocents’, promulgated at Birr in 697 A.D. The *lex innocentium* was designed to protect women, children and clerics from the worst ravages of warfare. It drew on ‘widely accepted ideas concerning just law and immunity from military service...[but] it was ultimately more concerned with conceptualizing and promoting peace’.⁶²⁹ It is entirely possible that this pre-existing tradition also fed into the attempt at limiting violence in the twelfth century, of course. It is clear though that the decline in regicides that occurred in the twelfth century was the product of a new, twelfth-century stimulus. It seems likely that this stimulus came in the form of the peace and truce of

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*, pp 158-9.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid*, pp 90-91.

⁶²⁸ Ní Mhaonaigh, p. 78.

⁶²⁹ Máirín Ní Donnchadha, ‘Birr and the Law of Innocents’, in Thomas O’Loughlin (ed.), *Adomnán at Birr, AD 697. Essays in commemoration of the Law of the Innocents* (Dublin, 2001), p. 20.

God movements.

3(c.)(iii.) Irish Church reform

All of the evidence presented above leads us to the conclusion that the peace and truce of God movements most definitely made an impact on Irish thought and Irish life in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It might well be the case, as H.E.J. Cowdrey argued, that after the mid-eleventh century the movement lost much of its vigour, ‘but while the incidence of specific conciliar enactment may have indeed lessened, the movement had a longer lasting effect insofar as it altered perceptions of the role of ecclesiastics, more especially bishops, in society’.⁶³⁰ The peace and truce of God had strong ties to the reform movement, a movement which, over the course of the twelfth century came to exert greater influence in the Irish church. It sought more than just the structural reform of the Irish church, though the implementation of a diocesan system in keeping with that found on the Continent was a key aspect of all of the twelfth-century councils; the reforming party desired to re-shape Irish society too, with particular emphasis on marriage practices and combatting the levels of violence in Ireland. Ireland might well have been ‘well known for its cruel battles’, but the church reformers do seem to have had at least some impact here.⁶³¹ Hitherto, perhaps, greater scholarly emphasis has been placed on the perceived successes, or lack thereof, the Irish reform party had in affecting ‘deviant’ Irish martial practices. Most seem happy to conclude though that the twelfth century was an age of turbulence in Ireland. Yet in many ways, it was also an age of peace, and the declining number of recorded regicides in the Irish annals suggests that we need to cultivate a more nuanced picture of twelfth-century Ireland. We might very well see ‘*cogadh*’ come to replace ‘*cath*’, but we also seem to have more references to ‘peace’, even where it was not achieved. In addition to a greater number of recorded ‘peaces’ brokered by churchmen, often with

⁶³⁰ Flanagan, *Transformation of the Irish church*, p. 177.

⁶³¹ Picard, *Vision of Thugdal*, p. 111.

the use of saints' relics, Irish annalists also seem more likely to point to the fact that peace was *not* achieved in the twelfth century. Irish kings also appear to have taken a lead themselves in organizing peace councils as time wore on. There is, it is suggested, a significance in the emphasis placed on the coarb of Patrick in an entry like this:

‘An army [was brought] by Muirchertach ua Briain and Leth Moga, both laity and clergy, to Grenóc. Domnall grandson of Lochlainn, however, with the nobles of the north of Ireland, [went] to Cluain Caín of the Fir Rois, and they were confronting one another for a month until Cellach, successor of Patrick, with the Staff of Jesus, made a year's peace between them.’

‘Slogadh la Muircertach H. mBriain [ocus] la Leith Mogha eter loech [ocus] cleiriuch co Grenoic. Domnall imorro m. m. Lochlainn co maithibh tuaiscirt Erenn co Cluain Cain Fer Rois co mbadar fri re mis cind comar co nedernai Ceallach comarba Patraic [ocus] bachall Isu beus sith mbliadhna etarru.’⁶³²

and an entry like that contained in the *Annals of Tigernach* for 1144 or the *Annals of the Four Masters* for 1133 which read, respectively, as follows: ‘A great gathering of the men of Ireland, laymen and clerics, by Toirdhealbhach Ó Conchobhair and by Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain’, ‘A conference was held by Toirdhealbhach Ua Conchobhair and Conchobhar Ua Briain’. Here the emphasis is placed upon the role of the kings, rather than the clergy, on negotiating peace. We have to be careful here, of course, as we are not comparing like for like; we are looking at different sets of annals (AU in relation to Muirchertach ua Briain, AFM in relation to the entry concerning the two Toirdhealbachs) and different compilers

⁶³² AU 1113.8.

could place greater or lesser emphasis on particular parties. That being said, an entry in the *Four Masters* for 1139 seems to place more emphasis on the coarb of Patrick than on kings in agreeing peace: ‘A year's peace was made between the men of Munster and the Leinstermen, by the successor of Patrick, and the staff of Jesus.’⁶³³

In any event, it seems likely that kings would come to play a not-insignificant role in brokering peace agreements and hosting peace councils. To be clear: they came, in time, to play a role in holding councils without clerical prompting but they did not come to supplant the role of clergyman entirely in this regard. War was, of course, often in their best interest, and any realistic claim to the high-kingship involved the subjection of other kings in battle, or, at least, a show of martial strength. Yet, so too was peace. From peace flowed stability, which allowed for economic prosperity, the flourishing of markets (often under royal patronage), and orderly and regular tax collection. Regicide never disappeared, of course, nor would it as long as there existed ambitious and disgruntled claimants to the throne and no predictable pattern of succession, but it did decrease. Undoubtedly, there are several factors at play here, but it seems to me that the impact of the church reformers was one of the more prominent ones. ‘Reform favoured kings, and they knew it’, wrote Ó Corráin.⁶³⁴ Kings came to work closely with reformers, courted by the prestige and flattery from popes that came with it.⁶³⁵ Jean Flori has spoken of the role of ‘ecclesiastical’ and ‘aristocratic’ ideologies in shaping knightly behaviour.⁶³⁶ In a similar way, we can speak of an ‘ecclesiastical’ ideology modifying Irish society in the twelfth century. The continental peace movements, via the reformers, gathered genuine traction in Ireland and are, perhaps, most responsible for the decline in regicides. We must come to identify the hitherto unnoticed successes of

⁶³³ AFM 1139.11.

⁶³⁴ Ó Corráin, *The Irish Church*, p. 64.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁶ Jean Flori, ‘Knightly society’, in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds), *The new Cambridge medieval history, volume IV c.1024-c.1198, part I* (Cambridge, 2004), pp 181-82.

the reform movement in respect of combatting violence.

3(d.) The Significance of this Decline

Finally, having established that there was a decline in regicides in the twelfth century, and having argued that this decline was, at the very least in part, produced by the influence of the peace and truce of God movements in Ireland, we might now ask why this decline matters? That is, what impact – if any – might it have had on twelfth-century kingship, and how does it alter our view on Ireland in the half-century or so prior to the arrival of the English?

As regards the ‘anarchic’ twelfth-century, the declining number of recorded regicides maybe confirms what we were starting to realise all along, at least in some quarters; that pre-invasion Ireland was not all that ‘anarchic’ anyway. Francis Byrne might well have spoken of the ‘undoubted anarchy’ of twelfth-century Ireland, but Seán Duffy, in remarking on the great warfare of the post-Clontarf period, rather sagely observed that such violence was in no way ‘senseless’ (see above). The tables of statistics listed above confirm such a view. A reluctance to shed kingly blood, the fact that the peace and truce of God movement do seem, at least to a certain extent, to have a perceptible impact in Ireland suggests that resistance to the king, very often violent resistance, was guided by certain principles and was seldom wanton. Of course, as one might recall, the statistics relating to *all* homicides (tables 3.3 and 3.4 above) do suggest that we do actually see an increase in violence overall, and suggests that the ‘trembling sod’ analogy employed in the *Annals of the Four Masters* does have something of substance to it. But of course, we also see quite a considerable increase in the number of church burnings, synods, visitations, church building and installation of ecclesiastics recorded in the twelfth century too (see tables 3.7 and 3.8). It might well be the case therefore that the apparent increase in homicides in twelfth-century Ireland is simply a product of the more verbose twelfth-century annal entries. It will also be recalled that we see the term *cogadh* come to be used in place of *cath* in the annal entries pertaining to the twelfth

century, and that some historians have suggested that this shift in terminology means that military engagements came to be larger in scale (and thus probably resulted in a higher number of casualties). According to Flanagan, there is ‘no doubt that warfare in Ireland intensified in consequence of Brian’s bid for the high-kingship. No king before him had placed such large armies in the field, and with such a significant naval component; nor had any expanded as much economic resources and manpower on war and campaigned over such a wide geographical area of Ireland.’⁶³⁷ The references to ‘castles’ and larger fortifications, discussed in chapter two, has also been seen as evidence for this move to more intensive, large-scale warfare. If this is what was actually happening in post-Clontarf Ireland, though, then surely the successes of the church in reducing (though by no means eliminating) the killing of kings is even more remarkable still.

A curious entry in the *Annals of Loch Cé*, admittedly slightly after the period under examination in this thesis, is suggestive of the impact this church-led movement away from regicides was beginning to have in Ireland. An entry for the year 1226 states:

‘Domhnall, son of Ruaidri O’Flaithbertaigh, was slain by the sons of Muirchertach O’Flaithbertaigh, after capturing a house (*tige*) against him. Pity, alas! the deed that was there committed – the killing of a future king (*adbur rig*) of the West of Connacht, without obtaining land or patrimony thereby (*gan tír gan dútcus d’fagbáil tar a cend*)’.

Clearly, Domhnall Ua Flaithbertaigh is not actually a king; he is simply said to be a future king or the makings of a king. Thus he has not ascended to the royal dignity as yet. It is possible that we seeing here the results of the clerically-led campaign to prevent regicide. One implication that might reasonably be drawn from this passage is that regicide was

⁶³⁷ Flanagan, ‘After Brian’, p. 226.

generally frowned upon and if a king were to be killed, there would want to be strong reasons for so doing, such as the pursuit of land or the extension of territory.

Resistance to the rule of individual kings by no means disappeared in the twelfth century. As will be seen in the following chapter, they continued to be opposed for a whole host of reasons, and by a similarly diverse array of characters. What is clear though, as the above discussion and the following chapter make clear, is that the form that that opposition took began to change. Resistance, it seems, manifested itself in different ways. Kings continued to be killed though, in great numbers, if not quite with the same gusto as in the eleventh century. A revolt might not now end with the spilling of royal blood.

4. CONCLUSION

The views of the medieval church *vis-à-vis* violence could be rather ambiguous to say the least, as could its views on revolt. Take, by way of example, the obvious adoption of Isidore's writings on the etymology of kingship into legal texts, church canon and religious sermons.⁶³⁸ Irish writers, though drawing on his *Etymologiae* in urging their kings to 'correct' did not so readily adopt his warning that the kingship was lost by one doing wrong. There are allusions to the negative consequences that could flow from a 'bad' kingship in saga tales like *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Bruiden Meic Da Reo*. Even here though, the Irish writers did not condone king-slaying it seems. Yet such views stand in stark contrast to those expressed by the annalist upon the murder of Muirchertach ua Lochlainn by the Cenél Conaill; much delight is taken in the fact that the 'honour of Jesus [and] Patrick' has been avenged. Despite this ambiguity though, we see, particularly in the twelfth century, a concerted 'civilizing' drive or offensive on the part of the Irish church (to borrow the

⁶³⁸ Not discussed above was the reference to the duty of the king 'to chastise and remove' (*cuindrech [ocus] cáich*) in the possibly twelfth-century *Sermo ad reges* (See Atkinson, *Leabhar Breac*, p. 405) which, like the *CCH* and *Críth Gablach* appears to be influenced by the *Etymologiae*.

terminology of other historians of violence). The Irish church had previously tried to curtail violence and to protect the weak, and the seventh-century *Cáin Adomnáin* is the most famous, but not the only, example of this. Increasingly, we see church men broker peace between kings and, later in the century, we might even see kings start to take the initiative, hosting peace councils of their own.

It is clear that social institutions, like the church, were able to shape not only the nature of the complaint but also the form opposition took and, as has been argued above, the church was very successful in reducing the incidence of regicide in Ireland in the twelfth century. This was done through what might be described by sociologists as a ‘civilizing offensive’ or ‘drive’, which reinforced, through peace councils, religious sermons and saga literature the notion that regicide was wrong and that greater glory was to be attained by working with the church – and, in the twelfth century, furthering the cause of reform – than by shedding the blood of kings.

Chapter 4: Revolt and dissent in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

Regicide, discussed in the preceding chapter, if perhaps the most drastic, was not the sole method of resistance in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. Kings also faced revolts which did not always result in a royal death though they could, on occasion, give rise to a deposition. Part of the problem in any examination of revolts is defining what exactly it is we mean by 'revolt' – need it involve actual violence, the threat of violence, must it be large-scale or can a mere handful of people constitute a revolt? And how does the historical terminology equate with the modern concept of a revolt? When does a 'revolt' in the language of the sources equate with a 'revolt' in the modern sense of the word? Also of interest is causation, and how 'revolts' fit in with modes of resistance more generally. These are some of the issues to be discussed below. This chapter also discusses the phenomenon of 'popular' revolts, and social unrest more generally, in an Irish context. Revolt of any hue is an understudied phenomenon in the historiography of pre-invasion Ireland, and this chapter goes some way to redressing this problem.

1. TERMINOLOGY

The first issue we encounter in examining revolts in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland is that relating to terminology. Attempting to define a revolt here is a tricky thing indeed. For example, what did a revolt entail in medieval Ireland? Need it necessitate a large-scale battle? Could it amount to something like a refusal to pay some sort of exaction or tax? Need it involve violence at all? Various terms have been translated as 'rebellion' or 'revolt' by nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors - *frithtuidecht* and *impód* in the annalistic sources, *asaid* in *Críth Gablach* and *imarbas* in a gloss on the introduction to the eighth-century *Senchas Már*. Yet, surely, there are many cases where *cath* (battle) or

cocad (war) is used which must have amounted to a ‘revolt’. Take, by way of example, events relating to the battle of Glenn Máma, which occurred in 999. The actions that forced Brian Bóruma into the battle on New Year’s Eve 999, most would agree, amounted to a ‘revolt’ against his rule, and, indeed, historians as esteemed as Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Ailbhe MacShamhráin, have classed them as such. So too have they viewed as a ‘revolt’ the actions of the Leinstermen in 1013-14.⁶³⁹

What is significant is that we do see in the annalistic sources a shift in terminology relating to revolt. There are, it seems, two instances where *frithuidecht* occurs in the annals. The first can be found in an entry in the *Annals of Ulster* for 850, where we see Cináed, son of Conaing, king of Cianacht, rebel against Máel Sechnaill, with the support of ‘the foreigners’ plundering ‘both churches and [territories]’ (*Cinaedh m. Conaing, rex Cinnachtae, du frithuidecht Mael Sechnaill a nneurt Gall cor indridh Ou Neill o Sinaind co mmuir etir cella 7 tuatha...*).⁶⁴⁰ The second entry appears in the same set of annals, in the year 915, when Donnchad and Conchobar rebelled against their father, Flann, son of Máel Sechnaill (*Frithuidecht Flainn m. Mael Sechlainn o maacaibh...*). They harried Mide, but Flann’s unruly sons were soon quietened by Niall, the king of Ailech, who ‘exacted a pledge from Donnchad and Conchobar that they would obey their father’ (*Slogad ind Fochlai la Niall m. nOedha righ nAiligh coro gabh naidhm Donnchada [ocus] Concobhuir fria reir a n-athar*).⁶⁴¹ These appear to be the only two uses of *frithuidecht* in the annalistic record.

The other term employed by the annalists, and which has been translated as ‘revolt’ by later editors, is *impúd*, a verbal noun of *imm-soí* which, according to the *Dictionary of the Irish language*, means ‘turn, turn around, return’. In the context of a ‘revolt’, we first see *impúd* occur

⁶³⁹ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), p. 128.; Ailbhe MacShamhráin, ‘The battle of Glenn Máma, Dublin and the high-kingship of Ireland: a millennial commemoration’, in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin II* (Dublin, 2001), p. 60.

⁶⁴⁰ AU 850.3.

⁶⁴¹ AU 915.3.

in an entry for the year 1000 in the *Annals of Tigernach*: ‘The first revolt [or turn] through treachery of Brian and the Connachtmen against Maelseachlainn the great’ (*Cétimpodh Briain 7 Con[n]acht for MaelSechlainn Mór tre mebail*). Thereafter, the term is not to be found again in annalistic sources until the late eleventh century. It is used in the *Annals of Inisfallen* in 1070 where we see it written that ‘Ua Léce died, having renounced [turned from?] the world in the same week’ (*Hua Léce do éc iar n-impúd dó fria domun isint sechtmain chetna*), and then again in the sense of ‘to revolt’ in the same set of annals in 1093.⁶⁴² There are two entries for 1093 that employ the term *impúd*, the first relating to a revolt of the Uí Chonchobair and the Síol Muiredaig of Connacht against Muirchertach ua Briain (*Hua Conchobair Chonnacht [ocus] Síol Murethaig do impúd ar Hua mBriain*), the second running as follows:

‘A hosting by Muirchertach in Connacht and he took fifty cows from ua Flaithbertaig as ‘cumals’ in compensation for [the death of] Cathal’s son, and for their revolt he plundered and slew many of the Síol Muiredaig, and imprisoned ua Conchobair their king.’-

*‘Sluaged la Muircherdach i Connachta co tuc da .xx. déc bó ó Hú Lathfertaig I cumalaib meic Cathail, [ocus] cor orig [ocus] coro marb sochaide do Síol Murethaig isin n-impúd [ocus] coro chuimrig Hua Conchobair, a rrig’.*⁶⁴³

It might be significant that, of the twenty-one instances where *impúd* or its variants appear in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of the Four Masters*, *Mac Carthaig’s Book*, and the *Annals of Loch Cé*, and where it can be translated as ‘revolt’, only three (or 14%) occur before 1100, the

⁶⁴² AI 1070.5; AI 1093.7.

⁶⁴³ AI 1093.8.

remaining eighteen (86%) coming after 1100. Further, there is only one use of *impúd* before 1093, namely, that occurrence in the *Annals of Tigernach* just noted. In short, 95% of the uses of *impúd* to describe revolt occur in or after 1093. *Impúd* is, of course, no new term and it is used in other sources before 1000; for example, as has been stated already, in the prologue to the *Senchas Már*: here we see it written that Tara was being overturned - physically and literally, rather than metaphorically, as there had been an earthquake - and the phrase used is *ag impod na Temrach*. It is also the case that other terms are used, and most ‘revolts’ will simply be labelled as *cath* or *cocad*.

Indeed, in many cases, where *impúd* is used by one set of annals, it will not be employed by another annalist describing the same event. Take those two uses of *impúd* recorded in the *Annals of Inisfallen* for the year 1093. We see no use of *impúd* in the *Annals of Ulster*, where it is noted that ‘[t]he Síil Muiredaig were expelled from Connacht by Muirchertach ua Briain (‘*Síil Muiredaigh do innarba a Conachtaibh do Muircertach H. Briain*’) and that they then returned ‘without permission’ (‘*cenn nomaidhe*’).⁶⁴⁴ The *Annals of Tigernach* describe the turning of the Connachtmen on ua Briain as a ‘hosting’ or ‘*sluaiged*’. The *Annals of Inisfallen* uses *impúd* in recounting the ‘turning’ of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, Murchad ua Mael Sechlainn, king of Mide, and Áed Ua Ruairc, king of Uí Briúin, on Muirchertach Ua Briain: ‘*Impúd dóib ar Murchertach ocus síth ri nacc Meicc Carthaig*’.⁶⁴⁵ However, the *Annals of Ulster* simply states that they brought an army to Glenn Maghair, and ‘they gave Desmond to Mac Carthaigh and Thomond to the sons of Diarmait, and took the hostages of both’ (‘*ocus co tard Desmumu do Mac Carrthaigh [ocus] Tuathmumain do macaibh Dairmada [ocus] co tuc a ngiallu diblinaib*’).⁶⁴⁶ Sometimes *impúd* will be used in more than one set annals in describing the same event, such as the

⁶⁴⁴ AU 1093.3, 1093.6.

⁶⁴⁵ AI 1118.8.

⁶⁴⁶ AU 1118.6.

revolt against Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair’s rule in 1127.⁶⁴⁷ In summary, while many terms are used to refer to an uprising against royal power, we do see an increase in the usage of the term *impúd* from 1093 onwards. Of course, other terms like *cath* and so forth continue to be used to describe what are clearly revolts against kings. Such a change is, though, at the very least, noteworthy. It could be the case that such a terminological shift might well be indicative of a conceptual shift also, a change in the ways in which revolts were being conceptualised. Perhaps *impúd* begins to develop a narrow, more technical meaning from the late eleventh century onwards. Ultimately, however, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions from the evidence, nor can we be certain as to what may have precipitated the increased usage of *impúd*.

Table 4.1 – *Impúd* in the annals

REVOLT	ANNAL ENTRIES
Brian Bóruma, 1000	AT 1000
Síl Muiredaig, 1093	AI 1093.7 and AI 1093.8
Diarmait Ua Briain, 1116	AI 1116.3 and MCB 1116.1
Turning on Muirchertach Ua Briain, 1118	AI 1118.8
Ua Conchobair’s enemies unite, 1124	MCB 1124.2
Dublin turns on Ua Conchobair, 1126	MCB 1126.12
Ua Briain against Ua Conchobair, 1127	AU 1127.5; LC 1127.5; AI 1127.4; AT 1132.4
Tairdelbach Ua Briain betrayed, 1153	MCB 1151.2; MCB 1153.1 AI 1164.2
Divisions in Desmond	AI 1165.2
Muirchertach against Tairdelbach, 1164	AU 1165.4 and AFM 1165.4

⁶⁴⁷ AU 1127.5, AI 1127.4, AT 1132.4.

Revolt of the Ulaid, 1165	AI 1166.7
Mac Murchada expelled, 1166	AI 1197.3 and MCB 1197.1
Division in Munster, 1197	

As the table above shows, the term *impúd*, though used in twenty-one annalistic entries, is applied to thirteen individual events. Of the eighteen post-1100 uses of *impúd*, nine (50%) occur in the first half of the century, in entries dated between 1100 and 1149, and nine (50%) in the second half of that century, in entries dated from 1150 to 1199. Of the eleven unique revolts to which *impúd* is applied that take place in the twelfth century, five (45%) are mentioned in entries dated between 1100 and 1149, and six (55%) in entries dated from 1150 to 1199. The term *impúd* is used most often in the *Annals of Inisfallen* (nine times). There follows *Mac Carthaig's Book* (six times); the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of Tigernach* (two times each); and the *Annals of Loch Cé* and the *Annals of the Four Masters* (one time each). The decade in which we find the most uses of *impúd* is the 1160s, where it is used five times in reference to five revolts. There follows the 1120s (six times in relation to three revolts); the 1110s (three times in relation to two revolts); the 1090s (two times in relation to one revolt), 1150s (where it is used twice in relation to one revolt) and the 1190s (twice in relation to one revolt); and in the 1000s, where it is used once.

2. INSTANCES OF *IMPÚD* IN THE ANNALS

We now turn to look at each use of *impúd* in the annalistic material in turn. What follows is a short summary of each of the thirteen individual events to which the term *impúd* is applied, and we shall attempt to discern some of the causes that led to the revolt. There is no discussion here of the reference to *impúd* in the *Annals of Tigernach* for the year 1000, as

the events it relates to – Brian Bóruma’s rise to power – have been amply discussed elsewhere.⁶⁴⁸

2(a.) The Síil Muiredaig revolt of 1093

We begin with the revolt of the Síil Muiredaig in the year 1093.

Tairdelbach ua Briain, whose kingdom lay in the modern counties of Clare and Limerick, to the south of the Síil Muiredaig lands, had intervened in Connacht in 1073, seeking to advance his own claims to the high-kingship of Ireland, and gained submission from the Uí Briúin Aí dynasty. Tairdelbach’s death in 1086 allowed the Uí Chonchobair (who were a constituent part of the Uí Briúin Aí) some room to manoeuvre, and, after submitting to Domnall Ua Lochlainn of the northern Uí Néill, Ruaidrí na Saide Buide Ua Conchobair laid waste to Munster, burning both Kincora (county Clare) and Limerick with Ua Lochlainn. However, in 1092, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair was blinded by an Ua Flaithbertaig king (and perhaps, also, one Fogartach Ua Fogartaig as well, as the *Annals of Tigernach* and the *Annals of the Four Masters* attest), rivals within Connacht. As Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin has noted, the annalistic record shows a fragmented kingship and political dissension after the slaying of Ua Conchobair.⁶⁴⁹ This allowed Tairdelbach ua Briain’s son, Muirchertach, to regain lost ground; to, in the words of the *Annals of Inisfallen*, ‘take the high-kingship of Connachta’. Around the same time, Muirchertach Ua Briain banished his brother and rival, Diarmait, to Ulster, thereby consolidating his position in Thomond. The order of events is then a little confused in the annalistic record; however, we can say with certainty that Áed, son of Cathal Ua Conchobair, was imprisoned by Muirchertach Ua Briain, and an Ua hEidin was installed as

⁶⁴⁸ Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the battle of Clontarf* (Dublin, 2013); Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, *Brian Boru: Ireland’s greatest king?* (Stroud, 2007), pp 33-7; John V. Kelleher, ‘The rise of the Dál Cais’, in Etienne Rynne (ed.), *North Munster studies. Essays in commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick, 1967), pp 230-41.

⁶⁴⁹ Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin, ‘Ua Conchobair, Ruaidrí Na Saide Buide’ in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography, volume 9* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 577.

king in his stead. The Uí Eidin were a population group from south Galway who had been on good terms with the Uí Briain. The *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of Tigernach* also suggest that the Síil Muiredaig were expelled from Connacht by Ua Briain, into Ulster, possibly the modern county of Tyrone. Furthermore, while being held in captivity by Muirchertach Ua Briain, Áed Ua Conchobair was killed. There is some slight ambiguity as to who exactly killed Áed – according to the *Annals of Inisfallen* it was ‘the followers of Ua Flaithbertaig’ who performed the act, the *Annals of the Four Masters* lay the blame with Fogartach Ua Fogartaigh, while the *Annals of Tigernach* simply say that he died ‘in fetters through treachery’. At the very least, it seems that the wishes of Muirchertach Ua Briain and the Uí Conchobair’s Connacht rivals coincided here: both wanted Áed gone.

It was possibly as a consequence of this that the Síil Muiredaig decided to rebel. AI 1093 states: ‘Ua Conchobair Connacht and the Síil Muiredaig turned against Ua Briain’, while AI 1093.8 continues:

‘A hosting by Muirchertach in Connachta, and he took fifty cows from Ua Flaithbertaig as ‘cumals’ in compensation for Cathal’s son (that is, Aed Ua Conchobair), and for their revolt he plundered and slew many of the Síil Muiredaig, and he imprisoned Ua Conchobair their king.’

‘Sluaged la Muircherdach i Connachta co tuc da .xx. déc bó ó Hú Lathfertaig i cumalaib meic Cathail, [ocus] or oirg [ocus] coro marb sochaide do Síil Murethaig isin n-impúd [ocus] coro chuimrig Hua Conchobair

This Ua Conchobair king, it appears, was one Gilla na Náem. The *Annals of Tigernach* and the *Four Masters* simply say that Muirchertach plundered the Síil Muiredaig; the *Annals of Ulster* only note that the Síil Muiredaig were back in Connacht ‘without permission’. Not that the enmity between the Uí Briain, the Síil Muiredaig, and the Uí Flaithbertaig

ended there and in the following year the Síil Muiredaig laid waste to Corcomroe in north Clare, although, on this particular occasion, Ua Flaithbertaig, who appears also to have been an intended target, ‘escaped therefrom’. Ultimately, however, in 1098 Ua Flaithbertaig was killed by the Síil Muiredaig, the *Annals of Tigernach* asserting that this was ‘vengeance for the blinding of Ruaidrí na Saide Buide’. There is no reason to doubt that this was so. In short, it is the actions of the Síil Muiredaig after the slaying of their imprisoned king Áed that appear to be termed a ‘revolt’ by the *Annals of Inisfallen*.

2(b.) Diarmait Ua Briain’s revolt, 1116

This same Muirchertach Ua Briain that plundered the lands of the Síil Muiredaig and was responsible for the death of Áed Ua Conchobair went on to enjoy a rather illustrious career as king of Ireland, a title which he is awarded in a number of annal collections but the most verbose of which is to be found in the *Annals of Ulster*: ‘king of Ireland and tower of the honour and dignity of the western world’ (more on this below, in section 3).⁶⁵⁰ In fact the events of 1092-93 marked a kind of turning point for him. By the late 1080s, Uí Briain was at something of a low ebb, Limerick and Kincora having been razed by Domnall Ua Lochlainn in 1088, and the following year he was defeated by the combined forces of Connacht and Mide.⁶⁵¹ From around 1093-94 though, for a period of twenty years, Muirchertach was the dominant figure in Irish politics, and by 1101 he was ‘master of all the island except for that north-western corner which he had done his best to undermine, but which had not actually submitted to his rule’.⁶⁵² In the summer of 1114 though, at the height of his power, Muirchertach was ‘struck down by disease’.⁶⁵³ Other

⁶⁵⁰ AU 1119.2.

⁶⁵¹ Seán Duffy, ‘“The western world’s tower of honour and dignity”: the career of Muirchertach Ua Briain in context’, in Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the twelfth century. Reform and renewal*. (Dublin, 2006), p. 67.

⁶⁵² *Ibid*, p. 69.

⁶⁵³ AI 1114.2.

aspirants to the kingship took full advantage of the ‘multitude of... evils’ which followed are anything to judge by, but not least Muirchertach’s own brother Diarmait, who ‘took the kingship of Munster, and banished Muirchertach from Limerick to Killaloe’ (*Diarmait Hua Briain do gabail rigi Muman ocus Muircertach do innarba dó a Luimnech co Cill Da Lua*).⁶⁵⁴ It is probably these events that emboldened Domnall Ua Lochlainn to commit depredations in Dál Cais.⁶⁵⁵

Muirchertach did not lie low for long though, and the following year, perhaps with the help of the inhabitants of Limerick, he managed to take Diarmait prisoner and free Brian mac Murchada, who had been imprisoned by Diarmait, thereby retaking the kingship again. This Brian was the grandson of Donnchad (d. 1064), son of Brian Bóraime; Muirchertach, in contrast, traced his descent from another of Brian’s sons, Tadg (d. 1023). Thereafter, Muirchertach led a force into Leinster and Osraige, presumably in an attempt to re-establish himself as the main player in Irish politics.⁶⁵⁶ Much like Muirchertach previously though, Diarmait did not remain quiet for long, and the following year, 1116, we see Diarmait take the kingship once more. It is here we see use of the term *impúd* in both the *Annals of Inisfallen*, and *Mac Carthaig’s Book*: ‘Diarmait Ua Briain turned against Muirchertach Ua Briain in violation of a mutual oath on the relics of Ireland’ (*Diarmait Ua Briain d’impúd ar Murchertach Ua mBriain dar comluga mind Hérend*).⁶⁵⁷ Evidently the church had intervened in the conflict, in an attempt to broker peace, as the reference to oaths on relics indicates. One wonders to what extent famine in Munster played a role in the revolt also – the *Annals of Ulster* make

⁶⁵⁴ AI 1114.2; AI 1114.4.

⁶⁵⁵ AU 1114.3; AI 1114.3

⁶⁵⁶ AI 1115.2; MCB 1114.2; AI 1115.3; AU 1115.6.

⁶⁵⁷ AI 1116.3. MCB 1116.1 reads as follows: ‘The year before this, Diarmaid Ó Briain turned against Muircheartach son of Toirdhealbach Ó Briain, his own brother, and took the kingship of Munster from him, in violation of [the security of] the relics and sanctuaries of all Ireland, at Cashel and Lismore (*Diarmaid O Briain an bliadhain roimhe sin do inntogh ar Muircirtac mac Toirdealbhaigh I Mriain a dearbreathair fein ocus rigi Mumhun do buain de tar sarughadh mind ocus neimeadh Eireann uile a Caisil ocus a Lis Mor*’.

reference to ‘great pestilence; hunger was so widespread in Leth Moga, both among Laigin and Munstermen, that it emptied churches and forts and states’ – but this is an issue to which we shall return later.

Muirchertach, for the time being, retired to Lismore.⁶⁵⁸

2(c.) A divided Munster

If the *Annals of Inisfallen* and *Mac Carthaigh’s Book* are to be believed, Muirchertach appears to have enlisted the assistance of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn, king of Mide, and Aed Ua Ruairc, king of Uí Briúin, to hold on to power in Munster in 1118. Earlier that year, Diarmait Ua Briain had died in Cork, seemingly of natural causes.⁶⁵⁹ Brian mac Murchada seems to have had some designs on claiming the kingship of Munster for himself after the death of Diarmait, but he was opposed by Tadc Mac Carthaig, who, no doubt, hoped to exploit the internal conflict within the Uí Briain and assert the hegemony of the Mac Carthaigh over Munster.⁶⁶⁰ The picture conveyed by the annals is one of turmoil, confusion, and a fragmented kingship.

It is understandable then that Muirchertach Ua Briain would seek to stack the odds in his favour by employing outside help. What he may not have anticipated was their ‘turning’ against him, as the *Annals of Inisfallen* relates:

‘Tairdelbach son of Ruaidrí, king of Connachta, Murchad Ua Maíl Sechnaill, king of Mide, and Ua Ruairc, king of Uí Briúin, [came] with Muirchertach Ua Briain to Desmumu, and they reached Glenn Magair. They turned against Muirchertach and [made] peace with the son of Mac Carthaig.’

⁶⁵⁸ AI 1116.5

⁶⁵⁹ AI 1118.2; AU 1118.2; ALC 1118.2.

⁶⁶⁰ AI 1118.7.

‘Tairdelbach mac Ruaidri, rí Cconnacht, agus Murchad Ua Máeil Shechnaill, rí Mide, agus Ua Ruairc, rí Ua mBriúin, la Murchertach Ua mBriain co Desmumain co roachtatar Glend Magair. Impúd dóib ar Murchertach agus síth ri mac Meicc Carthaig.’⁶⁶¹

There is no mention of Muirchertach Ua Briain in the *Annals of Ulster* or the *Annals of Loch Cé*:

‘An army [was brought] by Tairdelbach ua Conchobuir, king of Connacht, and Murchad ua Mael Sechlainn, king of Temair, along with him, and Aed Ua Ruairc, into Mumu until they reached Glenn Maghair, and they gave Desmumu to Mac Carrthaigh and Tuadmumu to the sons of Diarmait, and took the hostages of both.’

*‘Slogadh la Tairrdelbach H. Concobhair la rígh Connacht agus la Murchadh H. Maelsechlainn ri Temrac imailli fris agus la hAedh H. Ruairc isin Mumain co rochtadur Glenn Maghair agus co tard Desmumain do Mac Carrthaigh agus Tuathmumain do macaibh Diarmada agus co tuc a ngiallu diblinaib’.*⁶⁶²

Muirchertach is mentioned in *Mac Carthaig’s Book*, but here the term *impúd* is not used. It is said that Muirchertach, along with Tairdelbach Ua Conchobhair, Murchadh Ua Mael Sechlainn and Aed Ua Ruairc came ‘to take the kingship of Sliocht Eóghain Mhóir again for Muircheartach’ (*do gabhail ríghí Sleachta Eoghain Moir aris do Muircirtac*). Their seeming betrayal of Ua Briain is never presented as such, rather, it is said that they ‘came into the assembly of Tadhg son of Mac Carthaigh and made an

⁶⁶¹ AI 1118.8.

⁶⁶² AU 1118.6.

enduring treaty with him and with Cormac, his kinsman, against Muircheartach' (*do teacht a n-oireachtas Taidhg mic Mic Carrthaigh ocus daingniughadh ris ocus re Cormac a brathair ele do sir a n-aighidh Muircirtaigh...*).⁶⁶³

The difference in terminology used by the *Annals of Inisfallen* and *Mac Carthaig's Book* is hardly a surprise. The latter, a partisan account in favour of the Meic Carthaig is loath to see Tadhg's actions, or those of others that directly benefit him, as anything resembling treachery. The *Annals of Inisfallen*, on the other hand, favouring as they did the Ua Briain kings – at least at this point – would have been only too happy to paint Ua Conchobhair's, Ua Mael Sechlainn's and Ua Ruairc's actions in as negative a light as possible. This discrepancy in usage by these two sets of annals illustrates quite clearly that the application of the term *impúd* to a set of events was a value-judgment by the author about the events.

As for the actions of Tairdelbach, Aed and Murchad, they too are easily understood. As the *Annals of Loch Cé* relate, Desmond (south-east Munster) was given to Mac Carthaig, and Thomond 'to the sons of Diarmaid Ua Briain'. A weak, divided Munster was in their best interests and they took the opportunity presented by internal conflict within the province to provide for just that.

2(d.) Ua Conchobair's troubles

This Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair that 'turned' on Muirchertach Ua Briain would, himself, go on to have a long and distinguished political career. On his death in 1156 he was termed 'high king with opposition' of Ireland by *Mac Carthaig's Book*. He began his journey to the high-kingship in earnest in 1114, when, taking advantage of Muirchertach's illness, he expelled the ruler of Dublin, and positioned Énna Mac Murchada as its king under his submission.⁶⁶⁴ Ruaidrí ua Conchobair,

⁶⁶³ MCB 1118.2.

⁶⁶⁴ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 'Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair (1088-1156), *Dictionary of Irish Biography volume 9* (Dublin, 2009), p. 578.

king of Connacht, died in the same year that Tairdelbach and his allies carved Munster up between the Uí Briain and the Meic Carthaig, allowing Tairdelbach to assume the kingship of Connacht. Muirchertach, by now vastly diminished in terms of his power, expired the following year, in 1119. In 1120, Tairdelbach began to flex his muscles, marching into Mide ‘in violation of guarantees given by the coarb of Patrick and contrary to the peace made by the son of Mac Lochlainn, king of Ailech’ (*dar lama comarba Phattraicc ocus dar sith meicc M. Lochlainn, rig Ailig*). The next year, in 1121, Tairdelbach plundered Desmond, raiding its churches.⁶⁶⁵ That same year saw the death of Domnall Mac Lochlainn, *rig Herenn* according to the *Annals of Inisfallen*, *ardri Erenn* according to the *Annals of Ulster*, thereby clearing the field, so to speak, for Tairdelbach.⁶⁶⁶

Raiding by Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair continued until, in 1124, his enemies aligned themselves together to do battle with the ambitious king of Connacht.⁶⁶⁷ According to *Mac Carthaig’s Book* Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn, *righ Midhe*, Énna Mac Murchada (the man previously installed as ruler of Dublin by Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair), *ri Laighean*, and Tigernán Ua Ruairc, *ri Breithfne* ‘turned’ (*Impodh do Murchadh...etc.*) against Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair.⁶⁶⁸ Tairdelbach was defeated, though he managed to hold the bridge at Athlone, and, in response to this insubordination, Ua Conchobair slaughtered ‘the hostages of Desmond’ (*Geill Desmuman do marbadh la Tairrdelbach*).⁶⁶⁹

It would not be long before Tairdelbach faced another revolt, or, more accurately, his son Conchobar Ua Conchobair faced a revolt. In 1126 the young prince was appointed king of Dublin.⁶⁷⁰ This, for all

⁶⁶⁵ AI 1121.6, 1121.7; AU 1121.4, 1121.5

⁶⁶⁶ AI 1121.2; AU 1121.1. His obit in the *Annals of Loch Cé*, although quite flattering, does not call him ‘king of Ireland’.

²⁹ AU 1122; AI 1123.

⁶⁶⁸ MCB 1124.2

⁶⁶⁹ AU 1124.6; AI 1124.6; *DIB*, p. 578.

⁶⁷⁰ AI 1126.8.

Tairdelbach's political and military innovations, was nothing new.⁶⁷¹

Muirchertach Ua Briain, had, as a young man, been appointed to the kingship of Dublin by his father, Tairdelbach ua Briain, and Muirchertach had, in turn, appointed his own son, Domnall, to the kingship thereof in 1115.⁶⁷² Conchobar Ua Conchobair was not long in the job though, when he faced a revolt against his kingship. The 'Foreigners of Dublin turned against Tairdelbach son of Ruaidrí, and drove out Conchobar son of Tairdelbach son of Ruaidrí', as *Mac Carthaig's Book* phrases it (*Goill Atha Cliath do inntogh ar Toirrdealbach mac Ruaidhri ocus Concubur mac Toirrdealbhaigh mic Ruaidhri do dicur uatha*).⁶⁷³

The following year, in 1127, Cormac Mac Carthaig, king of Desmond, was 'deposed by the Munstermen themselves' (*Cormac mc. Meic Cartaig...do athrigad do Mubneciab fen*) and he retired to the monastery in Lismore.⁶⁷⁴ Seizing the opportunity, Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair marched into Desmond, as far as Cork, plundering it, and he 'took the hostages of Munster' (*co ruc gillu Munnech*).⁶⁷⁵ Thereafter, four sets of annals – Inisfallen, Loch Cé, Ulster and Tigernach – all agree that there was a 'turning' against Tairdelbach, although all differ in their details. The *Annals of Inisfallen* assert that Conchobar Ua Briain and his brother, Tairdelbach 'turned against Ruaidrí's son' (*Impoth do Concobor U Brian acus do Tairdelbac da bratair for mc. Ruaidri*), aligning themselves with Cormac Mac Carthaigh, bringing him out of Lismore and restoring him to the kingship of Munster.⁶⁷⁶ It seems likely that the Ua Briain brothers sought a strong ally, concerned as they probably were with their powerful neighbour in the north: an unchecked Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair was not a prospect they delighted in. The *Annals of*

⁶⁷¹ For more on his innovations, see Marie Therese Flanagan, 'After Brian Bóraime: the high-kingship and the kings of Connacht', in Seán Duffy (ed.), *Medieval Dublin XVI* (Dublin, 2017), pp 218-59.

⁶⁷² AI 1075.4; Duffy, 'Career of Muirchertach', pp 62, 71.

⁶⁷³ MCB 1126.12; Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin, 'Conchobar Ua Conchobair (d. 1144)', *Dictionary of Irish Biography volume 9* (Dublin, 2009), p. 571.

⁶⁷⁴ AI 1127.2.

⁶⁷⁵ AI 1127.3; AU 1127.1; ALC 1127.1.

⁶⁷⁶ AI 1127.4.

Tigernach observe that the men of Thomond had, in their revolt, allies in the Uí Briúin and the Conmaicne (*Impodh do Tuadhmunain ocus do hÚib Briuin ocus do Chonmaicnib ar Conchobair*); no doubt they sought to lessen the yoke of their Ua Conchobair overlords.⁶⁷⁷ Both the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of Loch Cé* place the revolt of the Foreigners of Dublin against Conchobar Ua Conchobair in 1127 also, conflating their revolt with that of the Uí Briain: ‘The men of Munster and Laigin turned on Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair and they forfeited *the lives of* their hostages, and his son was deposed by the Laigin and the foreigners’ claimed the Ulster annals and the *Annals of Loch Cé* in virtually identical terms.⁶⁷⁸ What is unusual is the level of agreement between four sets of annals in labelling the events of 1127 (and of 1126) with the term *impód*.

2(e.) Conflict within the Uí Briain, 1153

Tairdelbach Ua Briain had assumed the kingship of Munster in 1142, after the death of his brother, and then king, Conchobar, of an illness in Killaloe.⁶⁷⁹ Conchobar and Tairdelbach, as we have just seen, helped Cormac Mac Carthaigh regain the kingship in 1127 as it was politically expedient for them to do so at that time. In the 1130s though, the Uí Briain’s powerful northern neighbour suffered a number of reversals, and accordingly was not quite the source of anxiety he had been in 1127. Indeed, it was ‘only’ a truce brokered by the church in 1133 that ‘saved [Ua Conchobair] from utter destruction’, according to Dáibhí Ó Cróinín.⁶⁸⁰ Accordingly, hostilities between the Uí Briain and Meic Carthaigh recommenced, the latter devastating the territory of the Dál Cais in that year. Ultimately, Cormac Mac Carthaigh was to be killed by

⁶⁷⁷ AT 1132.4

⁶⁷⁸ AU 1127.5 reads: ‘Fir Muman & Laigen do impodh doriisi for Thairrdhelbach H. Conchobair & a n-geill do dhilsiuighadh doibh & a mac d’aithrighadh do Laignibh & do Ghallaibh’, whilst ALC 1127.5 runs as follows: ‘Fir Muman & Laigen do impódh áridhis for Toirrdhealbach O Conchobair, & a n-gell do dhísluigad dóibh, & a mac do athrigad do Gallaib, & do Laignechaib’.

⁶⁷⁹ AT 1142.1.

⁶⁸⁰ Ó Cróinín, *DIB*, p. 579.

one of the two men that restored him to the kingship previously, and Conchobar Ua Briain acceded to the kingship of Munster in 1138, which he held until his death.⁶⁸¹

Tairdelbach Ua Briain spent much of the 1140s fighting against Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn of the Cenél nÉogain, who had ambitions of his own respecting the high-kingship of Ireland. In Connacht though, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, son of the aging Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair had begun to position himself as successor to his father, and in 1151 raided Munster. Moreover, Tairdelbach Ua Briain appears to have suffered not one but two betrayals in 1151. According to *Mac Carthaig's Book*, Muirchertach, Tairdelbach's son, 'made an alliance with Thomond and deposed his own father' (*Muircheartach...do ceangal re Tuaghmumhain ocus do aithrighadh a athur*).⁶⁸² The same set of annals also relates that Tadc Ua Briain, 'turned against Tairdelbach, his own brother' (*Tadhg...dapos impogh ar Toirdealbac, a brather fein*).⁶⁸³ There seems to be a degree of repetition in *Mac Carthaig's Book*, and it seems most likely that the entries for 1151.2 and 1153.2 refer to the same event.⁶⁸⁴ Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair appears to have supported Tadc in this. That same year, Ua Conchobair, aligned with Mac Murchada, Ua Mael Sechlainn and Ua Ruairc fought a bloody battle against Ua Briain at Móin Mór in Cork. The men of Munster were routed, and their losses were heavy indeed: 'Until sand of sea and stars of heaven are numbered, no one will reckon all the sons of the kings and chiefs and great lords of the men of Munster that were killed there'.⁶⁸⁵ The result of this loss seems to have

⁶⁸¹ AT 1138.5-.6.

⁶⁸² MCB 1151.1

⁶⁸³ MCB 1151.2.

⁶⁸⁴ MCB 1153.1 reads as follows: 'Tadhg mac Diarmada I Briain do inntogh ar Toirdealbac, a brathair fein, tar minnaibh & tar slantaibh, & ceangal do re Diarmaid mac Cormaic Muidhe Tamnac & re Toirdealbac mac Ruaidhri I Concubuir, ri Connacht, & re Diarmaid Mac Murchadha, ri Laighean, & Toirdealbac mac Diarmada I Briain do innarbadh doibh a Cinel Eoghain co Muircirtac mac Neill h-Lochlainn.'

⁶⁸⁵ AT 1151.3. MCB 1151.3.

been that Tairdelbach Ua Briain was banished from Munster, seemingly up north, into modern Tyrone.⁶⁸⁶

As has been mentioned already, though, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn had designs on the kingship of Ireland himself, and, in a move mimicking the actions of the Uí Briain in 1127, marched into Munster to restore Tairdelbach Ua Briain to the kingship of Munster, fearing, as he no doubt did, a strong Ua Conchobair backed by Tadc Ua Briain.⁶⁸⁷

2(f.) Divisions in Desmond and further conflict within the Uí Briain

Despite his being restored to the kingship of Munster with Mac Lochlainn's aid, Tairdelbach never again regained the position of relative strength he held in the 1140s. Indeed, the Munster dynasties were to be eclipsed by rivals in Connacht, Ulster and Leinster, with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, Diarmait Mac Murchada, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and Tigernán Ua Ruairc set to dominate Irish politics up to the English invasion.⁶⁸⁸ Internecine warfare continued to characterise Munster politics in this period however, and the Uí Briain and Meic Carthaigh were still at each other's throats through the 1150s, into the 1160s.

Tairdelbach Ua Briain, restored to the kingship of Munster, surrendered hostages to his northern neighbour, Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair.⁶⁸⁹ The king of Connacht, though, was to die that same year and we see his son, Ruaidrí, who had been politically active for some time, move to eliminate his brothers from contention for the kingship.⁶⁹⁰ Things were in flux once more, and in 1156-7 Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn marched into Leinster and Desmond before moving on to

⁶⁸⁶ AT 1152.3; AFM 1151.4.

⁶⁸⁷ AT 1153.7; MCB 1153.3; AFM 1153.13.

⁶⁸⁸ For good narrative accounts of the rivalries between these four, see Séan Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (London, 1997), pp 52-56; Marie Therese Flanagan, 'High kings with opposition', in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *A new history of Ireland, volume I: prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), pp 926-933; and Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Diarmait MacMurrough (1126-71) and the coming of the Anglo-French', in Ciarán Brady (ed.), *Worsted in the game: losers in Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), pp 21-34

⁶⁸⁹ AT 1156.1

⁶⁹⁰ AT 1156.7

Limerick where ‘the Foreigners gave him the kingship and expelled Tairdelbach Ua Briain’ (*co tardsat Gaill righi dó & cur' dichuirsed Tairrdelbach h-Úa Briain uathaib*).⁶⁹¹ It could be the case that Mac Lochlainn, previously desirous of Tairdelbach Ua Briain’s support against Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair now worried, since the death of the latter, that Ua Briain was best placed to mount a challenge to his supremacy. Seeking to weaken Munster, he divided it between Diarmait Mac Carthaigh and Conchobar Ua Briain.⁶⁹² Tairdelbach though, just as after his deposition in 1151, proved himself to be something of a survivor, and, with Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair’s help, regained the kingship of Munster (while south, Ua Conchobair also forced submission from Diarmait Mac Carthaigh).⁶⁹³ Naturally keen to neutralise any potential reaction from Conchobar Ua Brian, in 1158 Tairdelbach Ua Brian had both him and his son blinded.⁶⁹⁴

Given Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair’s role in restoring Tairdelbach Ua Briain to the kingship, it is hardly surprising to see a ‘battalion’ (*cath*) from Thomond amongst Ua Conchobair’s forces in Mide in 1159.⁶⁹⁵ Clearly, Ruaidrí felt his quondam ally needed to be kept in check though, and in 1160 he sailed down the Shannon to Lough Derg, where he took hostages from Tairdelbach.⁶⁹⁶ If the *Annals of Inisfallen* are correct, Ruaidrí once again took hostages from Tairdelbach in 1161.⁶⁹⁷

Tairdelbach Ua Briain moved to assert his dominance over his provincial rivals in 1161, raiding Desmond not once, but twice, that

⁶⁹¹ AT 1157.6. See also Donnchadh Ó Corráin, ‘Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and the *Circuit of Ireland*’, in Alfred P. Smyth (ed.), *Seanchas. Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*. (Dublin, 2000), pp 238-50. Here, Ó Corráin argued that the *Circuit* has mistakenly been attributed a tenth century date of composition, but in actuality was composed between 1157 and 1166 as a historicist account intended to glorify Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn.

⁶⁹² AFM 1157.10.

⁶⁹³ AFM 1157.12.

⁶⁹⁴ AT 1158.4; AFM 1158.4.

⁶⁹⁵ AFM 1159.13; AT 1159.6.

⁶⁹⁶ AT 1160.12; AFM 1160.23.

⁶⁹⁷ AFM 1161.7.

year.⁶⁹⁸ It was these losses to Ua Briain that probably emboldened Donnchad Mac Carthaigh to challenge his cousin, Diarmait, for the kingship of Desmond.⁶⁹⁹ Diarmait was successful in keeping Donnchad at bay, imprisoning him in 1162, before having him killed in 1163.⁷⁰⁰ This did not spell the end of Diarmait Mac Carthaigh's troubles, though. He was at war with the Uí Briain again in 1162-3 and, perhaps sensing weakness, another kinsman – Mael Sechlainn – moved against him: 'Mael Sechnaill, son of Domnall Ua Carthaig, turned against Cormac's son, and raided In Gilla Caech Ua Ciairmeic, carrying him off into Éóganacht Locha Léin. Cormac's son and the Desmumu assembled to attack him and encamped that night in Grencha. Strife arose among them, and Domnall, son of Domnall, and others were slain. After that they made peace' (*Mael Sechnaill mc Domnaill U Chartaig do impud ar mc Cormaic ocus crech in Gilli U Chiarmec do denam do ocus a brith do leiss i nEoganacht Loca Len. Mc Cormaic ocus Desmumu do thinol ara ammus coro gabsat long i nGrencaib inn adaig sein coro as debaid etturru coro marbad Domnall mac Domnaill and ocus alii. Sid do denam doib iar sin*).⁷⁰¹

Meanwhile, back in Thomond, Tairdelbach Ua Briain was dealing with a revolt of his own. In 1162, Muirchertach – Tairdelbach's son – murdered Conchobar, son of Tadc Ua Briain, signaling that he held ambitions of his own. We do not hear mention of Muirchertach again until 1165, when he 'turned' (*do impúd*) against his father, and took the kingship of Thomond. Tairdelbach was banished first to Killaloe and then to Lismore, in the territory of the Mac Carthaigh.⁷⁰² Emmett O'Byrne, in

⁶⁹⁸ AFM 1161.18, AFM 1161.19.

⁶⁹⁹ Emmett O'Byrne, 'Diarmait Mór Mac Carthaig (d. 1185)', *Dictionary of Irish biography, volume 5* (Dublin, 2009), p. 777.

⁷⁰⁰ AI 1162.3, AI 1163.6; MCB 1163.1; AT 1163.7;.

⁷⁰¹ AFM 1162.21; MCB 1163.3; AI 1164.2.

⁷⁰² AI 1165.2; MCB 1164.1. The *Annals of Tigernach*, in stark contrast to the *Annals of Inisfallen*, the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and *Mac Carthaig's Book*, portray Tairdelbach Ua Briain's journey to Lismore as a voluntary surrendering of the kingship and pilgrimage: '*Tairdelbach h-Úa Bríain do thecht a n-ailithre co Cill Da Lua, & a mac .i. Muirchertach, d' fhagbail a r-righe Dal Cais*' (AT 1165.1.).

the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, stated that in 1165 Muirchertach Ua Briain submitted to Diarmait Mac Carthaigh at Lismore, pledging his loyalty against his father, and thereby ‘proving’ Diarmait’s regional power. *Mac Carthaigh’s Book* seems to suggest that it was Tairdelbach, not Muirchertach, that offered hostages to Diarmait though, for ‘assisting him against Muircheartach, his son’ and Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair’ (*go tug braide ocus oglacus do Diarmaid mac Cormaic do cinn neartaighi leis a n-aighidh Muircheartaigh a mic fein ocus Ruaidhri mic Toirdealbhaigh h Concubuir, righ Connacht*). Furthermore, in 1166 the *Annals of Tigernach* report that ‘Tairdelbach Ua Briain again took the kingship of Munster’, which might suggest that he did have the backing of Diarmait Mac Carthaigh against Muirchertach. What *is* clear though, is that Munster lay broken up on the eve of the English invasion, an inconsequential player in the struggle for the high-kingship.

2(g.) The revolt of the Ulaid, 1165

Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn of the Cenél Eogain, as has been alluded to above, had, since the 1150s, been aggressively asserting his power first in the north, and, as the years progressed, throughout the island. Upon his death in 1166 he was eulogised as the ‘arch-king of Ireland’ and ‘the Augustus of all the North-West of Europe for valour and championship’ in the *Annals of Ulster*.

In 1156 Mac Lochlainn led a hosting, gaining submission from the Ulaid, another population group in the north of Ireland.⁷⁰³ Thereafter, they proved to be useful allies, assisting him on a hosting as far as Limerick in 1157, where he gained the pledges of the kings and nobles of Munster, on a raid into Connacht in 1159, and on an expedition against the Hiberno-Norse of Dublin in 1162.⁷⁰⁴ However in 1165 the Ulaid turned on Mac Lochlainn.⁷⁰⁵ The term *impód* is used to describe this

⁷⁰³ AU 1156.2

⁷⁰⁴ AT 1157.6, AT 1159.11; AU 1162.5.

⁷⁰⁵ AU 1165.4.

event by both the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of the Four Masters*. Unsurprisingly perhaps, Mac Lochlainn at the head of the Cenél Eogain and accompanied by the Cenél Conaill and the Airgialla, laid waste to the Ulaid, slaying multitudes and expelling Eochaid Mac Duinnsléibe Uí Eochada. He then gave the kingship of Ulaid to Donnsléibe Mac Duinnsléibe Uí Eochada, and, as the *Annals of Ulster* observe, ‘all the Ulaid gave their pledges to Mac Lochlainn, through the might of his regal power.’

Eochaid Mac Duinnsléibe was not quite done yet however, and, in that same year he again attempted ‘to obtain the kingship of Ulidia’. Fearing a similar reaction from Mac Lochlainn though, ‘the Ulaid expelled him [Eochaid] through fear of Mac Lochlainn, and he was fettered by Donnchad Ua Cerbaill, arch-king of Airgialla, by order of Lochlainn’.⁷⁰⁶ Indeed, Ua Cerbaill had long been on good terms with Mac Lochlainn. However, if the Ulaid had hoped to avoid another ravaging by offering up Eochaid, such hope proved somewhat misplaced; along with the Cenél Eogain, Mac Lochlainn razed Ulaid as far as Inis Locháin (on the river Bann), exacting pledges from the Ulstermen.⁷⁰⁷

Thereafter, Donnchad Ua Cerbaill, king of the Airgialla, came to Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn with Eochaid Mac Duinnsléibe, to ask Mac Lochlainn for the kingship for Eochaid. Muirchertach, no doubt hoping to quell this persistent unrest, agreed, in return for ‘the son of every chief of the Ulaid and [Eochaid’s] own daughter’ as hostages and a number of other treasures. The following year, however, Eochaid Mac Duinnsléibe was blinded by Mac Lochlainn ‘in violation of the protection of the successor of Patrick and of the Staff of Jesus and of Donnchad Ua Cerbaill.’⁷⁰⁸ In other words, Mac Lochlainn had, when making his agreement with Eochaid, made oaths to respect the latter’s position as

⁷⁰⁶ AU 1165.9.

⁷⁰⁷ AU 1165.10.

⁷⁰⁸ AU 1066.8; MCB 1165.2.

king of Ulaid in the presence of the archbishop of Armagh and Ua Cerbaill. By attacking Eochaid, Mac Lochlainn breached these oaths.

That same year, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, king of Connacht, marched into Meath, Dublin, Leinster and Airgialla, receiving pledges wherever he went.⁷⁰⁹ Faced with the powerful Ua Conchobair king, and in light of Mac Lochlainn's treachery, the choice was probably an easy one for Ua Cerbaill. Then, in coalition with the Uí Briúin and the Conmaicne, Ua Cerbaill marched into Tyrone to attack Mac Lochlainn, significantly, 'by the direction of the Cenél nEogain themselves', as the *Annals of Ulster* record.⁷¹⁰ Ultimately, even Mac Lochlainn's small band of Cenél Eogain adherents abandoned him, and the once mighty king was slain.

2(h.) Mac Murchada expelled overseas, 1166

Diarmait Mac Murchada's story is an oft-told one indeed, given the repercussions his trip to Bristol and then to Saumur, in search of Henry II, king of England, were to have for the island of Ireland. We must tell it again for our purposes.

In 1143 Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair installed his son, Conchobar, as king of Mide. It was not long before the men of Meath, unhappy with the arrangement, killed Conchobar.⁷¹¹ Understandably aggrieved, Tairdelbach marched into Mide and divided it between Tigernán Ua Ruairc, king of Bréifne, and Diarmait Mac Murchada, king of Leinster. Meath, in fact, was to suffer 'more dilapidation than any other province in the twelfth century'.⁷¹² The scenario was not to have any great permanency 'but it gave [MacMurchada] a taste for territory in Meath and made him a bitter rival of [Tigernán Ua Ruairc]'.⁷¹³ In 1152 Ua Conchobair met with Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn near Beleek. There

⁷⁰⁹ AU 1066.9.

⁷¹⁰ AU 1066.10.

⁷¹¹ MCB 1143.2.

⁷¹² F. J. Byrne, 'The trembling sod: Ireland in 1169', in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume II: Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1987), p. 19.

⁷¹³ Ó Corráin, 'Diarmait MacMurrrough', p. 26.

they agreed a peace treaty. Mac Lochlainn then led a force into Meath, along with Ua Conchobair and Mac Murchada. Meath was restored to Ua Mael Sechnaill. Ua Conchobair and Mac Murchada then attacked Ua Ruairc, and set up a rival – the son of Gilla Braide Ua Ruairc – in his place.⁷¹⁴ Adding insult to injury, Mac Murchada kidnapped Ua Ruairc’s wife, Derbforgaill, apparently then raping the woman. We should not, argued Seán Duffy, underestimate the importance of this as a ‘motivating force’ for Ua Ruairc’s later actions against Mac Murchada.⁷¹⁵

As just discussed, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn was killed in 1166, leaving Mac Murchada without an ally. Even more ominously for the Leinster king, the latest claimant to the high-kingship, Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, was an ally of Ua Ruairc, Mac Murchada’s bitter enemy. Ua Conchobair marched into Leinster, and Mac Murchada retreated, burning his fortification at Ferns ‘from fear that the Connachtmen would burn his castle and his house’.⁷¹⁶ Ua Ruairc, sensing his opportunity for vengeance, along with ‘the men of Breifne and Meath, and of the foreigners of Dublin and the Leinstermen’ marched into Mac Murchada’s territory, banishing him overseas, and setting up his grandson, Murchad, as king.⁷¹⁷ The *Annals of Inisfallen* conveyed the events of 1166 in the following terms: ‘Diarmait son of Mac Murchada, king of Laigin, was banished eastwards over the sea, after the foreigners of Dublin and the Laigin had turned against him’ (*Diarmait mc Meic Murchada, ri lagen, do innerba dar mur sair ar n-impod do Gallaib Átha Cliath ocus do Laignib fair*).⁷¹⁸ Similarly, the ‘Song of Dermot and the Earl’ also portrayed the events of 1166 as a revolt of sorts. Indeed, we see the language of betrayal used throughout the earlier verses of this late twelfth century composition. We see Ua Máel Sechlainn termed a traitor (*li*

⁷¹⁴ AT 1152.6; AFM 1152.10, 1152.11.

⁷¹⁵ Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages*, p. 57.

⁷¹⁶ AFM 1166.14.

⁷¹⁷ AFM 1166.15.

⁷¹⁸ AI 1166.7.

traïtur) and Murchad ua Briain is accused of treachery (*la traison*).⁷¹⁹ We also hear of a traitor ‘turning’ against his rightful lord: *Que turné est li traïtur / Sur sun naturel seignur*.⁷²⁰ There will be more on such terminology below [section 2(j).(i.)].

The results of this ‘turning’ were to have rather long-lasting consequences.

2(i.) The English in Thomond, 1197

The repercussions of Mac Murchada’s actions were being well and truly felt by the time the young prince John visited Ireland in 1185. To ensure the safety of the English colony in the south-east of the island, John, sent over by his father, Henry II, sought to establish a buffer area around Waterford, from whence he expelled the native rulers and granted vast tracts of land to trusted agents: Philip of Worcester, William de Burgh, Theobald Walter and Ranulf de Glanville.⁷²¹ This protected the colonists from Munster which, as yet, lay beyond the sphere of English power in Ireland. There, the age-old rivalry between the Uí Briain and the Meic Carthaigh continued to be the key feature of the political landscape. However, John’s grant of lands around Waterford provided a launching pad for a push west.

Some measure of success was gained in 1192, when the English advanced as far as Killaloe, but further progress was checked by Domnall Mór Ua Briain.⁷²² Domnall Mór appears to have reached something of a *modus vivendi* with the invaders, but he died in 1194, leaving behind him three sons – Conchobar Ruad, Donnchad Cairprech, and Muirchertach Finn – all of whom desired the kingship for themselves. The *Annals of the*

⁷¹⁹ Evelyn Mullaly (ed.), *The deeds of the Normans in Ireland: La Geste des Engleis en Yrlande. A new edition of the chronicle formerly known as The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Dublin, 2002), l. 136, 140.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, l. 202-3.

⁷²¹ Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages*, p. 99; F. X. Martin, ‘Overlord becomes feudal lord, 1172-85’, in Art Cosgrove (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume II: Medieval Ireland, 1169-1534* (Oxford, 1987), p. 128.

⁷²² Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans, 1169-1333* (Dublin, 2005; Oxford, 1920), p. 209; AI 1192.4; MCB 1192.2.

Four Masters tell us that Domnall Mór was succeeded by Muirchertach, as does *Mac Carthaig's Book*, while the *Annals of Inisfallen* rather vaguely say that Domnall was succeeded by his son (*a mac do gabáil rígi fo chétóir dara es*).⁷²³ The very next entry in the *Annals of Inisfallen* runs as follows: *Murchertach mc Domnall Ú Briain do dallad do Gallaib a fhill*, which might suggest that it was indeed Muirchertach who had succeeded his father as king.

In 1196 we see Donnchad Cairprech slay Donnchad Ua Donnocáin, before, in turn, being imprisoned by his brother Conchobar Ruad.⁷²⁴ Donnchad obviously escaped Conchobar's clutches, but the following year, as the *Annals of Inisfallen* and *Mac Carthaig's Book* relate, 'Conchobar Ruad turned against his brother and brought foreigners into Tuadmumu. They plundered Tuadmumu, both church and lay property, inflicting a great slaughter on its people, including Cú Meda Mac Con Mara, Conchobar Ua Cuinn, and many others' (*Conchobur Ruad du impud ara brathar, ocus Gaill du brit do leis i Tuadmumain, ocus arcain Tuadmuman doib itir chill ocus tuaith, ocus ar mor ara dáinib im Choin Meda Mc Con Mara ocus im Chonchobur Ua Cuind ocus cum aliis multis*).⁷²⁵

2(j.) The use of *impúd* in the Irish annals

The brief synopses of the various uses of *impúd* in the Irish annals, set out above, comprises a reasonably comprehensive narrative of Ireland's twelfth century. It is, in some ways, a 'lesser spotted' history of the twelfth century. Its focus has been, at times, centred on the high-kingship and the struggle to attain it. That said though, it might be suggested at this juncture that there is more to the story of this period than an English invasion and a move towards a centralised kingship. What the brief synopses show though was that there was more to the story of eleventh-

⁷²³ AI 1194.3; MCB 1194.2.

⁷²⁴ AI 1196.2.

⁷²⁵ AI 1193.3; MCB 1197.1.

and twelfth-century Ireland than the struggles between Ua Briain, Ua Conchobair, Ua Lochlainn, Ua Ruairc and Mac Murchada. The great Irish kings had also to contend with the machinations and misgivings of a number of lesser lights too.

We park that discussion there though, momentarily at least, and we try now to discern some sort of rationale in the way in which *impúd* has been employed in the annalistic materials; not an easy task at this remove of some nine centuries. There are, it seems, two questions here: why might one set of annals use *impúd* in relation to a given event and another not?; and why, if an annal uses *impúd* to describe one event as a revolt will that same set of annals not use *impúd* to describe another event which clearly constitutes a revolt?

It was suggested in section 2(c.) above that the use of *impúd* implied a ‘value-judgment’ by the author about the events. This value-judgment pertains not to the question of whether an event constituted a ‘revolt’, but whether the actions undertaken were good or bad. To illustrate this point, we might review a few of the pocket histories detailed above.

The ‘turning’ of the Ulaid on Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn presents itself as an interesting point of discussion. Why, it might be asked, is *impúd* used by the *Annals of Ulster* to describe the actions of the Ulaid in 1165, but is not used by that same set of annals to relate the actions of the Cenél Eogain in 1166? Surely, the decision of the Cenél Eogain to abandon their king is just as deserving of the label *impúd* as is the decision by the Ulaid – whose previous allegiance only came at the point of the sword anyway – to turn on Mac Lochlainn? We might ask similar questions as regards the use of *impúd* in the *Annals of Inisfallen* to describe Diarmait Ua Briain’s actions in the 1110s. In 1114, after Muirchertach’s illness, Diarmait takes the kingship of Munster. Here, *impúd* is not used. Muirchertach Ua Briain, it will be remembered, managed to re-take his kingdom, but Diarmait took the kingship from him again, in 1116. Here, the *Annals of Inisfallen* uses ‘*impúd*’ to describe Diarmait’s actions – but why was *impúd* not employed by that same set of

annals to relate Diarmait's taking of the kingship in 1114? In 1114 the annalist decries the illness that struck Muirchertach down, and for the troubles that ensued as a consequence of his illness, but it is stated, in quite sober terms, that Diarmait simply 'took the kingship of Mumu, and banished Muirchertach from Limerick to Killaloe.'⁷²⁶

Some suggestions might be offered. In 1166, it will be recalled, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn had Eochaid Mac Duinnsleibe blinded. This was done despite Muirchertach taking an oath in the presence of relics and Ua Cerbaill that he would guarantee Mac Duinnsleibe in his kingship. According to the annalist – who might well have been more disconcerted by a breach of an oath undertaken in the presence of a relic than most – it was this that caused the Cenél Eogain to turn on their king. The question of causation will be dealt with in greater detail below, for now it is enough to note that the annalist did not use the term to describe the actions of those revolting after a perceived wrong had been done by the king. In contrast, in so far as we can see, Mac Lochlainn had not done anything so obviously 'wrong' in 1165 to provoke a revolt on the part of the Ulaid. Perhaps, then, the annalist used *impúd* to convey that it was the Ulaid that were acting 'in the wrong' in 1165.

In 1114, Diarmait took the kingship of Munster and banished Muirchertach Ua Briain. It is important to note that disability, at least in theory, disqualified an individual from holding the kingship. This is why we see so many contenders for a kingship blinded by their political opponents.⁷²⁷ While the annalist might bemoan Muirchertach's illness then, Diarmait's actions are not seen as 'wrong'; rather, they are perfectly legitimate. After Muirchertach recovers, he once again takes the kingship of Munster. When Diarmait moves against Muirchertach again, in 1116, in his bid to recapture the kingship, he is not so obviously entitled to do so. Diarmait acting improperly this time, the annalist seeks to paint his actions in negative terms, and thus uses *impúd*. It seems that, this time, as

⁷²⁶ AI 1114.4.

⁷²⁷ Bart Jaski, *Early Irish kingship and succession* (Dublin, 2000), pp 82-3.

with Mac Lochlainn, an oath sworn in the presence of relics was also breached, which might be significant.

Impúd is used in an obviously negative sense in the earliest recorded example of its use in the Irish annals. We see the *Annals of Tigernach* describe Brian Bóruma's actions as a revolt – *impúd* – through treachery (*Cétimpodh Briain ocus Connacht for Mael Sechlainn Mór tre mebail*). The inclusion of the words 'through treachery' denote the fact that *impúd* is quite clearly being used to relate actions that the annalist deem to be 'wrong' in some way. This is hardly surprising; after all Bóruma was upsetting the established hegemony of the Uí Néill which had existed for some centuries past. Again, it may be significant that Brian and Mael Sechlainn had previously reached an accord of some description; they 'divided Ireland between them into two' (*coro rannsat Herind ettarru i ndó*) and Mael Sechlainn handed over the hostages of the Dubliners and the Laigin to Brian (*geill Laigen ocus Gall ro batar oc Mael Sechnaill co tarta do Brian*).⁷²⁸ Brian, by his actions in the year 1000, was breaching that agreement.

Elsewhere, though, it is more difficult to discern a rationale for the use, or omission, of *impúd*. It must also be said that it is something approaching an impossibility to try and 'get inside the mind' of an annalist and to state with any confidence why or why not he chose to use a certain word at a certain time. The possibility also exists that we are simply seeing vocabularic variation for stylistic purposes on the part of our annalists. It is suggested that a similar development in French vernacular sources might serve as a type of persuasive authority.

2(j.)(i.) The act of 'turning' in French sources

It is not only in Irish vernacular sources that we see revolts described as an act of 'turning'; this is also done in French vernacular sources. Stephen D. White has pointed to the differences in the coverage of the war between Henry II and Henry 'the Young King', his son. The language of

⁷²⁸ AI 997.2.

‘war’ in the Anglo-French texts differs from that in the Latin texts. Whereas the latter use terms like *sedition*, *rebellare* and so on we see the French texts represent traitors as ‘people who turned’ (*torner*, *tourner*, *turner*).⁷²⁹ Contemporary writers were troubled by the conflict, seeing it as unnatural – for Gerald of Wales it was ‘worse than civil war’ (*bella plus quam civilia*). The rebellion of a son against his father was, according to Peter of Blois, contrary to the Gospels, the law of Moses and natural law itself.⁷³⁰

This concept of ‘turning’ arises again in the *History of William Marshal*, composed about 1230. Very often, noted White, instead of labelling men ‘traitors’, the *History* ‘characterizes them in ways that are best explained by situating them, for purposes of analysis, on an imaginary continuum on which one can make subtler distinctions about how loyal or disloyal a man was.’⁷³¹ White continued:

‘One may think of the continuum as extending all the way from that paragon of loyalty and honor, William Marshal, to men who “turned” from kings without necessarily betraying them, to men who truly committed treason against kings, and, finally, to the worst traitors of all, who were those who committed treason, not against any king, but against William Marshal himself. . . [H]ow the text evaluates these men is not always a function of their conduct alone. It also depends, in certain cases, on how much responsibility and what kind of responsibility the author assigns to the royal lord whom they abandoned and to the king with whom they became affiliated. Whether the evaluation of the men on the continuum should be considered legal or moral, it was certainly normative and

⁷²⁹ Stephen D. White, ‘European civil war I’, (unpublished lecture) International Medieval Congress Leeds, Monday 4 July, 2016.

⁷³⁰ Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King, 1155-1183* (London, 2016), pp 178-79.

⁷³¹ Stephen D. White, ‘Alternative constructions of treason in the Angevin political world: *traison* in the *History of William Marshal*’, e-Spania 4 December 2007

could have practical consequences for how others treated them.⁷³²

There were, it seems ‘good’ turns and ‘bad’ turns, and some men may even have gained honour by turning from one king to another where they had good reason to do so. The *History* shows that warring against the king was not intrinsically wrong, and, therefore, it did not invariably follow that to do battle with the king meant one was a traitor, guilty of treason.⁷³³ There was, of course, a category of the ‘bad’ turned – ‘the turned’ (*li torné*) as the *History* puts it. They were condemned for changing sides, and were, elsewhere, sometimes compared to rotting fruit.⁷³⁴

There is nothing to suggest that the use of ‘turning’ in relation to revolt in both an Irish and an Anglo-French context is anything other than sheer coincidence. Both *torner* and *impúd* carry implications of inversion, of something being ‘turned on its head’, or ‘turned upside-down: the *History* speaks of men being ‘all turned upside down. Turned upside down, yes, that’s right’ (*Li torné, / Qui tuit estoient bestorné./ Bestorné! Veire, j’ai dit bien*), while *impúd*, it will be recalled, was used to describe Tara after an earthquake. Yet there is no evidence to suggest that the two terms, although conveying similar ideas, are in any way related.

The idea that the use of terms like *torner* and *li torné* can communicate something about the nature of the act itself is an attractive one for our purposes, though we are dealing with two different beasts, to a point. There most definitely existed, in the Anglo-Norman world, a law of ‘treason’ in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Both John Gillingham and Matthew Strickland argue strongly against the suggestion that there was a recognised right to wage war against a king who denied justice to his men.⁷³⁵ ‘Contemporaries’, noted Strickland, ‘repeatedly stress that

⁷³² *Ibid.*

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*; White, International Medieval Congress.

⁷³⁵ John Gillingham, ‘1066 and the introduction of chivalry into England’, in George Garrett and John Hudson (eds), *Law and government in medieval England and Normandy: essays in honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge, 1994), pp 32, 44; Matthew

rebellion was a violation of sworn fealty and homage...The *Leges Henrici* consistently link together “*proditio et infidelitas*”.⁷³⁶ There is, in other words, a ‘law of treason’ in these lands. What is significant though, argued White, was that treason ‘long remained such a vague, politicized, and malleable concept that legitimate grounds could be found for resisting the application of broad interpretations of it, including the totalizing principle that any man of the king’s who makes war on him was necessarily a traitor’.⁷³⁷ The vernacular literature of the period – the *chansons de geste*, the *romans d’antiquité*, the verse and prose romances – suggest that there was firm resistance to broad interpretations of treason in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. These works rejected a broad interpretation of treason in favour of a narrow one, which was, in itself, an example of resistance to a broad interpretation of royal power.⁷³⁸ As we have just seen, the *History of William Marshal* sets out a ‘continuum’ of betrayal, no doubt again in an attempt to interpret ‘treason’ in as narrow a way as possible. Indeed, such is the level of vagueness in relation to treason that W. G. van Emden argues, contrary to Strickland and Gillingham, that the French ‘epics of revolt’ of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries betray the ‘apparent authorial view...that, in contradistinction to the ethos of the Guillaume Cycle and most other epics, there *are* circumstances in which a vassal may legitimately revolt against the king his lord.’⁷³⁹

There is nothing in the Irish legal texts to suggest that there existed in Ireland anything like a ‘law of treason’ in the sense that there was in northern France or post-conquest England. Nor is there much

Strickland, *War and chivalry: the conduct and perception of war in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 230-57.

⁷³⁶ Strickland, *War and chivalry*, p. 232.

⁷³⁷ Stephen D. White, ‘The ambiguity of treason in Anglo-Norman-French law, c. 1150 – c. 1250’, in Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye, and E. Ann Matter (eds), *Law and the illicit in medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), p. 92.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid*, pp.89-102. See also Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye and E. Ann Matter, ‘Preface’ in *Ibid*, p. xv.

⁷³⁹ W.G. van Emden, ‘Kingship in the old French epic of revolt’, in Anne J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and kingship in medieval Europe* (London, 1993), p. 309.

evidence in them for an Irish equivalent of Alfred the Great's *hlafordsearu* or 'lord-treachery', which stated that 'for all ranks, both commoner and noble (*ce ceorle ge eorle*): he who plots against his lord's life is in return to be liable for his life and all that he possesses'; one of the only prescribed death sentences in Alfred's law.⁷⁴⁰

Then there is the issue of timing. It will be recalled that, overwhelmingly, use of the term *impúd* occurs in the Munster annals, be it the *Annals of Inisfallen* or *Mac Carthaig's Book* (though the preponderance are to be found in the former). Where *impúd* is used in a non-Munster chronicle – the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of the Four Masters*, or the *Annals of Loch Cé* – it is, in most cases, used to relate to the same event in a Munster chronicle (with two exceptions – AT 1000 and AU 1165.4 / AFM 1165.4). It will also be recalled that the use of *impúd* can be said to begin in the 1090s, with one exception – AT 1000. More specifically, *impúd* is used from 1093 onwards. It is also worth noting the history of the composition of the *Annals of Inisfallen* at this juncture. It has been hypothesised that one process of compilation can be said to end around the year 1092.⁷⁴¹ According to Seán Mac Airt, 'some peculiarities in style, e.g. subject preceding predicate at 1093 § 3, would seem to indicate that the process of transcribing the earlier exemplar had ceased at any rate by 1093 § 2.'⁷⁴² The first use of *impúd* is to be found in 1093.7. For the most part, entries in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, at least up to the year 1174, were probably set down 'over the years' to borrow Mac Airt's phraseology. More recent work, done by Nicholas Evans, draws similar conclusions. The *Annals of Inisfallen*, he said, 'was a contemporary chronicle from 1092 onwards...the section from 1092 onwards as it survives was written very close to the events described.'⁷⁴³ In other words, the use of *impúd* to

⁷⁴⁰ David Pratt, *The political thought of King Alfred the Great* (Cambridge, 2007), pp 98, 232-4.

⁷⁴¹ Katharine Simms, *Medieval Gaelic sources* (Dublin, 2009), pp 28-9.

⁷⁴² Seán Mac Airt, *The annals of Inisfallen* (Dublin, 1944), p. xxxii.

⁷⁴³ Nicholas Evans, *The present and the past in medieval Irish chronicles* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 98.

describe certain revolts is an actual innovation of the very late eleventh and twelfth century. The frequent use of *impúd* in *Mac Carthaig's Book* can probably be explained by virtue of the fact that it draws heavily on the *Annals of Inisfallen* and perhaps another, lost, Munster annal, though it often contains more detail than AI.⁷⁴⁴ The use of *impúd* is a Munster phenomenon and it is a twelfth-century phenomenon.

2(j.)(ii.) More 'new' terminology in the annals

We might also look at sources closer to home in seeking to determine the significance of the appearance of *impúd* in the late eleventh century. In fact, *impúd* is not the only 'new' phrase that appears in the annals in this period of time. Marie Therese Flanagan has drawn attention to two other terms that first appear in the annals in the mid-to-late eleventh century entries. The first such phrase is 'A entered the house of B' (*do dul co tech / do dul i ttech / do dul a teach*). The first recorded entry by one king into the house of another in this fashion is to be found in 1059 in the *Annals of Inisfallen*, where it is said that Brian Bóruma's son, Donnchad, went into the house of the Connacht king Áed Ua Conchobair. Up until this point, Flanagan noted, the annalists would typically state that one king took the hostages of another, as a means of recording submission. From 1059 onwards, after that first reference to Donnchad mac Briain and Áed Ua Conchobair, 'this phrase was used in preference to accounts to the taking of hostages in the *Annals of Inisfallen*; and it also began to be used in other sets of annals to indicate submission, sometimes in conjunction with a record of the exaction of hostages.'⁷⁴⁵

Flanagan suggested that this change in terminology is indicative of a new ceremony of submission, developed by Brian Bóruma, 'specifically designed to indicate submission to the claimant to the high-kingship of Ireland', and that he may have looked to contemporaries in Europe for inspiration, most likely the Anglo-Saxon kings of Britain.

⁷⁴⁴ Simms, *Gaelic sources*, p. 30.

⁷⁴⁵ Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish society, Anglo-Norman settlers, Angevin kingship. Interactions in Ireland in the late twelfth century* (Oxford, 1989), pp 174-5.

Alternatively, it may simply convey a ‘general intensification of overlordship’ from the middle of the eleventh century.⁷⁴⁶

It should be noted that this 1059 date expounded by Flanagan has since been challenged. Kevin Murray has drawn attention to a sixteenth-century manuscript, Dublin TCD 1337 (H.3.18) which he argues draws on Old Irish sources. That tract contains the following passage:

‘A division from the bottom first, i.e. the king of the province of the major *túath* goes into the house of the king of Ireland (*tét rí(g) in c[h]óicidh nó móthúaithe i tech rí[g] Érenn*).

Whether provincial king or king of a major *túath* he goes into the house of the king of the province or the high-king (*tét i tech right in chóicid nó ind ardrigh*)...’⁷⁴⁷

Murray concedes that is difficult to ascertain exactly which parts of this composite text date from what century, however he concludes that it is ‘likely’ that the references to ‘entering into the house of’ can be dated to the tenth century. Murray accepts that there are some differences between the process described in his sixteenth-century manuscript and the process discussed in the annals, but his aim is to draw attention to the first attested use of the phrase *do dul i tech*, which is possibly a century before Flanagan’s 1059 date. Even so, it is perhaps significant that, as he noted, there are certain divergences in practice in ‘entering into the house of’ in the tenth and eleventh century. It is suggested too that sudden use of the term in the annals from 1059 onwards indicates that there is some novel practice that the annalist is attempting to relate, or an old practice has taken on a new meaning, a new importance.

The second ‘new’ term that Flanagan draws attention to is *tuarastal*. Much like *impúd*, the word *itself* is not an innovation, and it is

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp 178-9.

⁷⁴⁷ Kevin Murray, ‘The dating of *Branwen*: the “Irish question” revisited’ in John Carey, Kevin Murray and Cairíona Ó Dochartaigh (eds), *Sacred histories: a festschrift for Máire Herbert* (Dublin, 2015), p. 249.

used in the sense of a stipend in the ninth-century poems of Blathmac.⁷⁴⁸ Rather, it is its use in the annals in relation to submission that is worthy of our attention, its first appearance in this sense coming in 1080, this time in the *Annals of Ulster* rather than *Inisfallen*.⁷⁴⁹ There, it is stated that ‘Donnshléibe Ua hEochada went into Munster with nobles of the Ulstermen in the expectation of a *tuarastal*’ (*Donnsleibhe H. Eochadha do dul isin Mumain co maithib Uladh lais ar cenn tuarastail*). At this point, Flanagan argued, *tuarastal* seems to record in a very literal sense the giving of gifts, but, within a few decades it comes to ‘be used in a technical sense by the annalists’.⁷⁵⁰ What we have then is the coincidence of the adoption of a new formula expressing submission and of the technical term *tuarastal*; as Flanagan writes: ‘[t]he origin of both customs as social institutions may date back to long before the eleventh century. Annalistic usage, however, appears to reflect their increasing significance in the context of political overlordship from the eleventh century onwards.’⁷⁵¹

It is surely significant that we see the uptake of the term *impúd* in the sense of ‘revolt’ in the annals at roughly the same time as we see the use of other ‘new’ terms and phrases. The other two – ‘entered into the house of’ and *tuarastal* – have been taken to indicate an intensification of overlordship by Flanagan and by Charles-Edwards. Might we also view *impúd* in a similar light? It will be recalled that the development of terms like *torner*, *tourner*, *turner* in the vernacular Anglo-French sources was seen by Stephen White to be a response to increased royal ‘power’; they were representative of a spectrum of betrayal, cultivated to counteract an expansive definition of treason. For van Emden, the ‘epics of revolt’ were

⁷⁴⁸ Flanagan, *Irish society*, p. 180, fn. 39.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.* See also, Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘*Lebor na Cert* and clientship’ in Kevin Murray (ed.), *Lebor na Cert. Reassessments* (Dublin, 2013), pp 25-30. Both Flanagan and Charles-Edwards reach different conclusions, but what is relevant here is simply that we see the emergence of these terms at roughly the same time as the references to *impúd*.

themselves a response to the expanding power of the Capetian kings of France: ‘It is surely significant, for historians as well as specialists in literature, that the poems which show rebellion as legitimate in circumstances of oppression and tyranny date from this reign [that of Philip Augustus] of all reigns.’⁷⁵² Could it be that we are seeing in the annals the cultivation of a more nuanced – perhaps technical – vocabulary of revolt in response to an ‘intensification of lordship’?

3. CAUSATION

We begin with an entry in the *Fragmentary Annals*, about the year 858. This, quite obviously, falls outside the time frame under consideration for the overwhelming majority of this thesis, but it gives us a vivid insight into one of the possible causes of revolt and its inclusion is justified on those grounds. Furthermore, the text itself is most probably an eleventh-century production; Clare Downham has suggested they were composed in the 1030s.⁷⁵³ Mael Sechlainn, in 858, made a hosting into Osraige and Munster, because the men of Munster said they would not give hostages to him, and because of a complaint he allegedly received from the Laigin about Cerball, king of Osraige. Cerball, the annalist tells us, took ‘great annual tributes’ (*císa móra bliadhne*) from the Laigin. As was their job (discussed above, Chapter Two), Cerball’s steward (*máor*) went to collect that tribute (*an chiosa sin*). In doing so, he managed to insult the Laigin and cause great strife. Accordingly, they went and complained to Mael Sechlainn, who in response, slaughtered 20,000(!) Munstermen. Upon hearing this, Cerball decides the game is up and gives hostages and his daughter’s hand in marriage to Mael Sechlainn to stop his territory being ravaged.⁷⁵⁴ It is to the revolt of the Laigin in particular that attention ought to be drawn. It is hardly surprising that the exaction of taxation

⁷⁵² Van Emden, ‘French epic of revolt’, p. 350.

⁷⁵³ Clare Downham, ‘The good, the bad, and the ugly: portrayals of Vikings in “The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland”’, in Erik Kooper (ed.), *The medieval chronicle III* (Amsterdam, 2004), p. 28.

⁷⁵⁴ FA 260, a. 858.

could be a source of conflict. We see an example of this also in the *Life* of Ciarán of Saighir. When three stewards of ‘the king of Erin’ set off ‘collecting his dues in every place’, they killed a friend of the Saint, as discussed above. We must not read too much into this tale, but it does highlight some of the antagonisms surrounding tax-collection and the payment of dues. The ‘British’, for example, rose up against the Romans on account of excessive taxation according to the *Lebor Breatnach*.⁷⁵⁵ To contemporary writers, tribute-collecting appeared as an enduring issue of contention, even at the level of the individual. The ‘Life’ of Maedóc of Ferns tells the tale of a poor man (*duine daidbhir*) who came to the saint, looking for assistance. The poor man’s lord (*a thiccerna*) was claiming rent and heavy arrears from the man, about which he could do nothing (*cíos [ocus] fiacha mora [ocus] gan maithemhnus aicce da fagháil ionnta*).⁷⁵⁶ Taxation, and the payment thereof, it seems, was a source of constant anxiety in medieval Ireland and anxiety could, on occasion, spill over into conflict.

It might also be significant that heavy frost and snow was a feature of the winter of 1092-3, that is, at the time of the Síol Muireadaig revolt, discussed in detail above.⁷⁵⁷ This frost and snow led to a ‘great pestilence...which caused death to a large number of people’ that same year.⁷⁵⁸ A ‘great wind’ which damaged crops and trees hardly helped matters either.⁷⁵⁹ The *Annals of Ulster* record hunger and want for the following year, brought on by bad weather.⁷⁶⁰ Indeed the 1090s appear to be a period of unrelenting hardship. Wintery conditions led to the freezing over of lakes and rivers, and to the destruction of cattle.⁷⁶¹ Disease stalked

⁷⁵⁵ James Henthorn Todd (ed.), *The Irish version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius* (Dublin, 1848), pp 71-5.

⁷⁵⁶ ‘The Life of Maedóc of Ferns, II’, in Charles Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉirenn* (Oxford, 1910; latest edn., 1997), s. 146, p. 232.

⁷⁵⁷ AI 1092.11.

⁷⁵⁸ AI 1093.10.

⁷⁵⁹ AI 1093.9.

⁷⁶⁰ AU 1094.8.

⁷⁶¹ AU 1095.2

the land, killing so many that it was ‘impossible to enumerate all the people that died.’⁷⁶²

How should the Síl Muiredaig revolt of 1093 be viewed? Was it solely the expulsion of the Síl Muiredaig and the execution of their deposed king that caused them to rebel (which seems natural enough), or did climatic factors have a role to play? Again, the two need not be mutually exclusive. It might well have been the case that low crop yields and pestilence made any tribute that Uí Briain overlordship entailed utterly intolerable. We might also see the Síl Muiredaig revolt as a continuation of the almost tit-for-tat raiding that went on across the Thomond/Connacht border as the Uí Briain and Uí Briúin vied for hegemony.

To linger on the issue of climate just a moment longer; it might also have had a role to play in the revolt of the Laigin against Muirchertach ua Briain’s overlordship in 1115.⁷⁶³ Again, the years 1115 and 1116 were years of considerable dearth and disaster. The *Annals of Ulster* records ‘extremely bad weather in the form of frost and snow...and it inflicted slaughter on birds and beasts and men, and from this great want arose throughout all Ireland, and particularly in Laigin.’⁷⁶⁴ The same set of annals recorded similar dearth and famine in the following year: ‘There was a great pestilence; hunger was so widespread in Leth Moga, both among Laigin and Munstermen, that it emptied churches and forts and states, and spread throughout Ireland and over sea, and inflicted destruction of staggering extent.’⁷⁶⁵ It might be noted that Leinster and Munster were the areas allegedly worst affected and that

⁷⁶² AU 1095.13.

⁷⁶³ MCB 1115.2.

⁷⁶⁴ AU 1115.1. See also AFM 1115.10: ‘Boisterous weather, frost, and snow, from the fifteenth of the Calends of January to the fifteenth of the Calends of March, or longer, which caused great destruction of cattle, birds, and men; whence grew a great dearth throughout all Ireland, and in Leinster particularly.’

⁷⁶⁵ AU 1116.5. Also, AI 1116.2: ‘Muirchertach Ua Briain invaded Laigin. Countless injuries were committed on that expedition: raids and conflicts, war and famine during that time.’ Also, AFM 1116.5: ‘A great plague and famine this year in Munster and Leinster, so that churches and fortresses, territories and tribes, were desolated; and they also spread throughout Ireland and beyond seas afterwards.’

they were the theatres of revolt in 1115 and 1116. Again, famine and disease might have made Uí Briain taxation, hitherto tolerable, more onerous than it had previously been. Yet, surely just as significant a factor is Muirchertach ua Briain's illness from 1114 which destabilised his rule and emboldened Diarmait, Muirchertach's brother, to indulge his own ambitions. Indeed, Diarmait himself revolted against Muirchertach in 1116.⁷⁶⁶ Although Muirchertach imprisoned Diarmait in 1115, he never truly recovered from his debilitating illness of 1114.⁷⁶⁷ Thus the revolts of 1115 and 1116 can be seen as a consequence of either climatic or natural catastrophe, *or* political opportunism. Perhaps this is too stark a dichotomy, and by no means are the two mutually exclusive.

Climate is mentioned as a causal factor because, increasingly, historians and scientists are suggesting that a correlation might be drawn between upsurges in violence and climatic factors. Frank Ludlow, while dismissing what he terms 'environmental determinism', has noted such a connection and in an examination of fifty instances of drought recorded in the *Annals of Ulster* he observed a spike in violence in the same or the following year. Accepting that societies are not 'passive victims' and adopt coping mechanisms, he suggested that it was political instability after the reign of Brian Bóruma that made Irish society more vulnerable to changes in the environment.⁷⁶⁸ In a similar vein, some have come to argue that the climate played a not-insignificant role in the outbreak of violence in Syria in 2011. Drought, it was argued, 'had a catalytic effect, contributing to political unrest'.⁷⁶⁹ Syria, of course, was vulnerable anyway, and it was not climate change alone but drought 'coupled with pre-existing acute vulnerability, caused by poor policies and

⁷⁶⁶ AI 1116.3, MCB 1116.1.

⁷⁶⁷ AI 1115.2.

⁷⁶⁸ Frank Ludlow, 'Climactic contributions to violence and conflict in tenth- and eleventh-century Ireland.' Unpublished lecture given at the O'Brien Summer School, Killaloe, Saturday 2 July 2016.

⁷⁶⁹ Colin P. Kelley, Shahrzad Mohtadi, Mark A. Cane, Richard Seager and Yochanan Kushnir, 'Climate change in the Fertile Crescent and implications of the recent Syrian drought', *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Science* 112(11) (2015), p. 3241.

unsustainable land use practices in Syria's case and perpetuated by the slow and ineffective response of the [Bashar al-]Assad regime'.⁷⁷⁰ Thus, in a similar way, we might view the climatically-induced hardship of 1092-93 and 1115-16 as having a 'catalytic effect'.

Other occasional insights into the causes of revolt appear in the annalistic material. The *Annals of the Four Masters* records that, in 1168, 'Diarmaid Ua Máel Sechlainn was deposed by the people of east Mide, in revenge of the payment of the aforesaid cows.' Murchad Ua Finnalláin, lord of Delbna Mór in the modern county of Westmeath, had been killed by Diarmait Ua Máel Sechlainn earlier that year in revenge for the death of his father, Donnchad. Donnchad Ua Máel Sechlainn had been slain eight years previously by the Uí Finnalláin. However, the murder of Murchad was perpetrated 'in violation of the protection of the people of the province of Connacht, and the Airghialla' and, as such,

'A meeting was convened by Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, King of Ireland, with all the people of Connacht; Tighernan Ua Ruairc, lord of Breifne; and Donnchadh Ua Cerbhaill, with the Airghialla, at Ochainn, to demand their *éric* from Diarmaid Ua Maelseachlainn and the men of Mide.'

Ua Conchobair had, in 1166, entered Mide, receiving pledges therefrom. Indeed, he involved himself in the affairs of Mide before, in 1162, when he received a sum of gold from Diarmait Ua Máel Sechlainn for west Mide. Accordingly, Ua Conchobar, by now the most powerful king in Ireland anyway, was in a position to make the demand for payment. Eight hundred cows were given to Ua Conchobair, Ua Ruairc and Ua Cerbaill by the men of Mide and their king, and a further *éric* was awarded to the Delbna Mór. As noted, the *Annals of the Four Masters* attributes Ua Máel Sechlainn's deposition to the payment of these fines. Another interesting

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 3242.

snippet is to be found in the *Fragmentary Annals* also. It alleges that in the year 869

‘the Laigin drove away one of their chieftains, because they hated him – that is, they were jealous of him on account of the victories he had won over the Norwegians – or because they regarded him as an interloper, for he was of the stock of the Ciarraige Luachra; or else they hated him because of his arrogance.’⁷⁷¹

It seems *a propos* to mention the turning of the Cenél Eogain against Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn here also. It will be recalled that Muirchertach’s own men abandoned him, and he was killed, after he had broken an oath sworn in the presence of relics to leave Eochaid Mac Duinnsleibe in the kingship of Ulaid.

These three revolts have been coupled together – that of the Mide, the Laigin, and the Ulaid – because, it might be argued, the common theme running through all three is the betrayal of some norm of behaviour expected from a ruler which led, ultimately, to their own people turning against them. Again, though, we should not portray these revolts in an overly-simplistic fashion and, as ever, there seem to be several issues at play. Take the revolt of the Cenél Eogain in 1166. As the annalist states, Muirchertach ‘was killed and his head cut off for the honour of Jesus, Patrick and Ua Cearbhaill’.⁷⁷² Kings, though, seem to have transgressed other such norms of behaviour without consequence. It is surely just as significant, therefore, that the revolt of the Cenél Conaill came after Mac Lochlainn’s long-standing supporter Donnchad Ua Cerbaill had turned on him, and a new power, Ua Conchobair, was rising in the west. Upset though the Cenél Conaill may well have been at Ua Lochlainn’s violating the peace brokered by the coarb of Patrick, one

⁷⁷¹ FA 377, a. 869.

⁷⁷² MCB 1165.2; AT 1166.3.

wonders what action they might have taken had the winds of political change not been blowing so strongly against ua Lochlainn.

A somewhat similar argument might be advanced as regards the revolt of the Mide against Diarmait Ua Máel Sechlainn. He had Murchad ua Finnalláin murdered largely, and perhaps somewhat understandably from a purely personal perspective, in revenge for the killing of Diarmait's father a few years previously. Such a move could hardly be called politically astute, however, and Diarmait was deposed by the people of East Mide, 'in revenge of the payment of the aforesaid cows.' There is always some danger in relying solely on the *Annals of the Four Masters*, of course, but here, the inference drawn by the annalist seems to be a fair one. The following year, in 1169, Diarmait was killed by his brother's son, Domnall Bregach (of Brega), and also (according to the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of the Four Masters*, but not the *Annals of Inisfallen* or the *Annals of Tigernach*) by Donnchad Ceinnselach Ua Ceallaig. Diarmait Ua Máel Sechlainn was variously termed 'King of Meath and the makings of a king of Ireland', 'king of Meath and most of Leinster', and 'King of Meath, of the foreigners of Ath-clíath, of Ui-Failghe, and Ui-Faelain, head of the prosperity and affluence of his tribe.' His slayer and nephew, Domnall, died in 1173 as king of Mide. It is rarely wise for a ruler to incur the wrath of those upon whom his rule depends – the nobility. This Diarmait most certainly did, for it was they who had to pay the cost of Ua Mael Sechlainn's indulgence. Again though, we may wonder what other factors were at play here. Diarmait's slayer and nephew, Domnall, acceded to the kingship of Mide thereafter. We might indulge in a little conjecture here: Domnall, long salivating over the prospect of the kingship for himself saw, just like the Cenél Conaill, that the political winds were changing. Understanding that his uncle had invoked the ire of his nobility, Domnall might well have viewed this as the opportune moment at which to pounce, using their dissatisfaction to curry support.

Finally, the reference to 'arrogance' in the entry relating to the Laigin revolt of 869 suggests that the ruler in this case also failed to

behave in a manner his subjects felt becoming of a king. Though it is difficult to draw too many inferences from this entry, the number of motives mooted by the annalist (arrogance, they regarded him as an interloper, they were jealous of his many victories) suggests that, as with the other examples of revolt discussed above, the flow of resistance was the product of many currents, not just one.

Axiomatically, revolts, and literature concerning the subject of revolt, was not exclusively Irish. One might well draw parallels between Irish history and literature and Welsh history and literature, for example, and the latter might give us some further insight into the causes of revolt in Irish society. In *Branwen*, the Irish king, Matholwch, recounts a tale to the Welsh king, Bendigeidfran. Matholwch tells how he gave succour to a monstrous, red-headed man and a woman for a year, but in that year the man and woman committed several outrages. Matholwch explains that ‘my people rose against me to bid me part with them, and they gave me my choice, my dominions or them.’ Matholwch further explains that, in consequence of this, he ‘referred to the council of [his] country’ for advice.⁷⁷³ Wendy Davies has drawn attention to this and other, similar tales, and suggested that while ‘[t]he information is slight’, a number of different writers envisaged the possibility that representatives of the community might attempt, sometimes even successfully, to have a restraining effect upon the actions of kings.⁷⁷⁴ She pointed in particular to the slaying of Ithel, king of Gwent, by the ‘men of Brycheiniog’ in 848 and the ‘treachery’ of the men of Ystrud Tywi, and argued that there must have existed some sense of community and that, on occasion, ‘sections of the community had the political capacity not merely to comment but to act’.⁷⁷⁵ Many historical revolts, recorded in Welsh sources, also bear similarity to Irish revolts and regicides. We see used the familiar formula

⁷⁷³ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (eds & trans.), *The Mabinogion* (London, 1949; latest edn., 1974), p. 30.

⁷⁷⁴ Wendy Davies, *Wales in the early middle ages* (Leicester, 1982), p. 126.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 82; Rev. John Williams (ed.), *Annales Cambriae* (London, 1860), 848; eadem *Brut y Tywysogion* (London, 1860), 1045.

a suis occisus est (discussed in Chapter Three, above), or some form thereof, although it does not occur with the same frequency as in the Irish sources (partly no doubt because there were less kings in Wales than in Ireland). Thus in 1063, we are told, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, in effect king of all Wales, was killed by his own men (*Grifinus filius Lewelini rex Britonum nobilissimus, dolo suorum occisus est*).⁷⁷⁶ A decade or so later, Rhydderch ap Caradog was killed by his cousin, Meirchion.⁷⁷⁷ Medieval Welsh kings were faced with many of the same problems that beset Irish kings; inter- and intra-dynastic conflict were a constant source of anxiety and the losers could expect to face exile, mutilation or death.⁷⁷⁸ Where a king transgressed the wishes or expectations over those whom he ruled, he might anticipate a backlash, as the tale of *Branwen* illustrates. He might be expected to doff to the advice of representatives of his kingdom, too.

Those examples discussed above, it is hoped, highlight the various issues at play in the case of a revolt and have drawn attention not just to the causes of revolt, but also the ways in which opposition manifested itself in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. Very often the historian can point to a specific trigger, and these triggers might be varied: the exaction of taxes, breaching a peace made in the presence of relics, the driving of a people from their territory and the slaying of their king, a king's purported 'arrogance' or his causing economic hardship for his people, or sheer political opportunism. These triggers, though, are in many cases the proverbial 'straw that broke the camel's back', and it has been shown how what one might term 'structural weaknesses' very often made these polities susceptible to revolt in any case (the illness of a Muirchertach Ua Briain; the abandonment of an ally, as with Ua Cerbaill) and how there were often several factors at play (for example, the hardship wrought by climatic disaster in 1092-93).

⁷⁷⁶ *An. Camb.* 1063; *Brut y Tywysogion*, 1061; R.R. Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford, 1987), pp 24-7.

⁷⁷⁷ *An. Camb.* 1074, R.R. Davies, *Conquest, coexistence, and change*, p. 73.

⁷⁷⁸ R.R. Davies, p. 73.

3(a.) Popular revolt in medieval Ireland?

Perhaps the most intriguing instance of revolt recorded in the annals falls not in the period under investigation here, but in the tenth century. There is a most tantalising entry for the year 910 in the *Fragmentary Annals*. It runs as follows:

‘In this year a great force from Bréifne came raiding. Thus was told to the king of Ireland and to his sons. Then the King of Ireland said, “It is the end of time,” said he, “when peasants like these dare to rise against freemen.” The King of Ireland and his sons immediately gathered an irresistible force, and they proceeded to Druim Criaich, and they were looking at the troops of the Bréifne men there. An army of peasants had never before been seen. They fought together after that, and although there was no king leading them, they fought firmly against the King of Ireland. The sons of the King of Ireland saw a company some ways out from the rest; they approached and fought against it. The sons of the King defeated that troop, and the other troops were immediately defeated and slaughtered, and many of them were taken prisoner, and they were ransomed in return for treasures. The King returned with glory and spoils from the peasants, after killing the king of Bréifne, Flann son of Tigernán.’

‘Isin bliadhain si tainig tionol mór Brefne ar creachaibh. Ra h-innisdh sin do Righ Eireann ocus da mhaccaibh. As ann sin ro raidh Rí Eireann, “As deireadh n-aimsire ann,” ar sé, “an tan lamhuid comhaithigh mur so eirge a n-aighidh sáorchlann.” Do rónadh tionól difreaga fo céadóir la Rí[gh] nEireann ocus la mhacoibh, ocus tangattar reampa go Druim Chriaich, ocus rob attar og féccadh thionol na mBrefneach ann sin. Ní facus remhe sin tionól do aitheachuibh. Do

*chuirsiod ceann I gceann iar ttain, agus gen go rabha rí
reampu do fuabradar go cruaidh Rígh nEireann, Ro
chonncattar meic Rí[gh] Eireann cath sealad o chách amach;
tangattar da ionsoighid-ssidhe, agus ro chuirsiod fríu. Ro
mhaidh re macaibh an Rí[gh] ar an chath sin, agus ro maidh
ar na cathaibh oile fo céadóir, ro cuireadh a ndeargár, agus ro
gabhadh sochaide diobh, gur ceannaigít íad do chionn
ionnmhais. Tainig an Rí go mbuaidh agus cosgar do bhreith
óna a[i]theca[h]dhathuibh ar marbhadh rí[gh] na
mBreifneach, .i. Flann mc. Tigearnain.’⁷⁷⁹*

While reference is made to war between Flann Sinna and the men of Bréifne in a number of annalistic sources, and indeed to the killing of Flann son of Tigernán, there is nothing to suggest a ‘peasant’ revolt of any description took place. In fact, the *Annals of the Four Masters*, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, and the *Annals of Ulster* all explicitly mention the slaughter of many nobles.⁷⁸⁰ The *Chronicon Scotorum* speaks only of ‘the men of Bréifne’ (*fira Breifne*) and three thousand others that were slain (*tria millia hominum*).⁷⁸¹ There is nothing at all to suggest that the ‘men of Bréifne’ or the *tria millia hominum* refers to an army of peasantry. The battle that took place in 910 between Flann and Breifne, as represented in most annalistic sources, appears to be little more than a standard inter-territorial skirmish, the likes of which is to be found anywhere in the Irish annals. Yet the entry in the *Fragmentary Annals* is unambiguous: this was an army of peasants. Whether one wants to quibble about the exact translation or use of *comhaithigh* (perhaps something like ‘commoner’ is more apt), or point to the fact that a king – Flann son of Tigernán – was mentioned, phrases like ‘*As deireadh n-aimsire ann*’ and ‘*Ní facus remhe sin tionól do aitheachuibh*’ make it

⁷⁷⁹ FA 430, a. 910.

⁷⁸⁰ AU 910.1: ‘*ocus alii nobiles multi interfecti*’; ACLon.: ‘with many other noblemen of his side’; AFM 905.4: ‘*ocus sochaide do saorclannaib oile*’.

⁷⁸¹ CS 909.

clear that the annalist is trying to convey to the reader the extraordinary nature of this event. The problem is the level of trust we are to place in the *Fragmentary Annals* and the fact that none of the other annalistic sources draw attention to the peculiarity of this battle.

The *Fragmentary Annals* themselves appear to be a product of the early eleventh century, being completed, perhaps, by the 1030s. They may well draw on earlier materials for information, but they are also composed of longer, pseudo-historical entries, that are most certainly a product of the eleventh century and reflect eleventh century concerns. Based on current scholarship, it seems most likely that this extraordinary reference to a revolt of the *comhaithigh* is the product of an eleventh century imagination, and, therefore, in the words of Clare Downham, reflects eleventh-century political aims and literary tastes.⁷⁸²

What then is to be made of this reference to an army of peasants rising up against the most powerful king in Ireland at this point? It seems to sit uneasily with some of the pictures of pre-invasion Irish society that have been painted by modern historians. For Dáibhí Ó Cróinín ‘harmony – not disharmony – is the striking trait that emerges from the later historical sources.’⁷⁸³ High productivity and a low population meant that ‘for most members of society the level of comfort was probably considerable’ and while lords could expect a greater share of agricultural produce than their clients could, ‘the sources give no reason to believe that there was any widespread or chronic poverty’.⁷⁸⁴

This might be so, but some of our sources do suggest an underlying social tension. Take the eleventh-century *Life* of Gerald of Mayo. Ó Cróinín has argued that the *vita* preserves the memory of the sixth-century plagues that devastated the population of the island.⁷⁸⁵ It is a possibility certainly, but it is suggested that, when taken with other eleventh- and twelfth-century sources like the *Fragmentary Annals*, the

⁷⁸² Downham, ‘The good, the bad, and the ugly’, pp 28, 34.

⁷⁸³ Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (Harlow, 1995), p. 109.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 108.

⁷⁸⁵ Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 108.

Life of Gerald suggests that the references to social tension within the narrative are as much a result of eleventh-century concerns as they are the fossilised collective memory of a centuries-old plague. The text mentions that there was a large population, so great that the land could not support them all (*Tanta enim tunc erat multitudo hominum, ut non sufficeret eis tota terra ad agriculturam*).⁷⁸⁶ The great men of the land come together at a council (*consilium*) to decide what is to be done, both laity and clerics. They pray to God that the irksome hordes of peasantry be killed by a plague, and that through this, they be spared (*multitudine onerosa populi inferioris, [ut] dignaretur per aliquam pestilentiam partem tollere, ut per hoc ceteri comodius possint uiuere*).⁷⁸⁷

Furthermore, Ó Cróinín's assessment of pre-invasion Irish society might in theory be broadly applicable to the eight centuries or so under review in his book, but there were certainly exceptional times when plenty and harmony were not typical. One such period that immediately springs to mind is the 1090s, a decade described at some length above. The 1090s saw wave after wave of natural catastrophe wash over the Irish, 'so that it is impossible to enumerate all the people that died'.⁷⁸⁸ Successive diseases and famines worked together to create something like the perfect storm. Ireland was not alone in enduring such hardship in these years, though. Scarcity was a feature of European society generally in the final decade of the eleventh century. Social unrest as a driving force behind the more millenarian aspects of the First Crusade has been discussed elsewhere.⁷⁸⁹ Ireland itself was not without its own millenarian

⁷⁸⁶ *Vita sancti Geraldii abbatis de Magh Eo* in Charles Plummer (ed.), *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae, part II* (Dublin, 1997; latest edn.), p. 113.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁸ AI 1095.13. The phrase actually refers quite specifically to a *mortlaith mór* of 1095, but the phrase applies quite nicely to the decade as a whole.

⁷⁸⁹ Steven Runciman, *A history of the Crusades, volume I: the First Crusade and the foundation of the kingdom of Jerusalem* (London, 1951, 1991), pp 113-15; Norman Cohn, *The pursuit of the millennium. Revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the middle ages* (London, 1970), pp 62-3. There is some (highly questionable) evidence that Urban II's sermon emphasised apocalyptic themes. While Bernard McGinn rejects the thesis that the crusades were the result of apocalypticism, he does accept that they may have stimulated a revival of apocalyptic signs. See Bernard

unrest either, it seems. The *Annals of Ulster* record, in typically laconic fashion, an unusual occurrence in the year 1096: ‘Great fear seized the men of Ireland before the feast of John in this year, and God protected them through the fasts of the successor of Patrick and other clerics of Ireland’.⁷⁹⁰ The *Annals of the Four Masters* elaborated:

‘The festival of John fell on Friday this year; the men of Ireland were seized with great fear in consequence, and the resolution adopted by the clergy of Ireland, with the successor of Patrick *at their head*, to protect them against the pestilence which had been predicted to them at a remote period, was, to command all in general to observe abstinence, from Wednesday till Sunday, every month, and to fast *on one meal* every day till the end of the year, except on Sundays, solemnities, and great festivals; and they also made alms and many offerings to God; and many lands were granted to churches and clergymen by kings and chieftains; and the men of Ireland were saved for that time from the fire of vengeance’.⁷⁹¹

The reference to the feast of John the Baptist falling on a Friday has been explained by Benjamin Hudson solely by reference to a native

McGinn, *Visions of the End: apocalyptic traditions in the middle ages* (Surrey, 1979), p. 89. At the very least, we do see Ekkehard of Aura and Guibert of Nogent, writing somewhat later, mention the influence of apocalyptic signs on the First Crusade (see Cohn, pp 61-70; McGinn, p. 89). Whether the Irish fought in the first crusade has been a matter of some debate. Captain Con Costello argued for some limited Irish involvement in his article from 1970, and, more recently, Conor Kostick has argued along similar lines. However, Denis Casey has taken both writers to task and has suggested that it is unlikely that there was any such involvement. See Con Costello, ‘Ireland and the Crusades’, *The Irish Sword* 9 (1970), pp 263-73; Conor Kostick, ‘Ireland and the First Crusade’, *History Ireland* 11(1) (2003), pp 12-13; Denis Casey, ‘Irish involvement in the First and Second Crusades? A reconsideration of the eleventh- and twelfth-century evidence’, *Crusades* 13 (2014), pp 119-42. See also, Flanagan *Transformation of the Irish Church*, p. 228; Kathryn Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades, c. 1000-1300* (Hampshire, 2013).

⁷⁹⁰ AU 1096.3.

⁷⁹¹ AFM 1096.9.

eschatological tradition.⁷⁹² There appears to have been some form of prophecy relating to the feast day of John the Baptist, namely, that the End would come when the saint's day fell on a Friday, in a leap year, at the end of a chronological cycle. Only two of those three conditions were actually fulfilled in 1096, though.⁷⁹³ The cataclysmic conditions of the 1090s probably had something to do with the popular panic. Hudson has noted a upsurge in eschatological works produced from the second half of the tenth century onwards, but points to the panic of 1096 as evidence for an interest in the Apocalypse outside the learned classes. Eschatology was, in fact, most often the concern of the well-educated clerical intelligentsia, it was 'a way in which contemporary political and social events were given religious validation by incorporation into a transcendent scheme of meaning'.⁷⁹⁴ Indeed, beliefs about the End 'were as important for social continuity as they were for social change...they were often designed to maintain the political, social, and economic order as to overthrow it.'⁷⁹⁵

Indeed, one notable feature of the 1096 'panic' is the apparent lack of broader social unrest. Even recorded church burnings are conspicuous by their absence in the annals for 1096. Donnchadh Ó Corráin has noted a corollary between periods of dearth and church burnings.⁷⁹⁶ This is hardly a surprise in many respects for church lands were great food producers and we also have evidence that churches acted as repositories for food.⁷⁹⁷ Raids on churches during a period of famine had the obvious aim of filling empty bellies, then, but there might also

⁷⁹² Benjamin Hudson, 'Time is short: the eschatology of the early Gaelic church', in Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman (eds), *Last things: death and apocalypse in the middle ages* (Philadelphia, PA, 2000), pp 101-23.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

⁷⁹⁴ McGinn, *Visions of the End*, pp 32, 31.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁷⁹⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Ireland c. 800: aspects of society', in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (ed.), *A new history of Ireland volume I: prehistoric and early Ireland* (Oxford, 2005), p. 578.

⁷⁹⁷ The 'Life of Maedóc of Ferns II', in Charles Plummer, *Bethada Náem nÉirenn* (Oxford, 1922, rerinted 1997), s. 92, p. 209; Charles Doherty, 'Some aspects of hagiography as a source for Irish economic history', *Peritia* 1 (1982), p. 302.

have been a ‘political’ dimension to the raids. For one, the churches of a territory often had close familial ties to the ruling line of a kingdom, and might work closely with a king to enhance his glory and reputation. We might also ask why these churches were burned if the aim was simply the retrieval of foodstuffs. We might well expect to see words like ‘ravaged’ (*do milledh*) or ‘raid’ (*crech*) used in the annals, but not necessarily ‘burned’ (*do loscadh*). Indeed, burning the church seems, to the modern reader, unnecessarily destructive, if the sole aim of the expedition was the recovery of food. Of course, it is always possible that the burning of the church might happen incidentally to the raid. Yet ‘burnings’ seem to happen with such frequency that we come to the almost inescapable conclusion that the burning of the church was not merely ancillary to a raid, but was one of the principal goals. Indeed, much of the research that has been done on crowds throughout history (principally by early modernists) seems to point in the same direction: we should view crowd violence ‘not as random and limitless but as aimed at defined targets and selected from a repertory of traditional punishments and forms of destruction’.⁷⁹⁸ Early work done by George Rudé on crowds in France and England between 1730 and 1848 suggested that the ‘pre-industrial crowd...rioted for precise objects and rarely engaged in indiscriminate attacks on either properties or persons’.⁷⁹⁹ Similar work conducted by William Beik on sixteenth-century French crowds led him to conclude that crowds were focused and had purpose; ‘they were not random or uncontrolled’ and there was a logic to the behaviour of crowds.⁸⁰⁰ Nor were such observations made solely about early modern crowds. Mark O’Brien’s study of the 1381 revolt in England strongly suggests that medieval crowds acted in a similar fashion and had precise objectives and

⁷⁹⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and culture in early modern France* (London, 1975), p. 154.

⁷⁹⁹ George Rudé, *The crowd in history. A study of popular disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (London, 1964), p. 254.

⁸⁰⁰ William Beik, ‘Protest and rebellion in seventeenth-century France’, in Michael T. Davis (ed.), *Crowd actions in Britain and France from the Middle Ages to the modern world* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp 44, 45, 47. See also Peter Burke, ‘The Virgin of the Carmine and the revolt of Masaniello’, *Past and Present* 99 (1983), pp 3-21.

did not attack indiscriminately.⁸⁰¹ If it is the case that medieval crowds behaved in much the same way as their early modern successors then it follows that the burning of the church was no mere collateral damage. Targets were focused and the form that violence took was not without its own rationale either. Rudé has pointed to the role memory and tradition came to play in this regard: the burning of farmers' stacks of hay was a 'well-established weapon' in agrarian disputes in England and the women's march to Versailles during the French Revolution was based on precedents set in 1709, 1775 and 1786. In a sense therefore, burning beget burning; this was how crowd anger was 'supposed' to play out. This is not the full story though. Natalie Zemon Davis observed that the atrocities perpetrated during French 'wars of religion' 'can be reduced to a repertory of actions derived from the Bible, from the liturgy, from the action of political authority'.⁸⁰² Beik similarly observed that 'angry crowds adapted behavioural motifs borrowed from rituals of church, royal justice or holding festivities and redefined them for use in rallying support and attacking enemies'.⁸⁰³ Those who burned Irish churches in times of dearth were no doubt aware of the raids done by Irish kings which also often concluded with the burning of a church. Examples of this are abundant; a few examples will suffice here to make the point. In 1013 the 'foreigners' burned Cork; Domnall 'the Stammerer' burned Slane in 1024; Conchobar Ua Maelsechnaill burned Swords in 1031; in 1042 Donnchad mac Briain burned Ferns and in retaliation, Dairmait mac Mael na mBó burned Glenn Uisen that same year.⁸⁰⁴ It is possible that, as with early modern crowds, our medieval Irish arsonists 'borrowed' their motifs from the politically and socially dominant.

⁸⁰¹ Mark O'Brien, 'Heresy, rebellion and utopian courage: the English peasant uprising of 1381', in Michael T. Davis (ed.), *Crowd actions in Britain and France from the Middle Ages to the modern world* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp 17-30, esp. pp 24-6. See also Rodney Hilton, *Bond men made free. Medieval peasant movements and the English rising of 1381* (London, 1973), pp 138-9.

⁸⁰² Davis, *Society and culture*, p. 178.

⁸⁰³ Beik, 'Protest and rebellion', p. 44.

⁸⁰⁴ AI 1013.2; AT 1024.3, 1031.7; AU 1042.1.

What must be acknowledged is that research done on crowds over the last fifty years has shown that crowds rarely act in a wanton fashion; their anger is targeted at specific individuals or institutions. It seems reasonable to conclude that medieval Irish crowds would have acted in a similar fashion. Ó Corráin was right to point to some connection between the burning of churches and periods of dearth. It is of course true that a church might be burned for a number of reasons: ‘the carelessness of a wicked woman’ or lightning could set a church alight just as easily as an angry mob.⁸⁰⁵ That periods of dearth could have a deleterious effect on churches is suggested by the Irish annals though. The *Annals of Ulster* tells us that the churches of Tyrone ‘from the mountain southwards were desolated through war and through dearth in that year.’⁸⁰⁶ The *Annals of Inisfallen* state that, in 1015, many of Munster’s churches were ‘vacated...on account of scarcity and dissension’. It is reasonable to conclude therefore, as did Ó Corráin, that many of the terse references to church burnings refer to actions done by angry crowds in times of famine. The social composition of these crowds is, lamentably, forever unknowable, and we do not possess the same level of knowledge about our eleventh-century Irish arsonists as we do of early modern crowds. What events such as these do show is that people were not powerless and were successful in their attempts to create unrest to give voice to their anger.⁸⁰⁷

Perhaps it is no surprise that in 1095, a year of disease and wintery conditions, we see the burning of Kells, Ardstraw, Durrow, Fore, Clonard and Glendalough.⁸⁰⁸ Conversely, perhaps it *is* something of a surprise to see no mention of church burnings in 1096, the year of the ‘panic’. We must be careful, therefore, not to impute any unsubstantiated

⁸⁰⁵ AU 1031.3, 1019.2, 1111.7; AT 1177.4.

⁸⁰⁶ AU 1179.

⁸⁰⁷ Jack Fruchtman Fr., ‘Introduction. The arc of violence: riots, disturbances of the peace, public protests and crowd actions in history’, in Michael T. Davis (ed.), *Crowd actions in Britain and France from the Middle Ages to the modern world* (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 10; Beik, ‘Protest and rebellion’, p. 56.

⁸⁰⁸ AU 1095.2.; AT 1095.2, AT 1095.8.

revolutionary impetus to the events of 1096. Yet entries like that of the *Fragmentary Annals*, and themes like that found in the *Life* of Gerald of Mayo, do suggest that social tension and social unrest were topics of concern for the literati of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland.

3(a)(i.) Social tensions?

It has been alleged that the kings of the eleventh and twelfth centuries engaged in building projects and military campaigns on a scale unlike anything ever seen before in Irish history.⁸⁰⁹ Those kings of the post-Clontarf era were of a peculiarly new breed, so the argument goes. What was this new species of kingship founded upon? Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has spoken of the ‘economic expansion on which such developments were based’.⁸¹⁰ Axiomatically, he argued, these kings were able to draw upon economic and military resources that their antecedents could not have imagined in even their wildest, most power-hungry dreams. Accordingly, Irish kings now ‘exercised a degree of control and authority in their own provinces which none of their predecessors enjoyed.’⁸¹¹

Whether these new building projects were just that – new – or not, is, to some extent, irrelevant. There is plenty of evidence for royal-mandated construction works before the eleventh and twelfth century. In any event, ambitious projects of the eleventh, twelfth, or any century, such as the building of bridges and so forth, necessitated large economic sources on which to draw. The construction of bridges by Tairdelbach ua Briain at Áth Caille (O’Briensbridge, co. Clare) and Killaloe (co. Clare) in a fortnight cannot have been cheap.⁸¹² Nor can the *caisdeoil* (‘castles’) of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, constructed by him during the course of his twelfth-century reign as king. As just stated though, the construction of roads, bridges and the like had long been the prerogative of Irish kings,

⁸⁰⁹ Cf. chapter one, section one.

⁸¹⁰ Ó Cróinín, *Early medieval Ireland*, p. 274.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.* For more on the historiography of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland, see Chapter one, where this is discussed in detail.

⁸¹² AI 1071.7.

as Cogitosus' *Life of Saint Brigit* – a product of the mid-seventh century – makes clear. In section thirty of the *vita* there is mention of an edict of a king that 'came into force throughout the *tuatha* and provinces which were under his jurisdiction and dominion, to the effect that all the peoples and *tuatha* should come together from all the territories and provinces and build a solid wide road.'⁸¹³ So, the commissioning of such projects was no innovation. It might be wondered if the workers received any form of remunerative compensation, though this seems unlikely almost to the point of absurdity. Rather, the summoning of the men of the kingdom to build roads or bridges has all the appearance of a duty owed to the king. It might be speculated that, should the matter prove pressing, a community would come together and decide, of its own volition, to build or repair a road or bridge. But this, as stated, is pure conjecture.

Royal building works were not the only ones that necessitated the mobilisation of enormous manpower. Harvest time could see vast numbers of people come together to gather the crop. The 'Life' of Maedóc of Ferns referred to 150 brothers (of the religious variety) reaping in a field:

*Quodam die, cum esset sanctus Moedhog cum centum
quingenta fratribus in messe, uenit rex Brandubh ad
messem, uisitans uiram Dei.*⁸¹⁴

One day, when Saint Maedóc was with one hundred and fifty
brothers harvesting, king Brandubh came to the harvest,
visiting the man of God.

⁸¹³ S. Connolly and J.-M. Picard (trans), 'Cogitosus: *Life of Saint Brigit*', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 117 (1987), p. 23.

⁸¹⁴ Charles Plummer (ed.), '*Vita sancti Maedoc episcopi de Ferna*' in *Vitae sanctorum Hiberniae* volume II (Dublin, 1997; latest edn.), p. 155. This 'Life' is taken from an MS marked V. 3. 4, f. 51^d, held in Marsh's Library, Dublin. This is a sister MS of E.3.II. held in Trinity College, Dublin. They are not copied from one another but from a common original. Both manuscripts are probably of a fifteenth century provenance. The 'Life' itself, in its original form, is a much older composition. See *ibid*, pp ix, xi, xii, liv, lxxv.

It appears that, perhaps unlike the people of the *tuatha* mentioned in the *Life of Saint Brigit*, the brothers may have received some form of recompense. A Latin ‘Life’ of St Kevin refers to a group of reapers (*messores*) who receive meat and beer in return for their work.⁸¹⁵

The point is that many of the necessities of life in early medieval Ireland – be it the reaping of corn or the laying of roads – involved the mobilisation of large numbers of people to execute the task, often by compulsion. The performance of such work – much of it back-breaking in nature – cannot have proved too inviting a prospect. Many of the sources say as much. On occasion, for example, it could be difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of men to harvest the crops, as evinced in the ‘Life’ of Carthach:

*In quodam autumpno prepositus suus ad sanctum Carrthagum uenit, dicens: “Pater, messores sufficienter non possumus inuenire; et segites multum maturante sunt”.*⁸¹⁶

One autumn, Carthach’s provost came to him, saying:

“Father, we are not able to find enough reapers; and much of the corn has ripened”.

In the event, the corn was saved when God sent angels to reap it for Carthach. Unfortunately, divine assistance was not always so forthcoming, and a lack of workers would typically have proved a more pressing problem. It might reasonably be objected that the ‘Life’ never explicitly states that the deficiency in manpower was a result of laziness or any sort of deviance. That this may have been the case is suggested by other similar, examples that occur in other saints’ ‘Lives’. A ‘Life’ of St

⁸¹⁵ Ibid, ‘*Vitae sancti Coemengi abbais de Glenn da Loch*’, Vol. II, p. 238. This ‘Life’ is also taken from MS V. 3. 4, f. 64^d.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid, ‘*Vita sancti Carthagi*’, vol. I, pp 188-9. The life as printed in Plummer’s work is a collation of lives found in MSS. E. II, f. 60^d and V. 3. 4, f. 94^b, sister documents of that fifteenth century compilation mentioned above, cf. n. 153.

Ciarán of Clonmacnoise refers to a *scolóc* who refused to join a band of reapers and was subsequently found dead in his bed. The ‘Life’ also contains a general condemnation of servile tenants who turn to the church only when they are in need. (It might be added that, feeling generous, St Ciarán brought the *scolóc* back to life).⁸¹⁷

Many of those who served as low-ranking tenants or as a *scolóc* for the church would have been the children of poorer families offered in times of famine. The Life of Berach (admittedly a late ‘Life’; Pádraig Ó Riain dates the Latin text to c. 1400) tells of a woman who gave birth during a time of scarcity.⁸¹⁸ Rather than kill the child, she offers the child’s service to the church in Termonbarry, co. Roscommon, in return for its maintenance.⁸¹⁹ Life for those of low status could be extremely difficult, as this story illustrates. So too does a ‘Life’ of Colmcille. The saint, wandering through a graveyard, spots an old woman picking nettles. When he asks her why she was doing this, she replied ‘O darling father, I have a single cow and she has not yet borne a calf, and I am expecting it; and this [broth] is what serves me for a long time back’.⁸²⁰ How easy it is to imagine people like this dropping further still into absolute destitution, living as paupers. And while Michel Mollat drew a distinction between the ‘familiar and traditional’ pauper of the parish and a ‘dissident world’ of outcasts (prostitutes, delinquents, vagabonds and rebels), no doubt that as the distribution of alms ebbed and flowed in time with periods of famine and disease, such people were apt to be drawn into a world of criminality.⁸²¹ Such individuals might live, in a very literal sense, on the edge of society, along the fringes of the forest. These included the ‘forest men’ or *boisilleurs* of eleventh- and twelfth-century

⁸¹⁷ Doherty, ‘hagiography as a source’, p. 320.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid, p. 316; Pádraig Ó Riain, *A dictionary of Irish saints* (Dublin, 2011), p. 95; Charles Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉirenn: lives of Irish saints, volume II* (Oxford, 1997), p. 39.

⁸¹⁹ Plummer, *Bethada*, p. 39; Ó Riain, *Irish saints*, p. 94.

⁸²⁰ A.T. Lucas, ‘Nettles and charlock as famine food’, *Breifne. Journal of Cumann Seanchas Bhreifne* 1(2) (1959), p. 144.

⁸²¹ Michel Mollat, *The poor in the middle ages: an essay in social history* (London, 1986), pp 65, 51, 7.

France. The forest edge, indeed, became a place of ill repute, a place used to frighten children.⁸²² These people lived as thieves and criminals, stealing to survive. The fate that awaited them was, very often, the gallows.⁸²³ The Irish law texts also refer to such liminal characters as the *ríascaire* or ‘marsh-dweller’ who travelled from marsh to mountain and the *raitech* or ‘man of the road / vagrant’, who was described as ‘an unattached person who travels from place to place’, or ‘one who is exiled from his kin’.⁸²⁴ How easy it was, then, for them, in a time of pressing need – in a ‘life or death’ situation in the truest sense – to turn to the church. And how natural too it would have been to, as times got better, regret the full implications of those desperate actions.

Not that it was only reapers who grumbled and neglected their duties. Take, by way of illustration, the following passage from Cogitosus’ *Life of Brigit*. It will be recalled that the king had ordered the people of various territories to come together and build a new road. But,

‘...when the exacting and really difficult part of the river happened to fall to the lot of one of these *tuatha*, this *tuath* wanting to avoid the very hard work, used its strength to browbeat Brigit’s weaker *tuath* so that it would have to work on this difficult section of the road-building. This cruel and unfair *tuath*, having chosen an easier section than it had got in the draw, would then build it without any trouble from the river.’⁸²⁵

Much as God worked a miracle for Carthach, Brigit too offered some supernatural assistance to the people of her *tuath*. The point to be taken

⁸²² *Ibid*, pp 65, 7. It might also be significant that the three ‘desert-places’ (*díthruib*) of Ireland listed in the *Triads* are all woodland: Fid Mór, Fid Déicsen and Fid Moithre (Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland*, s. 43). See also Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the medieval world, AD 400-1000. Landscape, kingship and religion* (Dublin, 2014), pp 25-6.

⁸²³ Mollat, *The poor*, p. 68.

⁸²⁴ Fergus Kelly, *Early Irish farming* (Dublin, 1988), pp 425-6.

⁸²⁵ Connolly and Picard, ‘Life of Brigit’, p. 24.

from all of this is that large projects necessitated the involvement of large numbers of people, and such work could often be resisted. In the various saints' 'Lives' just mentioned, very disparate groups of people – religious brothers, servile tenants of the church, and the everyday people of the *tuath* conscripted to a royal building project – can all be seen to drag their feet in one way or another when it comes to the performance of burdensome and thankless work. The reality is, of course, that in most cases, the work was simply done. Corn was reaped, bridges, roads and great fortifications were built. No doubt many grumbled, but they did as they were asked, or ordered. That said, as Thomas Charles-Edwards has noted, doing agricultural work or construction work for another 'had a tinge of servility'.⁸²⁶ There were two types of clientship in medieval Ireland: free (*sóer*) clientship and base (*doer*) clientship. A number of differences existed between the two varieties, but it is clear that the base clientship was the more onerous of them. One important difference between the two seems to have been that while a base client was required to perform labour-dues for his lord, the free client only performed 'honourable' dues, like attendance to his lord. One gloss states that free clientship was 'without service by means of his hand' (*cin giallna fria laimh*).⁸²⁷ Strenuous work in any case, perhaps detracting from one's own private labour duties, performing manual labour for a lord was also a signifier of inferior status.

As discussed in Chapter One, the work of James Scott can provide us with a framework for interpreting this grumbling. For Scott, foot-dragging of this kind was indeed a form of everyday resistance. These were, for Scott, 'token' acts; unorganised, unsystematic, opportunistic and without revolutionary consequence, but by no means 'trivial'.⁸²⁸ There are, of course, difficulties with Scott's work, some of the more pertinent pointed out by Charles Tilly (see above, Chapter One, s. 3), but neither is

⁸²⁶ T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh kinship* (Oxford, 1993), p. 345.

⁸²⁷ *Ibid*; *CIH* 3 902.15.

⁸²⁸ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: everyday forms of peasant resistance* (London, 1985), p. 290.

it completely without merit. Tilly's principal complaint was that Scott's work assumes a unity that may not exist in actuality. Certainly, the 'segmentation of peasants into families, local communities and clans and the differentiation of interest within the communities' is something of which we need to be aware.⁸²⁹ We must also be conscious of imposing a 'classness' where perhaps there was none. But individuals within communities often banded together to resist power when their various agendas aligned. Resistance can also be perpetrated at the level of the individual.⁸³⁰ Peasant resistance to power in earlier medieval Ireland was not marked by large-scale peasant revolts, and in this way Ireland bore similarity to other contemporary European societies. Large-scale, geographically-expansive peasant revolts would not come until later in the Middle Ages – the 1381 revolt in England and the Hussite rebellion of the fifteenth century being amongst the more noted examples of that phenomenon. Collective actions prior to 1381 'appear to have been more a part of James C. Scott's world of atomised acts of pilfering and the like...'.⁸³¹ There were exceptions of course: the Saxon *stellinga* of 841-2, the revolt in Normandy in 996, and so forth.⁸³² We hear mention of an Irish 'popular' revolt in the year 910, but our only source for this is the *Fragmentary annals* of c. 1030. All of our other annalistic sources are silent on the 'popular' aspect of a conflict between Bréifne and Flann Sinna, and so we must call into question the historicity of this revolt of the *aitheachuibh*. The type of foot-dragging or 'passive resistance' hinted

⁸²⁹ Teodor Shanin, 'Peasantry in political action', in eadem (ed.), *Peasants and peasant societies. Selected readings* (Oxford, 1971; second edn., 1987), p. 359.

⁸³⁰ Charles Tilly, 'Conflict, resistance and collective action versus capitalization and statemaking', in Teodor Shanin, *Peasants and peasant societies. Selected readings* (Oxford, 1971; second edn., 1987), pp 340-2.

⁸³¹ Cohn Jr., *Lust for liberty*, p. 52; Hilton, *Bond men*, p. 96.

⁸³² Eric J. Goldberg, 'Popular revolt, dynastic politics, and aristocratic factionalism in the early Middle Ages: the Saxon *Stellinga* reconsidered', *Speculum* 70(3) (1995), pp 467-501; Bernard Gowers, '996 and all that: the Norman peasants' revolt reconsidered', *Early Medieval Europe* 21(1) (2013), pp 71-98.

at in the hagiographies appears to have been the sum total of peasant resistance to dominant powers prior to the English invasion.⁸³³

3(a.)(ii.) Conspiracy and assembly

Even historians of the larger-scale revolts just mentioned – the *Stellinga*, the revolt in Normandy – have been anxious to point out the exceptional nature of these acts; how they were not revolutionary and perhaps not even overtly militaristic. In the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, produced in the 1050s, the revolt of 996 is characterised as a *coniuratio* or ‘swearing-together’ (or ‘conspiracy’), something which lacks ‘the necessary military element implied by a “revolt”’.⁸³⁴ The term, as used here, has ‘clear (if not quite unambiguous) connotations of subversion’, though ‘in form they shared features with legitimate political-legal activity’ or assemblies.⁸³⁵ The use of subversive assembly in fostering resistance might well have been commonplace in the Middle Ages. As Timothy Reuter has said ‘it was a sure sign that a ruler who was still alive was in serious political trouble when his leading men began to summon and meet in assemblies for themselves; such behaviour meant that he might well cease to exist, as a ruler, and, if really unlucky, as a person as well.’⁸³⁶

Reference to assembly crops up in *Cath Maige Tuired*. After a satire is made against king Bres, the Túatha Dé, we are told, come together before going to the king and asking him to surrender the kingship. This coming together is termed an *oirecht* or ‘assembly’ in the text.⁸³⁷

⁸³³ We see earlier, small-scale but violent examples of resistance in sixth century France: a tax riot in Limoges in 579, and the hanging of a tax collector. See Ian Wood, *The Merovingian kingdoms, 450-751* (London, 1994), pp 62-3.

⁸³⁴ Gowers, ‘996’, p. 84.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 86.

⁸³⁶ Timothy Reuter, ‘Assembly politics in western Europe from the eighth century to the twelfth’, in Janet L. Nelson (ed.), *Medieval politics and modern mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 207.

⁸³⁷ Gray, *CMT*, s. 40, p. 35.

3(a.)(iii.) The language of dissent

We have already discussed some of the terminology of revolt as used in the Irish annals for what one might term ‘political revolts’ – namely the new use of the term *impúd*. One might reasonably ask though, what is the distinction between a so-called ‘political’ revolt and a ‘popular’ revolt? Terms like these are historians’ words; they are the product of an attempt by modern historians to analyse and categorise. It is equally important, as Samuel K. Cohn Jr. observed, to highlight the key words used by contemporaries to describe revolt. Cohn, in his study of revolts in Italy, France, and Flanders noted that the term ‘rebellion’ was used by contemporaries when describing aristocratic challenges to a dominant power like a king or a city-state or the ‘rebellion’ of a subject village, and the phrase ‘to rise up’ when relating the events of what we might call a ‘popular rebellion’.⁸³⁸ Many of the phrases used by contemporary sources relate to sound or noise. In France and Flanders, Cohn said, rebels ‘moved’ and were said to create *commociones*. In Italy, because of the noise they made, revolts were labelled *rumori*.⁸³⁹

It might be recalled that in two of the sagas discussed above, in Chapter Three, we hear of ‘murmuring’. There is one line in both texts – *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* – that is remarkably similar, namely, that which relates to this ‘murmuring’. The two lines run as follows:

‘*Buí fodhord móar imbe lie máthrui la Túaith Déi...*’ (CMT)

‘*Bai fodord mór ic atechthúathaib Érenn i n-aimsir trí rí n-Érenn...*’ (BMDR)

⁸³⁸ Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., *Lust for liberty. The politics of social revolt in medieval Europe, 1200-1425: Italy, France, and Flanders* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), p. 4.

⁸³⁹ *Ibid.* The term *clamor*, a word of great elasticity, could be used in the Middle Ages to convey shouting, the noise of an urban mob, civic riot and the shouting of taunts at enemies, amongst other things. See Richard E. Barton, ‘Making a clamor to the lord: noise, justice and power in eleventh- and twelfth-century France’, in Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (eds), *Feud, violence and practice. Essays in honor of Stephen D. White* (Burlington, VT, 2010), pp 211-35.

It is perhaps significant that, in both tales, revolt is preceded by ‘great murmuring’ (*fodord mór*). That the term is an Irish rendering of the Latin *mormurare* is evinced in the Milan and Würzburg glosses.⁸⁴⁰ It is interesting, too, that Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, in their piece on subversive speech and unrest in late medieval Flanders note that ‘Muttering’ [*murmuratio*] is the collective speech act that invariably precedes every pre-industrial uprising...’.⁸⁴¹ Indeed, they note, ‘the condemnation of muttering was part of the systematic normative discourse on illicit speech acts, or sins of the tongue, established by the religious and legal theorists of the later Middle Ages.’⁸⁴² Murmuring, they continue, was associated with rumour and subversion, and medieval authorities were ‘very familiar with grumbling as a form of veiled complaint and shared anxieties about the obscure and undecipherable nature of this subversive circulation of discourse.’⁸⁴³ Dumolyn and Haemers give the following example: in 1301, when Phillip IV of France sought to reintroduce certain taxes, the *Annales Gandenses* reported that the people of Ghent ‘began to rage fiercely, complain, and grumble shrilly’ (*Quod communitas audiens, ferociter cepti fremere et acute conquiri et murmurare*).⁸⁴⁴ In the Italian commune of Macerata there was a ban on all political talk outside of councils, and the penalties for speech offences were sharpened elsewhere in Italy.⁸⁴⁵

It was not just the late medieval church that condemned muttering though; the act is similarly reviled in many of the early Irish penitentials. A manuscript written by Tadc Ua Rígbardáin in the late fifteenth century

⁸⁴⁰ Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus*, vol. I (Dublin, 1975), f. 97² n.10, p. 331; Séamus Kavanagh, *A lexicon of the old Irish glosses in the Würzburg manuscript of the Epistles of St Paul*, ed. Dagmar S. Wodtko (Vienna, 2001), p. 443.

⁸⁴¹ Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, “A bad chicken was brooding”: subversive speech in late medieval Flanders’, *Past and Present* 214 (1) (2012), p. 56.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁸⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁵ Philip Jones, *The Italian city-state from commune to signoria* (Oxford, 1997), pp 574, 512.

contains a penitential written in Old Irish.⁸⁴⁶ Chapter IV of that penitential on ‘envy’ (*inuidia*) condemns mischief done through ‘gossiping’.⁸⁴⁷ Warnings against ‘murmuring’ without just casue (*Nech fodordai cen deithfiri*) and murmuring about food (*his aire is beithi menmae frisin fodor immun tuarai uare issed*) are also given.⁸⁴⁸ The penitential holds the act of ‘murmuring’ responsible for many of the worlds’ ills, but also promises grave consequences for that act: ‘for in whatever place there has been murmuring and envy and reviling and hate of one’s neighbour and mischief-making and exultation in everything evil and chagrin at everything good, that place has never been left without vengeance from Heaven and earth’ (*ar nach dú ir-rabai fodurd ocus format ocus ecndach ocus miscuis connesaim ocus taithbech ndebtha ocus failti do cach uls ocus bron di cach maith nicon rueschmallad cen digut uil di nim ocus talam*).⁸⁴⁹ The ‘Penitential of Cummean’, which draws in part on some very early Welsh texts and was widely circulated on the Continent in the eighth and ninth centuries sets out various punishments for murmuring and defaming.⁸⁵⁰

In the Irish sources, ‘murmuring’ (*fodhord*) is also associated with sedition (as was seen in *Cath Muired* and *Bruiden Meic da Réo*) and with disquiet and dissent. In *Baile Suibhne*, the eponymous character recites the following lines, after his encounter with a naked (and equally deranged) woman in the forest: ‘Seldom is there a league of three / without one of them murmuring; / blackthorns and briars have torn me / so that I am the murmurer’ (*Ni minic bhíos cumann trír / gan duine fo fodhord dibh / droigni is dris romc[h]oirb / conadhe misi an fer fodhoird*).⁸⁵¹ The idea being expressed here seems to be that in a group of

⁸⁴⁶ E. J. Gwynn, ‘An Irish penitential’, *Ériu* 7 (1914), p. 121.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, s. 5, p. 162; Ludwig Bieler (ed.), *The Irish penitentials* (Dublin, 1963), s. 5, p. 270.

⁸⁴⁸ Gwynn, ‘Penitential’, s. 7, p. 162, s. 8, p. 164; Bieler *Irish penitentials*, s.7, p. 270, s. 8, p. 270.

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, s. 10, p. 165; *Ibid.*, s. 10, pp 270-71.

⁸⁵⁰ Bieler, ‘Irish penitential’, ss. 6, 8, pp 122, 123.

⁸⁵¹ J. G. O’Keeffe (ed.), *Baile Suibhne. The frenzy of Suibhne* (Dublin, 1913), pp 108, 109.

any size, there will be discord. It is significant for our purposes that this discord is being expressed in terms of ‘murmuring’. In *Togail Bruiden Da Derga*, Conaire’s reign is one of peace, plenty ‘and such abundance of good will that no one slew another in Erin during his reign’.⁸⁵² Unhappy with this situation, Conaire’s fosterbrothers – truly a rapacious bunch – ‘murmured at the taking from them of their fathers’ and their grandfathers’ gifts, namely theft and robbery and slaughter of men and rapine’ (*Fo-dordsat iarum a chomaltaiseom im gabáil dána a n-athar ocus a senathar díb...gat ocus brat ocus duin dáno ocus díberg*).⁸⁵³ Again, in this tale, the unrest and the stirring up of opposition by Conaire’s fosterbrothers is represented in terms of indecipherable noise, of ‘murmuring’ (*fo-dordsat*).⁸⁵⁴ In this way, our Irish sources are no different to those of Flanders, or of Italy, in that uprisings are prefaced with references to incoherent speech acts or ‘muttering’.

The ‘murmuring’ of the peasantry has been the subject of attention by sociologists; the act they term ‘gossip’.⁸⁵⁵ They have recognised the importance of gossip in understanding peasant resistance and as a means of obtaining power and prestige in rural societies. The various theses on gossip will not be discussed here (see the literature set out below, in fn.

⁸⁵² Whitley Stokes, ‘The destruction of Da Derga’s hostel’, *Revue Celtique* 22 (1901), p. 28.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁴ But it is not just words that can be indecipherable; the idea is also expressed in the terms used to describe commoners: words like *drabarslúag* and *dáescordáinib* convey the disregard with which these people were held by learned writers; their faces, like their words, are indecipherable, undistinguishable. See R.I. Best, ‘The settling of the manor of Tara’, *Ériu* 4 (1910), p. 124. Indeed, this cess-pool of humanity, this mass of people is to be ignored. ‘What is best for the good of a tribe?’ asks Carbre in the *Tecosca Cormac*. Amongst many other things, Cormac tells Carbre not to listen to the ‘rabble’: ‘*Buidre fri dáescarslúag*’. See Kuno Meyer, *The instructions of king Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin, 1909), s.3, p. 10.

⁸⁵⁵ See Max Gluckman, ‘Gossip and scandal’, *Current Anthropology* 4(3) (1963); Robert Paine, ‘What is gossip about? An alternative hypothesis’, *Man* 2(2) (1967), pp 278-85; Bruce A. Cox, ‘What is Hopi gossip about? Information management and Hopi factions’, *Man* 5(1) (1970); Sally Engle Merry, ‘Rehtinking gossip and scandal’, in Donald Black (ed.), *Toward a general theory of social control, volume 1* (London, 1984); Elizabeth Colson, *The Makah Indians. A study of an Indian tribe in modern society* (Manchester, 1953); Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian valley* (London, 1937). These are but some of the works dealing with the subject of ‘gossip’.

853). The problems with studying gossip should be obvious: gossip is, by its very definition, a very private affair, shared amongst quite a select audience. As such, it tends to leave no trace in the written record. Even so, certain historians have made the case for the study of gossip, namely Chris Wickham and Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, whose work has been discussed above. Wickham accepted that an analysis of gossip, though a worthwhile endeavour, 'is harder in the Middle Ages, where Montaigne's are few' and he accepted that 'the gossip transcript' was not readily obtainable, a problem 'including, but not only for, historians'.⁸⁵⁶

What is important to this present discussion, and indeed more easily gauged in the extant sources, is that the subversive nature of 'gossip' was recognised by those who possessed power in the Middle Ages. They were quite cognisant on the fact that, as Wickham has noted, people whose reputations have been eroded will find it harder and harder to dominate.⁸⁵⁷ The same point has been made by Scott who quotes a line from George Orwell's essay 'Shooting an Elephant' to emphasise his point: 'And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at'.⁸⁵⁸ It is perhaps worth quoting Wickham at length here. He gave the example of resistance to the bishop of Florence. By the 1220s entire villages refused to pay judicial taxes and to recognise local episcopal officials and oaths of loyalty.

'How the talking went which underpinned this slippage of consent, among the dependents...of the bishop of Florence, we have no way of knowing. But...a major local lord suddenly found that his control of his peasants, which had been unwillingly or willingly accepted for centuries, was no longer as obvious as it had been before. The context was indeed a common medieval one, a moment of external

⁸⁵⁶ Chris Wickham, 'Gossip and resistance among the medieval peasantry', *Past and Present* 160 (1998), pp 23, 15.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 18.

⁸⁵⁸ Scott, *Hidden transcripts*, p. 11.

difficulty which weakened lordly hegemony, brought to crisis by a piece of local domineering: this domineering suddenly did not work any more. The gossip had evidently flicked over from (complicit) complaint to (subversive) action, and trouble ensued, which was hard to contain. And this in an environment where there actually were armed men holding up traditional power'.⁸⁵⁹

It is suggested that a similar process is being recounted in *Cath Maige Tuired* and *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*, albeit within the realms of fantasy.⁸⁶⁰ What these tales reveal are elite anxieties about subversive gossip, which is signified through the use of *fodhord*.

That gossip could be dangerous was something that was appreciated by our Irish writers, just as it was by élites elsewhere. Regulating the social space 'as a locus for legitimate political discussion was a matter of concern in many medieval cities.'⁸⁶¹ In an Irish context, we even see this in relation to the laws concerning satire. Various steps had to be taken before a satire could – or at least should – be made. The laws distinguish between a justified and unjustified satire, and a person who suffered an unjustified satire was entitled to a compensatory sum determined by his honour-price.⁸⁶² The *trefoicul* acted as another form of safeguard, a sort of 'warning procedure', whereby the poet mixed praise and satire, giving an intended victim advance notice of an impending

⁸⁵⁹ Wickham, 'Gossip and resistance', p. 20.

⁸⁶⁰ As Neil McLeod rightly points out though, 'literature is not created in a vacuum. We should expect it to reflect the cultural assumptions of its authors...We can expect the literature they themselves produced to reflect the cultural institutions of their time, including their legal institutions.' See McLeod, 'Irish law and the wars of the Túatha Dé Danann', in Liam Breatnach, Ruairí Ó hUiginn, Damian McManus, and Katharine Simms (eds), *Proceedings XIV international congress of Celtic studies. Maynooth 2011* (Dublin, 2015), p. 75.

⁸⁶¹ Dumolyn & Haemers, 'A bad chicken was brooding', p. 67.

⁸⁶² Roisin McLaughlin, *Early Irish satire* (Dublin, 2008), p. 4.

satire.⁸⁶³ Indeed, Liam Breatnach drew an analogy between the steps or phases involved in satirizing with those relating to distraint.⁸⁶⁴ Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly from our perspective, the law texts also distinguish between the formal, legal satire of the *fili* or ‘poet’ and that of the *cáinte* or ‘satirist’. As Kim McCone has demonstrated, the *cáinte* emerges as a target for clerical opprobrium.⁸⁶⁵ The *cáinte* was a breed of versifier who used satire, or the threat thereof, as a means of extortion or attack, not as a defensive mechanism, so to speak; a point clearly illustrated in *Cath Maige Tuired*.⁸⁶⁶ In *CMT* Cridenbél the *cáinte* extorted food from the Dagda, so much so that the Dagda began to waste away.⁸⁶⁷ In stark contrast, Coirpre the *fili* only makes a satire against Bres after he receives three small, dry, cakes as a meal.⁸⁶⁸ The *cáinte* no doubt attracted clerical odium because of the way in which he used (and abused) satire, but perhaps also by virtue of this attachment to the *fian*, a predatory band existing on the edge of society.⁸⁶⁹ One wonders which of the two was of greater import; the way in which the *cáinte* used satire compared to the way in which it was by a *fili*, or the social standing of the *cáinte vis-à-vis* the *fili*. One is tempted to postulate that it is the use of language by a liminal figure like the *cáinte*, living on the edge or even ‘outside’ of society (as is suggested by his association with the *fian* band) as much as the way in which he actually used satire that is the cause of

⁸⁶³ Ibid, p. 7; Liam Breatnach, ‘On satire and the poet’s circuit’, in Cathal G. Ó Háinle and Donald E. Meek (eds), *Unity in diversity: studies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic language, literature and history* (Dublin, 2004), pp 25-6; Liam Breatnach, ‘Satire, praise and the early Irish poet’, *Ériu* 56 (2006), pp 66-7.

⁸⁶⁴ Breatnach, ‘poet’s circuit’, p. 26.

⁸⁶⁵ Kim McCone, ‘A tale of two ditties: poet and satirist in *Cath Maige Tuired*’, in Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach, and Kim McCone (eds), *Sages, saints and storytellers: Celtic studies in honour of professor James Carney* (Maynooth, 1989), p. 127; eadem, *Pagan past and Christian present in early Irish literature* (Maynooth, 1990), pp 219-26.

⁸⁶⁶ McCone, ‘A tale of two ditties’, pp 122-5.

⁸⁶⁷ Gray, *CMT*, s. 26, p. 29.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid, s. 39, p. 35.

⁸⁶⁹ Joseph Falaky Nagy, *The wisdom of the outlaw. The boyhood deeds of Finn in Gaelic narrative tradition* (Berkeley, CA, 1985), pp 18, 20-21, 42-47.

clerical anger here. It is the unregulated use of language by non-élites that stoked the fears of our learned writers.

Language and speech were regulated in other ways too in pre-invasion Ireland. As Robin Chapman Stacey has shown, the length of time a person could address a court (or have a lawyer address it for him/her) depended on social standing. MS H 3. 17 (TCD 1336) sets down the number of ‘words’ and ‘breaths’ that were to be attributed to each social grade.⁸⁷⁰ A freeman, for example, was to have one solitary ‘breath’ and enunciate five ‘words’ in it, whereas an ecclesiastic could take seven ‘breaths’ and articulate forty-nine ‘words’.⁸⁷¹ Another interesting passage, worth mentioning here, occurs in *Cath Maige Mucrama*. After Ailill judges between Lugaid and Éogan, finding in favour of the latter, Lugaid rebukes Ailill, claiming that the judgment was unjust and that justice was ‘not usual on [Ailill’s] lips’.⁸⁷² Seemingly aghast, Éogan retorts ‘It is not for you to rebuke him... a vassal [*aithech*] like you.’⁸⁷³ Medieval Ireland was a deeply hierarchical society. One brief anecdote will serve to highlight this. In the *Life* of St Senán, a county Clare-based saint, contained in the *Book of Lismore*, we hear mention of a great gathering or *mordhál* in the territory of Corco Baiscinn (situated in south-west Clare). At this gathering a certain great wizard or magician (*drai*) is said to rise up (*ardracht*) before an *aithech* called Gergenn, and his wife. This action is a cause for hilarity; the idea of a great *drai* rising up before an *aithech* brings laughter pouring forth. Of course, it is not the *aithech* but the child within the mother’s womb (St Senán) that the wizard seeks to honour.⁸⁷⁴ Similar ideas are being reinforced in *Cath Maige Mucrama*; those of strict hierarchy and of deference. In *CMM* though, we see again the connection

⁸⁷⁰ Robin Chapman Stacey, *Dark speech. The performance of law in early Ireland* (Philadelphia, PA, 2007), p. 76.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷² Máirín O’Daly, *Cath Maige Mucrama. The battle of Mag Mucrama. ITS, vol. 50* (Dublin, 1975), s. 9, p. 41.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁴ Whitley Stokes (ed. & trans.), *Lives of saints from the book of Lismore* (Oxford, 1890), l. 1875-83, p. 57.

between social status and language; that is, the regulation of language or, in this case a particular speech act, because of one's standing in Irish society. We see reinforced once more the fact that medieval Irish élites recognised that both the act of speech itself and the actual words spoken were potentially seditious.

This much at least has been noted in passing by Robin Chapman Stacey, though gossip, language and its regulation is not a well-explored phenomenon in the context of medieval Ireland. Stacey said:

‘Public praise and blame were crucial aspects of [the early Irish] social system in that they announced to the world the measure of a person’s moral standing...Speech played a critical role in the process by which individuals were constructed and maintained as honourable or dishonourable, generous or mean. Several kinds of speech are in question: random gossip was certainly not irrelevant to such matters, then as now.’⁸⁷⁵

She then qualified this by saying:

‘However, considerably more important to this process was deliberate public speech – speech performed specifically in order to characterise an individual in particular ways, whether for good or for ill. Some performers were perceived as inherently more powerful and authoritative than others. Especially potent were the words of poets: poetry composed and conducted in accordance with the complex regulations governing early Irish verse carried an authority that was both feared and respected by persons with stature to lose.’⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁵ Stacey, *Dark speech*, p. 106.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Of course, poets and poetry were important, and satires done by poets did of course carry tremendous weight. Much like Orwell's 'white man', it was important for medieval Irish kings and noblemen not to be 'laughed at'. The point that perhaps Stacey misses, or at least does not sufficiently emphasise, relates to the 'complex regulations governing early Irish verse'. The complexity of legal regulation no doubt lent the satires done by the *fili* a tremendous amount of weight, as Stacey seems to imply. But the driving force behind much of this regulation was to curb dissent; it was born of a fear of the unfettered whispers of the faceless masses, but also the secret conventions called by disgruntled nobles. The regulation of the speech act was essential to preventing uprisings; something that was acknowledged all across medieval Europe. Irish élites, in desiring to stifle revolts, in so many ways acted no differently than their contemporaries in France and Flanders. 'Murmuring' could have tangible consequences. As Sally Engle Merry has noted, gossip can, and frequently does, have very real consequences for its victims, whether these be economic, political or social and collective.⁸⁷⁷ The bloody fate that befell the three kings of *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* would have resonated with many a twelfth-century Irish king.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The ways in which opposition to a king's rule manifested itself in the eleventh- and twelfth-century were varied. Very often it involved a battle or raid of some sort, but there are instances where no battle seems to have been fought, at least not obviously, as with the deposition of Ua Máel Sechlainn in 1168. Military conflict need not always result in a king's death – a deposition or blinding might follow instead, or victory without regicide could be enough. Indeed, regicide was but one of many manifestations of resistance, albeit the most extreme. What is curious about the period under review though is that regicides actually decline, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Kings were still killed, though

⁸⁷⁷ Engle Merry, 'Rethinking gossip', pp 284-6.

they were less likely to be, and still opposed, though the way in which such opposition was enacted was, axiomatically, changing. No doubt there were a number of factors at play here, but it seems likely that the civilizing drive of the church had a greater role than others in reducing royal deaths. A shift in terminology too – the adoption of the term *impúd* from 1093 – to describe revolt in our annalistic sources, although modest, might indicate a change in the way in which revolt was being thought about.

Earlier in this thesis it was asked whether kings had free rein to do as they pleased, before noting some of the legal proscriptions on their actions. Do we now have an answer to this question? Resistance, very often violent resistance, was a staple of Irish political life in the middle ages and, as long as the laws of succession did not drastically limit the number of potential claimants, regicides would continue. Violence is rarely totally wanton; it is an instrument that serves to achieve specific goals, a tool, and studies have shown that rational choice processes can have a significant impact on whether violence is used or not.⁸⁷⁸ Therefore, one assumes, should a king be in a particularly strong position, he should, usually, be less likely to face violent opposition, at least in theory. We might also think of violent opposition as a means of negotiating the boundaries between king and nobility, between king and people. So, when a king has blatantly transgressed what might be expected of him, he might very well anticipate a violent reaction, as with, say, Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn in 1166 and yet we have myriad examples of kings breaking peace agreements without any adverse reaction from those they ruled. Irish kings could be, and were, held to account for their actions, but only irregularly, fitfully. The success of a revolt or attempted regicide, the likelihood of a revolt manifesting itself as a regicide, and indeed the likelihood of a revolt at all would often depended on various other factors too, though: was there a viable alternative leader around whom opposition could crystallise, had a hated king recently lost the backing of an ally or

⁸⁷⁸ Eisner, 'The uses of violence', pp 44, 46.

faced a set-back elsewhere, had he been weakened by illness?, and so forth. It is not at all impossible that the musings of the Irish literati, espoused in ‘mirrors of princes’, law texts and sagas formed the yardstick by which the behaviour of kings was measured, at least by the nobility. Nor indeed is it impossible that such musings were used to ‘dress up’ raw ambition as legitimate grievance. Sadly, lost to us forever is the ‘rhetoric’ of revolt, the language used by those in opposition to condone their actions. Whether or not kings were actually taken to task for their transgressions, though, might depend on a whole host of other variables.

Violent opposition was not the sole preserve of the Irish nobility. There are indications that those of lower social standing might occasionally rise to violent opposition, though large-scale social unrest was not typical in Ireland in this period, nor was it commonplace throughout Europe before the later Middle Ages. Opposition was not perhaps ideologically motivated and it took the form of more atomised resistance to lords, dues and taxes. The annals tell us very little about social unrest in the two centuries before the English invasion; to get a sense of what did go on we must turn to saints’ lives and the sagas. There are suggestions in the annals that periods of dearth might see the burning of churches. Ó Corráin was the first to suggest a linkage between the references to church burnings and references to famine or bad weather. Such entries tell us very little though, and we must turn to the fuller accounts we have of later medieval and early modern crowd action to try and understand what was happening in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. What we do know of crowd behaviour suggests that the burning of churches was a deliberate, calculated act on the part of the attackers. The symbolism behind such an act might be guessed at, though again studies of early modern crowd violence suggest that in burning churches the crowd may have been apeing the regular church burnings perpetrated by kings and bands of Vikings.

As noted, the language actually used by rebels or insurgents is forever lost to us. Even so, the language of the sources can still tell us

much about how revolt was thought about in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As we have seen, new terms like *impúd* began to be employed from around the turn of the twelfth century. Extracting a specific relevance for *impúd* is a difficult, perhaps hopeless, task. French and Anglo-French parallels, observed by White, suggest that the use of specific terms can communicate something about the way in which revolt, or indeed, a particular revolt, was conceived. In an Irish context too, it might well be significant that we begin to see other phrases used in the annals for the first time at roughly the same time that we see *impúd* begin to be used regularly therein. This might, as Flanagan has suggested, tell us something about the changing nature of lordship and, as a parallel to that, about the changing nature of opposition to lordship.

This chapter has examined in detail an understudied phenomenon in pre-invasion history – revolt.⁸⁷⁹ Both it and the previous chapter suggest that forms of revolt were changing between 1000 and 1200 and perhaps also the ways in which revolt was being thought and written about. It has explored the equally understudied and related topic of social unrest and other forms of dissent. It has concluded that social unrest or dissent in Ireland was enacted in similar ways to the rest of Europe in the same time-frame and that we have no evidence of any large-scale popular revolts in the pre-invasion period. Although we do have a reference to some such revolt in the *Fragmentary Annals*, it is not to be trusted, in the current state of knowledge, as relating an actual historical event. The entry, along with others in hagiographies and the like, suggest that social unrest was a subject that concerned the Irish men of letters. And, when they wrote about unrest and the formulation of dissent, they relied upon the same topoi as their continental counterparts – assemblies and

⁸⁷⁹ It might be wondered, though, whether the pattern of revolts change in the century or so after the arrival of the English, and whether the terminology used to relate these revolts also changes over the course of the thirteenth century. We have seen that new terms were being used to convey revolts in the annalistic material. How are revolts related in the thirteenth century? How do Irish sources and English sources treat similar events? Does the invasion alter perceptions of what a revolt is, of what treachery is, of what a traitor is?

‘murmuring’. These signifiers probably reflect with some accuracy the prelude to many of the historical revolts we hear about in the sources.

Kings and nobles had more to worry about from their social equals as opposed to their subordinates. As has been argued above, myriad causes might feed into the eruption of a revolt. It is suggested that it was, above all else, some weakness of the ruler, some circumstance that rendered him liable to attack, that was one of the major determinants in whether or not a revolt would break out. For, political subordination and the existence of hungry claimants to a kingship were the constant reality of medieval Irish life; it was often just a case of biding one’s time until the opportune moment to strike.

Conclusion: Ireland, c.1000 – c. 1200

The two centuries prior to the English invasion of Ireland are viewed by historians as periods of tremendous change. This was, after all, the period that saw the rise of Dál Cais, a theretofore nonentity in the broader political scene; it was the era of ‘trembling sods’ and high kings with opposition; it was a time of great change in the Church too – these centuries saw both the spirit and structure of the Irish church shaped by the currents of a European-wide reform. In our sources we see the adaptation of old terms to describe new phenomena – *tuarastal* and *do dul co tech* – but also old phenomena described in new ways, for example, the use of *impúd* when describing a revolt.

Yet, though a long-standing feature of Irish life in itself, there were other changes taking place in the realm of revolt beyond it being described in new ways by contemporary commentators. As we have seen already, a king was now less likely to pay for perceived wrongs with his life. There is little to suggest that overall levels of interpersonal violence were declining, though, and the use of *cogad* rather than *cath* by annalists suggests that battles were getting bigger and, in all likelihood, bloodier as well.

Below the grade of kingship (those individuals styled *rí* or *rex*), at the level of non-royal lordship, there was also change in this period. This is reflected in the upsurge in references to such individuals in the Irish annals, particularly in the twelfth century.

1. LEGITIMISING KINGSHIP

The concept of power was discussed at length in chapter one. While accepting that the question of ‘value-dependency’ would always weigh on any discussion of power, it was also noted therein that for some key thinkers ‘resistance’ was key to understanding power relations; that power could consist of the shaping of wants, desires, world-views and subjects; and that the treatment of ‘power’ in the historiography of medieval Irish kingship was in many ways unfulfilling.

The costly and innovative building projects of the Irish kings of c. 1000 – c. 1200 have already been alluded to in this thesis. We have seen how Tairdelbach Ua Briain ordered the construction of bridges at Killaloe and O’Briensbridge in county Clare and the building of *caisdeoil* by Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair has also been discussed.⁸⁸⁰ The Uí Briain patronised the building of mortared stone churches at Ardpatrick in county Limerick, and Killaloe and Kilfenora, in county Clare, to name but a few.⁸⁸¹ As has been discussed already, in chapter four, these royal building works necessitated the mobilisation of enormous manpower. This is truly the nub of the problem; the question of authority.

Those who made these demands, be they abbots or kings or whomever, must have had, in the eyes of those who acted, the authority to do so. Ultimately, the threat of coercion lay behind every demand made and the Annals abound with examples of kings exacting tribute from a recalcitrant *tuath* by force of arms. A couple of examples will suffice to illustrate the point: in 1009 Flaithbertach Ua Néill raided as far as Brega, taking ‘a great tribute in cows’ (*borroma*) and in 1015 Mael Sechnaill plundered Laigin and exacted ‘a great tribute in cows and the pledges of the Laigin’ (*7 co tuc boroma mor 7 aitire Laigen lais*).⁸⁸² What the Annals do *not* show are all those instances when tribute was paid without it having to be violently extracted. Catherine Swift has recently made the point that Diarmait Mac Murchada was only able to travel to Bristol, and then on to Saumur in France, in pursuit of Henry II ‘because of the tributes rendered up to him by the peoples of the south-east, together with incidental profits engendered by his political activities’.⁸⁸³ And while the focus of much of this thesis has been on resistance, oblique references to

⁸⁸⁰ AI 1071.7; AU 1129.5; AT 1124.3.

⁸⁸¹ Tomás Ó Carragáin, *Churches in early medieval Ireland. Architecture, ritual and memory* (London, 2010), pp 118-41.

⁸⁸² AU 1009.6; AU 1015.2.

⁸⁸³ Catherine Swift, ‘Follow the money: the financial resources of Diarmait Mac Murchadha’, in Emer Purcell, Paul MacCotter, Julianne Nyhan and John Sheehan (eds), *Clerics, kings and Vikings. Essays on medieval Ireland in honour of Donnchadh Ó Corráin* (Dublin, 2015), p. 102.

payment at fixed dates in our sources suggests a system of regular and relatively unproblematic payment. In the early twelfth-century *Lebor na Cert* in particular there are a number of references to the payment of tribute (or tax; the two words are, as Catherine Swift has noted, interchangeable but both carry very different connotations) at Samain. A poem in section three noted that ‘The king of Cashel is entitled / to three hundred suits of cloth at Samain, / and to fifty roan steeds / for each battalion.’⁸⁸⁴ Section one in the part of the *Lebor na Cert* dealing with Connacht recorded that ‘a hundred and fifty boars’ and ‘a hundred and fifty cloaks’ were due to the king of Connacht ‘every Samain’ whilst he was owed ‘three hundred and fifty milch cows...each Beltaine’ from the Luigne.⁸⁸⁵ Nerys Patterson has noted that in the *Lebor Breatnach* the British rose against the Romans at Samain on account of the latter’s excessive demands for tribute.⁸⁸⁶ Implicit, of course, is the suggestion that the demands for tribute were made in or around Samain or were due to be paid at Samain; it would be a strange thing indeed if the tribute was paid in late August, for example, but no trouble arose until Samain. We have also discussed the role of the *rechtaire* or ‘steward’ in the collection of taxation.⁸⁸⁷ In short, the sources suggest a relatively sophisticated system of taxation.

For the most part, that system must have operated smoothly enough, even if payment was most likely somewhat begrudged. The very fact that the Annals report kings pillaging neighbouring kingdoms for tribute is indicative of this. Not that it is especially surprising that this was the case; the payment of tribute to an overking was a mark of subjection. Privileged subjects, and privileged subject-peoples could claim kinship or

⁸⁸⁴ Catherine Swift, ‘Taxes, trade and trespass: the Hiberno-Norse context of the Dál Cais empire in *Lebor na Cert*’, in Kevin Murray (ed.), *Lebor na Cert: reassessments* (London, 2013), pp. 42, 45-6; Myles Dillon (ed. & trans.), *Lebor na cert: the Book of rights* (Dublin, 1962) [accessed online at www.ucc.ie/celt on 31 March 2016], s. 3.

⁸⁸⁵ Dillon, *Lebor na Cert*, ‘Of the profits of Connacht as Benén tells’, s. 1.

⁸⁸⁶ Nerys Patterson, *Cattlelords and clansmen: the social structure of early Ireland* (Notre Dame, Ind, 1994; second edn.), p. 128; J.H. Todd (ed.), *The Irish version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius* (Dublin, 1848), p. 73.

⁸⁸⁷ Cf. Chapter two, fn. 231.

cairde with the overking, the benefit of this being that they did not owe tribute to the king.⁸⁸⁸ The other, less favourable form of clientship, termed *cáin* by Thomas Charles-Edwards involved the payment of tribute and carried with it all the connotations of servility and subjection. Indeed, the requirement to pay could very often be justified as punishment for some past offence.⁸⁸⁹ It cannot be very surprising then that payment was occasionally resisted.

Then, why pay? Or why build roads or churches when the king demands it? As stated, there always remained the possibility that compliance would be coerced through force. Undoubtedly, this was an important consideration for payers. It is suggested, however, that there was more behind the decision to pay than simply fear of violent reprisal. But unadulterated oppression, the naked threat of coercion – this is ‘highly unstable, and only becomes stable when its origins are hidden and when it transforms itself into a hierarchy: a legitimate order of inequality is an imaginary world... This is done by the creation of a mystified “nature”... where inequality takes on the appearance of an inevitable part of an ordered system.’⁸⁹⁰ There must have been some sense that this was a legitimate demand, and that there was a legitimate expectation that payment would follow; that this was the way things worked.

Irish kings sought to legitimise their rule, their claims to kingship, in multiple ways, whether that was by an appeal to a claim of blood-right⁸⁹¹, the forging of a connection with a site of symbolic

⁸⁸⁸ Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘*Lebor na Cert* and clientship’, in Kevin Murray (ed.), *Lebor na Cert: reassessments* (London, 2013), p. 20.

⁸⁸⁹ Much learned literature was devoted to justifying the imposition of heavy taxes on subject or ‘vassal’ peoples. See for example Kuno Meyer, ‘The expulsion of the Déssi’, *Ériu* 3 (1907), pp 135-42; Vernam Hull, ‘The later version of the expulsion of the Déssi’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 27 (1958-9), pp 14-63.

⁸⁹⁰ Maurice Bloch, quoted in Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality: rank, power, and ideology in early medieval Ireland’, *Traditio* 49 (1994), p. 57.

⁸⁹¹ In the twelfth-century *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* Brian’s brother, Mathgamain, tells an assembly of the Dal Cais that they ought to proceed to Cashel ‘and to the Eoghanacht also, for that was...also the place of their origin and their ancient birthright’ (*senducus badein*). Here, control of a symbolic site (Cashel) is central to the ideology of kingship, but this possession is explicitly deemed to be a consequence of ‘birthright’. This reference can be set in stark contrast to the position of Donnchadh Mac

Gillapatraic, king of Osraige, much later on in the text. Returning from the Battle of Clontarf, wounded and exhausted, the Dal Cais are set upon by the Osraige and the Laihsi, the former demanding hostages. 'And then the sin of Brian said that it was no wonder that the son of Maelmuaidh and the Desi-Mumhan should ask for hostages and alternative sovereignty from the Dal Cais, because their blood was the same as that of the Dal Cais, but they did wonder that Mac Gillapatraic should seek for a sovereignty to which he had no natural right.' The connection between sovereignty and blood is expounded here, as again it is in a bardic poem composed upon the death of Aodh Ua Conchobair in 1224 known as *Congaibh róm t'aghaidh, a Aodh*. Lamenting Aodh's death, the poet draws a distinction between Aodh and the Ua Conchobair kings more generally, and the foreign invaders, the like of Henry (Éinrí), Hugh (Ubhag) and William (Uilliam). Stress is laid upon the importance of birth: '*Níor ghein Éinrí(gh) fát folt fiar / Níor ghein Ubhag ná Uilliam / saorchal[n]a bine Banbha(dh) / Nocha gille gallamhla*'. The emphasis here is on the '*Níor ghein*', that is, neither Henry, Hugh, nor William were 'begotten' of the soil of Ireland and hence were not entitled to rulership. The inclusion of the sovereignty goddess Banba, the very personification of Ireland, in this stanza which lays emphasis on '*Níor ghein*' stresses once more the connection between birth-right and kingship. The significance of birth-right is also set out in stanzas eleven and twenty, where Aodh's line of descent (and therefore his entitlement to rule) is emphasised. The recently deceased king of Connacht is addressed in the vocative – 'O Aodh of Tuathail Techtmar / O Aodh of Crimthain Coduil' (*a Aodh uí Thuathail Theachmahir / a Aodh uí Chríomthain Choduil*). Later on, Aodh is termed the chief of the people of Conn, and his descent from Ailill Oluim is stressed: '*Badh let ceanas cine Cuinn / a Oilliolla(dh) Oluim*.' The contrast between the proud pedigree of Aodh sits in stark contrast to those foreigners not 'begotten' of the land of Ireland. See Todd, *Cogadh*, pp 70, 71, 215-17; Katharine Simms, *From kings to warlords. The changing political structure of Gaelic Ireland in the later Middle Ages* (Suffolk, 1987), p. 26; Tadhg Óg, '*Congaibh róm t'aghaidh, a Aodh*', in Damian McManus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh (eds), *A bardic miscellany. Five hundred poems from manuscripts in Irish and British libraries* (Dublin, 2010), p. 139, ss. 11, 15, 20.

significance⁸⁹², prophecy⁸⁹³, or perhaps, though this is a contested point in the historiography of Irish kingship, through ritual anointing.⁸⁹⁴ In many

⁸⁹² Denis Casey, in his unpublished PhD thesis, has drawn attention to the control of certain symbolic sites for the legitimisation of certain kingship, such as Cashel. He noted how 'the possession of particular sites, which had specific royal associations, was depicted as a central aspect of the ideology of certain kingships' and that 'land appropriation motifs were utilised in the sources to describe the occupation of Cashel and by extension the legitimisation of kings of Munster.' The significance of Cashel is a key component in the twelfth-century propagandistic work *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, and also in 'The Exile of Conall Corc' and 'Conall Corc and the Corcu Loigde'. Similarly, the poems of Cúán ua Lothcháin sought to reinforce Tara's connection with the Uí Néill and, by extension, sought to legitimise the notion of an Uí Néill high-kingship. A key idea propounded in *temair toga na tulach* and in *Temair, Taitiu, tír n-óenaig* is the supremacy of Tara. The Uí Néill, through their association with Tara are held to be in a primary position vis-à-vis the other kings of Ireland. The connection with Tara must, and Clodagh Downey makes this point, have been relied upon quite heavily after the challenge to Uí Néill hegemony made by Brian Boraime. Poems such as *Temair breg, baile na fian* and *A chóemu críche Cuind chain* ("Taitiu") must, she argued, have formed 'part of the dossier of Uí Néill propagandistic literature produced or reworked around this time, and which it was intended, at least partly, to reaffirm the rights of the Uí Néill.' See Denis Casey, *Studies in the exercise of royal power in Ireland, c.650-c.1200 AD* (Cambridge, 2009), Unpublished PhD thesis, p. 38; Todd, *Cogadh*, pp 5, 53-55, 71; Clodagh Downey, 'The life and work of Cúán ua Lothcháin', *Ríocht na Midhe* 19 (2008), pp 58, 59, 60, 62, 72.

⁸⁹³ In *A chóemu críche Cuind chain* Cúán ua Lothcháin once again emphasises the importance of control of Tara and the Feast of Taitiu, but marries it with an appeal to the legitimising properties of prophecy: 'White-sided Taitiu uttered in her land a true prophecy (*fáitsine fir*), / that so long as every prince should accept her, Erin / should not be without perfect song'. Prophecy also plays a very central role in the twelfth-century *Vita Flannani*, which was probably first written in Ireland but was reworked in Regensburg before finding its way back to Ireland. In passage 17 of W.W. Heist's edition of the Salamancan recension, a vision of a stone appears to King Tairdelbach, Flannán's father, from which three drops of blood fall. Understandably curious, the king asks Colmán of Lismore what exactly all of this means. He is informed that three of his sons have been slain – this, presumably, relates to the three drops of blood that drop from the stone [*Tres enim tui filii ab inimicis crudelibus interempti sunt*]. But, Tairdelbach is told, seven kings, all descended from him will go in to rule Ireland [*Septem reges inclitii de sanguine tuo totam Hyberniam felicibus auspiciis iusta ditione regent*]. Prophecy is also a feature of Adomnán's late-seventh or early-eighth century *Vita Columbae*. This aspect of the *Vita* has been the subject of sustained analysis by Michael J. Enright, who argued that the 'point' of the *Vita* was to remould the institution of kingship in a Christian image, using the Old Testament as a blueprint. The role of prophecy and prophets in the Old Testament was a prominent one, and it is therefore no surprise that '...even a cursory examination of the text reveals [prophecy] to be of singular importance to Adomnán...'. Prophecy as a means of legitimation also played a role in buoying Eóganacht claims to the kingship of Munster in *Senchas Fagbála Caisil*, the first part of which 'belongs to the eighth century', the second to the tenth. In short, two swineherds fall asleep and are visited by an angel who shows to them 'the cycle of the kingship of Munster for ever in all its dignity, and the length of each reign and their prosperity and peace.' That part of the text of tenth-century provenance has one of the swineherds say 'And I was told that Conall Corc would settle there, according to the blessing which was revealed to me; and it was revealed to me that the settlement was

cases, a number of these legitimising concepts were often bundled together in the same text – in the twelfth-century *Vita Flannani* appeal is made to both blood right and to prophecy, for example. Thus the connection with a symbolic site might result from a prophecy of a saint or angel, or birth-right might be presented as having some form of preternatural endorsement.

Why seek to legitimise one's rule? Why not simply enforce rule through coercion and violence? As was suggested already, a sense of legitimacy made the exercise of kingship somewhat more straightforward. A degree of 'mystification' is needed to make kingship seem inevitable. There was a need to present the rule of a particular dynasty as inevitable and immemorial. Thus, in the *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* the rule of the Eóganacht and the Dál Cais is said to have existed since the dawn of time:

made immediately after I left.' Hence the *Senchas Fágbala Caisil* marries control of a symbolic site with prophecy by a preternatural being. See Downey, 'Cúán ua Lothcháin', p. 62; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Foreign connections and domestic politics: Killaloe and the Uí Briain in twelfth-century hagiography', in Dorothy Whitlock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville (eds), *Ireland in early medieval Europe. Studies in memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp 225; Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, 'The travels of Irish manuscripts: from the Continent to Ireland', in Toby Barnard, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín & Katharine Simms (eds), *'A miracle of learning': studies in manuscripts and Irish learning. Essays in honour of William O'Sullivan* (Aldershot, 1998), pp 57, 58; W.W. Heist (ed.), *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi* (Brussels, 1965), s. 17; Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons. The origin of the royal anointing ritual* (New York, 1985); Idem, 'Prophets and princes on isles of ocean: a "call" for an Old Testament style regime in *Vita Columbae*', *Peritia* 21 (2010), pp 56-135; Casey, *Exercise of royal power*, p. 64; Myles Dillon, 'The story of the finding of Cashel', *Ériu* 16 (1952), pp 63-4, 68, 71.

⁸⁹⁴ The evidence here is patchy. One must refer to Áed mac Néill of the Cenél nEogain and his sobriquet 'Oirdnide' (the Ordained). He is recorded by this title in the regnal lists. Both F.J. Byrne and Katharine Simms have suggested that Áed's nickname is evidence for anointing at the hands of an ecclesiastic. Refuting this, Bart Jaski has stated: 'If Conmach [the abbot of Armagh] ever ordained or anointed Áed at the synod [at Dún Cuair, north of Enfield], and the evidence for this is circumstantial at best, this was not after the continental fashion...There is no further evidence that clerical ordination or anointment ever gained currency in this period, while in later sources it is noticeably absent. Contrary to this, Michael J. Enright has argued that Adomnán was probably thinking of a physical unction – that is, anointing – when he used the word *ordination*. Similarly, he argued that the compilers of the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* (a collection of Irish canon law, dating from c.690-c.724), Ruben of Dairnis and Cú Chuimhne of Iona, two church reformers with strong ties to Adomnán, had something similar in mind when they used words like *ordination*, *ordinasse* and *unxit*. See F.J. Byrne, *IKHK*, p. 159; Simms, *Kings to warlords*, pp 25-6; Jaski, *Succession*, p. 61; Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons*, pp 24-8.

‘This was one of the two houses that sustained the rule and sovereignty of Erin, from the time of Eremon, son of Miledh and Ebher, his brother, and from the beginning of the world.’⁸⁹⁵

Here, the rule of the Dál Cais is presented as inevitable and eternal, above challenge.

A sense of legitimacy gave a king authority; the authority to exact tribute and take hostages, to order the construction of bridges, roads, and churches. It is suggested that a passage in the early Irish law text *Din Techtugad* might prove instructive here. In *Din Techtugad* it is stated: ‘He is not a king who had not hostages in fetters, to whom the rent of a king is not given, to whom the fines of law are not paid.’⁸⁹⁶ Irish kings held certain prerogatives by virtue of their position in society. These included, as has been mentioned already, a right to exact tribute and hostages, but also to reap the profits of law, the fines imposed by the *cáin* legislation. According to the *Din Techtugad*, however, any king who is unable to enforce his rights to these is ‘no kings’. The question to be asked is, why? Why is he who cannot exact rent or the profits of fines ‘no king’?

There are two plausible explanations. The first possible interpretation of this passage is that a king who cannot successfully draw tribute and so forth is ‘no king’ because without the resources that come from tribute and fines, his ability to exercise his kingship is somewhat curtailed. A raid into a neighbouring kingdom is no longer financially viable, nor is the commissioning of a church building, and so forth. Thus he is deemed to be ‘no king’ as a result of the *consequences* of his inability to exact the profits he is entitled to. The other feasible

⁸⁹⁵ Todd, *Cogad*, p. 59.

⁸⁹⁶ *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), p. 51; *CIH* 1 219.5-.6. Binchy translates the passage slightly differently: ‘He is no king who has not hostages in fetters, to whom the tribute of a land is not given, to whom the debts of *cáin* are not paid’. See Simms, *Kings to warlords*, p. 130.

interpretation of this passage is that such a king is termed ‘no king’ because of his inability to extract these profits *per se*. In other words, it is his very inability to extract these profits, rather than the fiscal consequences of such an inability, that see him labelled ‘no king’ by the compiler of *Din Techtugad*. It is suggested that the latter interpretation is to be preferred. Much of the remainder of that passage of the law tract is concerned with offering up ‘proofs’ which ‘attest to the falsehood of every king’.⁸⁹⁷ Such proofs include turning a synod out of its ‘*lios*’, being ‘without truth’, dryness of cattle, and scarcity of corn.⁸⁹⁸ This suggests that the inability of a king to collect fines and tribute is yet another ‘proof’ of his ‘falsehood’ or his lack of legitimacy; the compiler of *Din Techtugad* is not concerned with any of the practical difficulties that flow from a diminution in revenue return. Rather, his only concern is to enumerate the many ways in which a false king might be recognised. A king who cannot exact tribute and fines is, therefore, a false king. The corollary of this is that a ‘true’ (read: legitimate) king can. Indeed, as Katharine Simms has noted, the ability to exact such fines is the ‘acid test of a true king’, or is at least regarded as such by early Irish lawyers.⁸⁹⁹ An entry into the *Annals of Ulster* for 969 is instructive here also. In the year 971, Domnall Ua Néill was expelled from the kingship of Tara by Clann Cholmáin. The annalist records that, as a consequence of this event, there will be ‘a scarcity of corn and an overabundance of grass.’⁹⁰⁰ The employment of this particular literary trope suggests that, for the annalist at least, Domnall’s replacement was not a rightful or legitimate king.⁹⁰¹ This literary topos is included by the compiler of *Din Techtugad* as one of

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 53; *CIH* 1 219.16-.19.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid*; *CIH* 1 219.20-.29.

⁸⁹⁹ Simms, *Kings to warlords*, p. 130. Perhaps we see something similar in the *Life of Patrick* in the *Book of Lismore*: ‘If thou hadst believed inside thy house’, saith Patrick, ‘to thy house the hostages would have come. Since this is not so, they will not come, until they come through the might of arms.’ This suggests that getting hostages through force of arms was not the ideal way or the preferred way, or indeed the only way.

⁹⁰⁰ *AF*, 969; Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), p. 33.

⁹⁰¹ Jaski, *Succession*, p. 72.

his ‘proofs’ of false kingship, or illegitimate kingship, and as part of the wider discussion that includes the passage cited above about the ability or inability of a king to exact tribute. Therefore, at least for that individual who compiled *Din Techtugad*, the issue of legitimacy is one that is inextricably linked to the collection of taxes and, by extension, the ability to command groups of people to perform certain duties.

But while an *individual* king might need an air of legitimacy about him to enforce his demands for the payment of tribute or the construction of his *caisdeoil*, we must also say something about the esoteric underpinnings of this entire system. That is, beyond the ability of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair to have his *caisdeoil* built or of Brian Bóruma to order the construction of a bridge, why was any king or any lord or even any churchman able to exact taxation or keep in his possession individuals tied to him, and tied to the land.⁹⁰² Here, the law tracts and advice texts tell us something, at least. The advice texts to kings (and indeed, the law tracts) are very concerned with order; each individual has his place or his role to fill in society. The ninth-century *Tecosca Cormac* implores individuals to act according to their station: ‘Do not dress elegantly unless you possess sheep’ (*nírba massech minba cháerchach*), Cormac tells Carbre, for ‘elegant dress without sheep [is] a crime in the gatherings of the world’ (*ar is col i ndálaib in domain...maisse cen cáircha*).⁹⁰³ The eighth-century *Audacht Morann* states that ‘an unfree individual yields to a free individual’ (*To-léici doer do sóer*).⁹⁰⁴ The (probably) eighth century poem *Dimbad messe bad ri réil* sets down at some length the role every individual is to fulfil in society. The abbot’s son is to enter the church (*Mac ind abbad issin cill*), the farmer’s son works the land (*mac in trebthaig issin tír*), the carpenter’s son follows the adze (*Mac in tsáir allus in tail*), the trumpeter’s son

⁹⁰² T.M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Críth Gablach and the laws of status’, *Peritia* 5 (1986), pp 58-9.

⁹⁰³ Kuno Meyer (ed. & trans.), *The instructions of king Cormac Mac Airt* (Dublin, 1909), s. 11, pp 18, 19.

⁹⁰⁴ Fergus Kelly (ed. & trans.), *Audacht Morann* (Dublin, 1976), s. 54, p. 16.

carries the trumpet (*Mac in chornaire fon corn*), and so forth.⁹⁰⁵ The overriding concern is with order; everyone has their role and is expected to fill it and, further, should act according to their station.⁹⁰⁶

This idea of order and hierarchy is further expounded in the law texts. If indeed the social structure set out in *Crith Gablach* and *Uraicecht Becc* seems overly artificial, then this very artificiality is telling. Order is a central concern in this idealised view of Irish society. Two of the principal divisions in Irish society that emerge in the law texts are between those that are ‘free’ (*sóer*) and ‘unfree’ (*doer*) and between those that are *nemed* and non-*nemed*. Particularly interesting is the concept of *nemed*. The word means ‘sacred’ or ‘holy’ and so, as Kelly observes, it seem that privilege was originally sustained by religious feeling.⁹⁰⁷ *Nemed* persons could in turn be subdivided into *saer-nemed* and *daer-nemed*.⁹⁰⁸ The former group was composed of clerics, lords, poets and *feine* (stewards and hospitallers) (*ecalsi, fatha, filid, feine*).⁹⁰⁹ Those individuals listed as *daer-nemed* persons are carpenters, smiths, coppersmiths, goldsmiths, doctors, judges, druids and ‘the people of every art in general’ (*saer ocus gobaind ocus umaide ocus cerda ocus legi ocus bitemain ocus druid ocus aes caca dana olcena*).⁹¹⁰ The latter are said to be *daer-nemed* because they serve or render service to the *saer-nemed* people.⁹¹¹ As stated, the word *nemed* suggests that these individuals perhaps once owed their privilege to an aura of sacrality or to a religious feeling; the law texts attribute great importance to talent and to wealth. *Saer-nemed* are so because of their possessions (*o mainib*).⁹¹² To

⁹⁰⁵ Tadhg O’Donoghue, ‘Advice to a prince’, *Ériu* 9 (1921-3), pp 48-9.

⁹⁰⁶ See also chapter five, s.3(a.)(iii.) above.

⁹⁰⁷ Fergus Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin, 1988), p. 9; Thomas Charles-Edwards and Fergus Kelly (eds and trans), *Bechbretha* (Dublin, 1983), pp 108-9; Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality’, pp 59-61, 65.

⁹⁰⁸ We also hear of individuals termed *úsalnemid* and *arddnemed* in the *Bechbretha*. See Charles-Edwards & Kelly, *Bechbretha*, ss 36, 42.

⁹⁰⁹ *Uraicecht Becc*, in *AL*, vol. V (Dublin, 1901), p. 14; *CIH* 5 1593.4-.6.

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 90; *CIH* 5 1612.4-.10.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 14.

⁹¹² *Ibid*, p. 18; *CIH* 5 1594.14.

become a *saer-nemed* person, a *daer-nemed* individual must increase his material wealth (*Daer i suide saeir cetamus, fear creanus tir*), or must excel at his profession.⁹¹³ A *saer-nemed* person can drop to the rank of *daer-nemed* by losing land or property (*saer i suidiu ndair fear reanus a tir, no a deis*).⁹¹⁴ Property is also the primary concern in establishing rank even amongst commoners. So, to take two random examples, the *mruigfer* and the *boaire febsa*, both grades of commoner listed in the *Críth Gablach*, the former ranking higher than the latter. The law tracts list at length the possessions each must own and it is these material goods that distinguish one grade from the other. Indeed it is material wealth that is held to ennoble the seven grades of lordship given in the *Críth Gablach*: ‘What ennobles them? Their *deis*-right, the privileges of each whether small or great’ (*Cid notaisaira? A ndéis a ndliged, cach ae cid becc ciid moor*).⁹¹⁵ Rank was reflected in most aspects of Irish life, down to the carving and dividing up of a beast.⁹¹⁶ Indeed, the very rules laid down in the texts regarding consumption might well have been designed to reinforce social distinctions, as Cherie Peters has suggested.⁹¹⁷

As discussed in chapter one, the concept of power in the context of medieval Ireland was most fully explored in Nicholas B. Aitchison’s often overlooked article on rank and sacrality. Commendable though his essay was, Aitchison, it is suggested, draws too stark a distinction between ‘power’ and ‘rank’.⁹¹⁸ He appears to have equated ‘power’ with pure physical coercion, ‘rank’ was an ‘illusory phenomenon’.⁹¹⁹ Rather, ‘rank’ is not so obviously distinct from ‘power’; rank was indeed an ‘illusory phenomenon’ but, following Lukes, ‘is it not the supreme and

⁹¹³ Ibid, p. 20; *CIH* 5 1594.24-.27.

⁹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 21; *CIH* 5 1594.15-.16.

⁹¹⁵ *Críth Gablach*, in *AL*, vol. IV (Dublin, 1879), p. 320; *CIH* 2 566.7.

⁹¹⁶ Finbar McCormick, ‘The distribution of meat in a hierarchical society: the Irish evidence’, in Preston Miracle and Nicky Milner (eds), *Consuming passions and patterns of consumption* (Cambridge, 2002), pp 27-31.

⁹¹⁷ Cherie Peters, ‘“He is not entitled to butter”: the diet of peasants and commoners in early medieval Ireland’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 115C (2015), p. 83.

⁹¹⁸ Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society and sacrality’, pp 57-9.

⁹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 73.

most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things...?’⁹²⁰ Or, as per Bourdieu, ‘[t]he dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural’.⁹²¹

The perennial question remains though: to what extent was this system opposed or resisted by those lower down the social scale? The semi-free *fuidri* and the *senchleithe* bound to the land did not read law texts or advice texts, and we might wonder to what extent they were cognisant of concepts like *saer-nemed* and *daer-nemed* and so forth. As was alluded to in the introduction to this thesis, the literati were, it seems, aware that the shaping of cognitions is only ever partially effective: ‘Neither slave-woman nor lively slave will be obedient, humble, / if one looks into his mind, to the powerful, to lords’ (*Ni bia cumal ná modh mer / go humal, go hiríseal, / gé fédadh neach na menmain / do thrénaib, do thigernaibh*).⁹²² It is possible that passages such as this tell us more about the fears of élites than the thinking of the oppressed. An examination of popular resistance (chapter four, section 3(a) and section 3(a)(i)) revealed that it was piecemeal, uncoordinated, and atomised. Attention was drawn to the similarities in the forms that popular resistance took in Ireland and elsewhere in earlier medieval Europe. What is curious is that such atomised resistance is taken to mean that resistance in this period lacked an ideological edge; peasants were unhappy with perhaps an individual lord or cleric, but not with the system of domination as a whole. Cohn Jr., for example, stressed the ‘Scotlean’ nature of resistance as a way to downplay the critical nature this resistance may have possessed. It is the case, though, that for Scott, such low-level, individual acts of resistance – if lacking in revolutionary consequence – functioned as a symbolic

⁹²⁰ Steven Lukes, *Power: a radical view* (Basingstoke, 2005) Second edition, p. 28.

⁹²¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine domination* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 35.

⁹²² Eleanor Knott, ‘A poem of prophecies’, *Ériu* 18 (1958), s. 63, pp 73, 72.

criticism of elite beliefs and values; even when elite control is pervasive, he said, the dominant are never entirely successful in imposing their definition on the subordinate.⁹²³ In summation, we do not, nor will we ever truly know the answer to this question. Surely, commoners thought about the world in which they lived and it would be surprising if such thoughts were wholly uncritical. The problem for us is that our sources are produced by the élites. At the very least, it is interesting to observe élite anxieties about the social order as revealed in hagiography, advice texts and saga literature. But would it not be strange if the lazy *scolóc*, unwilling to work, never thought in general terms: ‘why should *we* toil in the fields whilst the *abbots* grow fat?’

Understanding the manifold ways in which kingship was legitimised in early medieval Ireland is of utmost concern to the historian. It is essential to the understanding of the ‘practicalities’ of kingship, not distinct from it. The legitimisation of a kingship was not only a way of warding off challengers to that kingship, but it also served to justify the exercise of that kingship. Legitimacy allowed a king to make certain demands of the people over whom he ruled, and allowed for a relatively straightforward functioning of the kingship.

2. SUMMARY

Standish Hayes O’Grady once said, in a memorable line, that the history of Ireland in the period before the English invasion was the history of a country evolving its monarchy.⁹²⁴ The passage has been taken to mean that Ireland was heading towards the creation of a centralised ruler over a unified kingdom. Such a view is problematic. There were roughly as many kings in existence in Ireland in 1169 as there were in 969. The petty kings were going nowhere. As was argued in chapter two, above, changes at the level of lordship have often been mistaken for a process whereby

⁹²³ James C. Scott, ‘Agrarian revolt and the little tradition part I’, *Theory and Society* 4 (1) (1977), pp 12, 15.

⁹²⁴ Standish Hayes O’Grady, ‘The last kings of Ireland’, *English Historical Review* 4 (14) (1889), p. 287.

the petty kingdoms were downgraded to non-royal lordships. There is no evidence for a widespread process of this kind. It is remarkable though that we do see a pronounced increase in references to ‘lords’ (those individuals styled *dux* or *toisech*) in the annals from the last third of the eleventh century. McGowan’s explanation for this – that the annalists were simply becoming more interested in more local affairs – is an unsatisfactory one. At the very least, this new-found interest in local affairs requires an explanation in and of itself. It is surely significant, though, that this upsurge in references to ‘lords’ comes at the same time that we see changes at the level of non-royal lordship elsewhere in Europe and at roughly the same time that we begin to hear mention of *bailte* in our myriad sources.

Scholars of both medieval France and medieval Germany have posited changes at the level of non-royal lordship (though in the French case, this is directly linked to changes at the level of royal lordship) from the late tenth century in respect of the former and the late eleventh century in the case of the latter. Historians of France have posited an increase in lordship in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. This rise in lordship came at the expense of an old ‘public’ regime, and it was characterised by predatory violence; through the use of castles, lords came to harass and dominate the peasantry of the surrounding area. Though an older generation of scholars of medieval Germany saw a similar process occur there, in more recent years there has been a move away from such a view. Castles remained a feature of eleventh- and twelfth-century German lordship, but only as a ‘mechanism’ for change and ‘not the originating force’. We did see a move towards the creation of territorial lordship, but this ‘did not come about because post-Carolingian lords were able physically to seize control of all the land in an area or establish real ownership’ but rather through the creation of formal rights of command and the definition of territorial jurisdictions. The other great change came in how the German aristocracy came to identify themselves dynastically. What is also important is that, for modern historians of medieval Germany, royal and princely power was seen to have grown

concurrently. Indeed, this idea that royal and aristocratic power need not be antithetical to one another is very much in vogue and formed a central part of Alice Taylor's thesis in *The shape of the state in medieval Scotland*.

In an Irish context, certainly, if we were to see a 'rise' in lordship come at the expense of the power of kings, if we were to see the growth in the power of one as inimical to that of the other, then we would be running counter to some forty years of historiography. There is ample evidence anyway that the power of the great overkings was increasing rather than diminishing, even if some elements of this thesis (the concomitant downgrading of petty king to *dux*) are clearly quite problematic. But of course, following the line of argument pursued by the more recent historians of medieval Germany (and by Alice Taylor), the growth in the power of one need not come at the expense of the other. There are some slight suggestions that there was a predatory element to Irish lordship; the passage in the twelfth-century 'poem of prophecies' that speaks of the subjugation of the *trebach* will be recalled by the reader. Certainly, we might perceive a change in settlement patterns take place over the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries – we see the abandonment of the *ráth* around the year 1000, and the adoption of the new word *baile* c. 1100. As the evidence of our pre-invasion sources shows, *baile* appears to refer to an area of settlement and perhaps commercial activity as well, located around or in very close proximity to, a fortification or *dún* which itself probably housed the lord, his family and close associates. We are probably seeing a reconfiguration of the relationship between lord and those over whom he ruled – the subjugated *trebach*.

The 'rise' in non-royal lordship was not inimical to the growth in power of the greater overkings of Ireland. A hierarchy of lordly titles existed in twelfth-century Ireland that ran (in descending order) something like this: *dux* – *comes* – *baro*. Clearly there was some conceptual differences between the three, but it is difficult to say with precision what these differences were. It seems quite clear, however, that

we can equate the Latin term *dux* with the Irish *toísech* and we can be fairly sure that the Irish term refers to an office holder. We might postulate that a *dux* was usually, but by no means exclusively, an elevated *comes* – elevated, that is, to the position of an office-holder (we see something similar in post-conquest England). Confusingly, we see individuals in our sources possessing both the title *dux* and *rí*. This, as has been explained above, hitherto been taken as a sign that kingships were being downgraded to lordships. It is submitted that this is not a fair reading of the source material. It is more likely that an individual could hold both titles at the same time. In other words, a greater king might appoint a lesser king to the office of *toísech* – but that lesser king was still king of his sub-kingdom.

Great changes were indeed afoot in the realm of kingship in the two centuries prior to the English invasion. How are these changes to be interpreted though, if our established convention – the demotion of petty kings to lords – has been disestablished? A plurality of kings was still in existence when Strongbow and his contemporaries first arrived. This has maybe proven difficult for modern historians of medieval Ireland to accept. For them, kingdoms were becoming larger and fewer, and the suggestion seems to be that, but for the arrival of the English, we would have seen even these fewer, larger, kingdoms amalgamate into a kingdom of Ireland (as had occurred in England). Perhaps; but by 1169 there seemed to be no problem, from the point of view of contemporaries, in having a *rex totius Hiberniae* exist alongside a multiplicity of lesser kings. The lesser kingdoms had not gone – nor were they going – anywhere.

Therefore we must strive to find an explanatory model that suits the reality of eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland. It is suggested that imagining (or reimagining?) the high- or over-kingship of Ireland in imperial terms might satisfy our needs in this respect. There are a number of reasons why we might do this. In the first instance the imperial model allows for – neigh, requires – the existence of a hierarchy of kings. To be emperor was to rule over many kings and peoples. Secondly, we see the

adoption of imperial terminology, motifs and practices by a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish kings, particularly the Dál Cais. Most explicitly, we see Brian Bóraime termed *imperator Scotorum* in the Book of Armagh. And while this inscription was entered by Mael Suthain, rather than by Brian himself, there is ample evidence elsewhere that the Dál Cais were thinking along imperial lines – Brian was perhaps aping the policy of Otto I in his taking over and building of churches in Clare, Limerick and Tipperary; the Uí Briain were compared to the ‘Franks’ in the twelfth-century *Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib*; the importance attached to the of rulership over non-Irish peoples in the obits of Muirchertach ua Briain, and so forth. Other kings – Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair and Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn – were styled ‘Augustus’ (which, axiomatically, possesses imperial overtones). Above all else, there is new importance attached to control over Dublin for claimants to the high-kingship. Seán Duffy is surely correct in saying that there was more to this than simple economics. It is suggested that it is because Dublin (and Limerick and Waterford too) housed a non-Irish population that they became so important. Rulership over peoples – plural – was an important element in any imperial claims. Thirdly, there existed a long insular history of, at the very least a nebulous, imperial idea. Fourthly, and finally, while much has been written about the debt Brian may have owed to Edgar’s actions in 973, there has been comparatively little made of the fact that seven years after Edgar’s coronation and after the imperial coronation of Otto I in Germany, we see for the first time in contemporary usage a new term – *ardri Ereinn* – used to describe the kingship of Domnall ua Néill. The Irish high-kingship, in many respects, appears as an Irish take on a European concept. If Ireland’s ‘monarchy’ was indeed evolving, it was evolving on imperial lines.

Beyond this, there were changes at the level of kingship too, not just at that of non-royal lordship. Our study of resistance highlighted the fact that the number of regicides recorded in the annals declined over time (and this, it was suggested, reflected an actual decline in regicides) and that, really from the late eleventh century onwards, we see the word

impúd used to relate certain incidences of revolt in the annals. The former change suggests that the form resistance took was changing; the latter, perhaps, indicates that the way in which resistance was being thought about by learned writers was also beginning to change. Both taken together hint at a fundamental change in the way kingship was being thought about. Can it be a coincidence that the two changes occur concurrently? It is suggested that, following Stephen D. White, we might see the use of terms like *impúd* as indicative of a sort of conceptual continuum or scale – there are good revolts and bad revolts. It was suggested above that *impúd* might have been used to convey a ‘bad’ or ‘unjustified’ revolt. Even if this was not the case, the idea that the term is conveying something about the nature of the act itself remains an attractive one. What of the declining regicides? It was argued above that the exertions of churchmen, striving to combat violence in Irish (and European) society probably had some effect. No doubt there were other, more temporal reasons also. We recall the deposition of Diarmait Ua Mael Sechlainn in 1168 by his own men of Meath (see chapter four, section 3). He had killed Murchad Ua Finnalláin in an act of vengeance, but Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair forced him to make a payment of eight hundred cattle in compensation. The cost fell on his own nobility, who deposed and killed him. We might therefore wonder the degree to which other killings – particularly regicides – were punished by a meddling overking, and we might also wonder what role this had in diminishing the number of regicides perpetrated in the twelfth century. If a prospective killer had to add the reaction of a powerful overking into his considerations, he might well think twice about his actions. To what extent this had more or less of an affect than a church-led ‘civilizing drive’ might well be wondered, though it is imagined that both played their part and perhaps reinforced one another. It appears that people were beginning to think about violence in new ways though – when was it justified, who it was justifiable to use it against. This had real-world consequences – the declining regicides.

If indeed we are seeing something like the emergence of a conceptual scale, where revolts are good-bad, justified-unjustified, then this can tell us a lot. That there could be a ‘good’ revolt speaks of the concern, not just in Ireland but around Europe, with tyranny, and the growth in power of the greater kings. We have noted John of Salisbury’s concern with tyrants in his *Policraticus* (1159), the resistance to a broad interpretation of ‘treason’ in the *chansons de geste* and *romans d’antiquité* of the twelfth century, and the oppressive actions of kings in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* and *Aided Diarmata meic Cerbaill*.⁹²⁵ That a revolt could be ‘bad’ might speak to something about the person of the king; we are reminded of the horror with which the rebel heroes greet the prospect of attacking the king in the French epics of revolt.⁹²⁶ This might also feed in to the decline in regicides – a new reluctance to violate the royal person. Of course, in a continental context this is tied in with the concept of the ‘Lord’s anointed’, and there is little to no real evidence for this in pre-invasion Ireland. We do see kings declare, in their charters, that they are *rex dei gratia*.⁹²⁷ As discussed above (fn. 892) the evidence for anointing in an Irish context is patchy, and much of it relates to an earlier period. In other words, there is little to suggest the adoption of innovative practices relating to such, c. 1100, though the decline in regicides might be evidence enough. More impactful, perhaps, was the

⁹²⁵ Jan van Laarhoven, ‘Thou shalt *not* slay a tyrant! The so-called theory of John of Salisbury’, in Michael Wilks (ed.), *The world of John of Salisbury* (Oxford, 1984), pp 319-41; Cary J. Nederman, ‘A duty to kill: John of Salisbury’s theory of tyrannicide’. *Review of Politics* 50(3) (1988), pp 365-89; Ralph O’Connor, ‘Searching for the moral in *Bruiden Meic Da Réo*’, *Ériu* 56 (2006), pp. 117-43; Thurneysen, Rudolf, (ed.), ‘Morands Fürstenspiegel’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 11 (1917), pp 56-106; Stephen D. White, ‘The ambiguity of treason in Anglo-Norman-French law, c. 1150 – c. 1250’, in Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye, and E. Ann Matter (eds), *Law and the illicit in medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), pp 89-102; Standish Hayes O’Grady (ed. & trans.), ‘Aided Diarmada meic Cherbaill’, in Id., *Silva Gadelica (I-XXXI). A collection of tales in Irish* (London, 1892), Vol. I, pp 72-80.

⁹²⁶ W.G. van Emden, ‘Kingship in the old French epic of revolt’, in Anne J. Duggan (ed.), *Kings and kingship in medieval Europe* (London, 1993), pp 344-6.

⁹²⁷ See the charters of Diarmait Mac Murchada to Felix, abbot of Osraige c. 1162x65 and that of Domnall Mór Ua Briain to Holy Cross Abbey, c. 1168x85 in Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish royal charters. Texts and contexts* (Oxford, 2005), pp 264, 308.

work of churchmen to limit and constrain violence, and we do see increased evidence of this in the twelfth century.

Appendix 1: Kingships and lordships in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB and Cotton.)

KEY:

Eleventh century

Twelfth century

Kingships

Lordships

Ailech, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Áine Cliach, King of (**1100-33**)

Áine, King of (**1100-33**)

Airgialla, King of (1000-33 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Airgialla (south), King of (1067-99)

Airghialla, Lord of (1134-66)

Airghialla, Overking of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Airthir Laigin, King of (**1100-33**)

Airthir Airghialla, King of (1067-99)

Airthir, King of the (**1134-66**)

Ara Tíre, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Áth Cliath and Laigin, Kingship of (**1100-33**)

Áth Cliath, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Bredach, Lord of (1100-33)

Brega (south), King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Brega, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Bregmuine, King of (**1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Breifne, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Breifne and Conmaicne, King of (**1167-99**)

Britons, the Hebrides, Dublin and Leth Moga, king of (1067-99)

Caenraige, King of (1000-33)

Caille Fallomain, King of [Lord of, ALC] (1000-33)

Cairpre, King of [Ua Ciarda] (1067-99 / **1167-99**)

Cairpre Grabra, King of (**1134-66**)

Cairpre, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Caisel, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Callraige Calaide, Lord of (**1134-66**)

Callraige, Lord of (1067-99 / **1134-66**)

Callraige, King of (1034-66)

Callraige Calaide, King of (**1100-33**)

Carraic Brachaide, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Cenél Aoda Echtege (**1134-66**)

Cenél Oengusa, Lord of (1067-99)

Cenél Binnigh, Lord of (1000-33 / 1067-99)

Cenél Bogaine, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66)

Cenél Conaill and Cenél Eógain and Airgialla, King of (**1167-99**)

Cenél Conaill, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Cenél Doftha, Lord of (**1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Cenél Énna and Ard Midhairr, King of (**1167-99**)

Cenél Énna, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99)

Cenél Eógain, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Cenél Feradaig, Lord of (1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Cenél Feradaig and of the Clanns, Royal Lord of (**1167-99**)

Cenél Feradaig, Two lords of (**1167-99**)

Cenél Fergusa, Lord of (1067-99)

Cenél Fiachrach, King of (1034-66)

Cenél Loegaire, King of (1000-33 / **1134-66**)

Cenél Lugdach, King of (1000-33 / **1100-33**)

Cenél Maién, Lord of (1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Cenél mBécce, King of (**1134-66**)

Cenn Caille, King of (**1034-66**)

Cera, King of the men of (1000-33)

Clann Mailighra, Lord of, and Uí Failghe, King of (**1167-99**)

Cianacht, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Clann Flaithemair, Lord of (**1167-99**)

Ciarraige Luachra, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Ciarraige, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Ciarraige, Two kings of (1034-66)

Ciarraige and Corca Duibne, King of (**1134-66**)

Clann Cathail, Lord of (1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Clann Crecháin, Lord of (1034-66)

Clann Admail, Lord of (**1167-99**)

Clann Ailebra, Lord of [and Steward of Cath Monaig] (**1167-99**)

Clann Bresail, Lord of (1067-99)

Clann Conchada, Lord of (**1167-99**)

Clann Conchobair, Lord of (**1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Clann Coscraigh, King of (**1100-33**)

Clann Diarmata, Lord of (1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Clann Flaithbertaig, Lord of (**1167-99**)

Clann Fócartaig, Lord of (**1134-66**)

Clann Maoil Ughra, Lord of (**1134-66**)

Clann Muirchertaigh and Clann Connmaigh, Lord of (**1134-66**)

Clann Murchada, Lord of(**1167-99**)

Clann Scandláin of Dál Cais, Lord of(1067-99)

Clann Sínaig, King of (1000-33)

Clann Sínaig, Lord of(1034-66 / 1067-99)

Clann Sneidghile, King of (**1100-33**)

Clann Sneidghile, Royal lord of(**1167-99**)

Clann Suibne, Lord of(**1134-66**)

Clann Tairdelbaig, Lord of(1034-66)

Clann Tomaltaig, Lord of(1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Clann Uadach, Lord of(**1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Clann Uadach, Two lords of(1067-99)

Clanna, King of Na (1067-99)

Coircne, Lord of(**1167-99**)

Conaille, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99)

Conmaicne Mara, King of (**1134-66**)

Conmaicne, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Connacht (east), King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Connacht (west), King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Connacht, High-king of (**1134-66**)

Connacht, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Corann, King of the (1000-33)

Corco Achlann, Lord of(1067-99 / **1134-66**)

Corco Achlann, King of (**1100-33**)

Corco Baiscinn, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1134-66**)

Corco Baiscinn, Two kings of (1034-66)

Corcach and Desmumu, Kingship of (**1167-99**)

Corco Duibne, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Corco Firtri, King of (1000-33)

Corco Laoighde, King of (**1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Corco Modruad, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Corco Raide, High lord of(**1167-99**)

Cremthann, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66)

Dál nAraide, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Dál Buinne, King of (**1100-33**)

Dál Cais, King of (**1167-99**)

Dál Fiatach, Lord of(**1100-33**)

Dál Riada, King of (1034-66 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Dartraige, King of (1000-33)

Delbna Ethra, King of (1000-33 / **1134-66**)

Delbna, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1134-66**)

Delbna Mór, King of (**1167-99**)

Deise, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Déisi Muman, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66)

Déisi Breag, King of (1034-66)

Derlas, King of (1000-33 / **1100-33**)

Desmumu, King of (1000-33 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Eile (south), King of (1034-66 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Eile, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Eóganacht Caisel, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99)

Eóganacht Loch Léin, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Eóganacht, King of (1034-66 / **1134-66**)

Eóganacht and Uí Echach, King of (**1167-99**)

Eóganacht Cill na Manach, King of (1034-66)

Fanad, Lord of(1167-99)

Fernmag, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Fernmag (south), King of (**1100-33**)

Fir Breg, King of (**1134-66**)

Fir Cell, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Fir Cell, (Another) King of (**1134-66**)

Fir Cúl, King of (1000-33)

Fir Droma, Lord of(1167-99)

Fir Lí, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1134-66**)

Fir Luirg and Uí Fiachrach Ard sratha, King of (1000-33)

Fir Luirg, King of (1000-33)

Fir Maige Itha, King of (1000-33)

Fir Mag Itha and Cenél Ennai, King of (**1167-99**)

Fir Manach, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Fir na Craoibhe and Cianachta, King of (**1167-99**)

Fir na Craoibhe, King of (1167-99)

Fir Rois, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Fir Tulach, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1134-66**)

Fordruim, King of (**1167-99**)

Foreigners of Dublin, King of (**1134-66**)

Foreigners of Laigin, King of (**1167-99**)

Foreigners, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Fortuatha, King of (1000-33)

Fortuatha Laigin, King of (1000-33)

Gabair, King of (1000-33)

Gailenga and Tuatha Luigne, King of (1000-33)
Gailenga, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)
Gailenga, Two kings of (1000-33)
Gall Gaeidel, King of (1034-66 / **1167-99**)
Glennamanach, King of (**1134-66**)
In Déis Bec, King of (1034-66)
Inis Cúile, King of (1000-33)
Inis Eógain, King of (1000-33)
Insi Gall, Kingship of (**1100-33**)
Ireland, south of, King of the [Leth Moga – AT] (**1100-33**)
Laegaire, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)
Laíges, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)
Laigin (west), King of (1034-66)
Laigin and the Foreigners, King of (1067-99 / **1100-33**)
Laigin, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)
Laigin, High-king of (1034-66)
Leth Cathail, King of (1000-33)
Loch Beitech, King of (1000-33)
Loch Léin, King of (**1100-33**)
Luigne (Mide), King of (1067-99)
Luigne, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)
Luigne (Connacht), King of (1000-33)
Luimnech, King of (**1100-33**)
Lurg, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99)
Lurg and Uí Fiachrach, King of (1034-66)
Machaire Gaileng, King of (**1167-99**)
Mag Luirg, King of (**1167-99**)

Mag Luirg and the Aicidecht, King of (1134-66)

Mag Luirg and Mag Ai, King of (1167-99)

Mide, Full-kingship of (1134-66)

Mide (east), King of (1100-33)

Mide (west), King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66 / 1167-99)

Monach, Lord of (1100-33)

Mugdorna and Uí Mheith, King of (1167-99)

Mugdorna, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1100-33)

Muintir Anghaile, Lord of (1134-66 / 1167-99)

Muintir Anghaile and Sil Finghin, Lord of (1167-99)

Muintir Birn, Lord of (1100-33 / 1134-66 / 1167-99)

Muintir Birn, Royal lord of (1167-99)

Muintir Cionaith, Lord of (1134-66)

Muintir Dubétain, Lord of (1134-66)

Muintir Eolais, Lord of (1134-66 / 1167-99)

Muintir Geradáin, Lord of (1067-99 / 1134-66)

Muintir Gillgain, Lord of (1100-33 / 1167-99)

Muintir Maelmórda and Mag Gaileng, King of (1134-66)

Muintir Mael Sinna, Lord of (1067-99 / 1167-99)

Muintir Mongáin, Lord of (1167-99)

Muintir Tlamain, Lord of (1067-99 / 1134-66)

Mumu and Leth Mogha, King of (1100-33)

Mumu, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66 / 1167-99)

Mumu, Overking of (1034-66)

Múscraige Bregain, King of (1100-33)

Múscraige Mittaine, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99)

Múscraige Ó hAéda, King of (1034-66)
Múscraige Tíre, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99)
Múscraige, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66)
North of Ireland, King of (1100-33 / 1034-66)
North, King of the (1000-33)
Ormond, King of (1134-66 / 1167-99)
Osraige, (north), King of (1134-66)
Osraige, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66 / 1167-99)
Osraige, Two kings of (1034-66)
Osraige (south), King of (1134-66)
Port Láirge, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66)
Raithlenn, King of (1034-66)
Renna, King of na (1067-99)
Saithe King of na (1000-33 / 1134-66)
Síl Anmchada, Lord of(1000-33)
Síl Anmchada, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66)
Síl Duibtire, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99)
Síl Mael Ruain, Lord of(1100-33 / 1167-99)
Síl Muiredaig, King of (1067-99)
Síl Muiredaig, Lord of(1034-66)
Síl Muiredag and Connacht, King of (1100-33)
Síl Ronáin, Lord of(1100-33)
Sliab Lughu, King of (1167-99)
Sogan, King of (1134-66)
Telach Óc, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99)
Temair, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66)
Teóra Connachta, High king of (1134-66)

Tethba (east), King of **(1167-99)**

Tethba, King of *(1000-33 / 1067-99 / 1100-33 / 1134-66)*

Tír Briúin, Lord of **(1100-33)**

Tír Chonaill, King of *(1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / 1100-33)*

Tír Eogain, King of **(1167-99)**

Tuadamumu, King of **(1100-33 / 1134-66 / 1167-99)**

Tuath Buada, Lord of **(1134-66)**

Uachtar Tíre, King of *(1034-66)*

Uí Amalgaid, King of *(1034-66 / 1067-99 / 1100-33)*

Uí Amalgaid and Uí Fiachrach, King of **(1134-66)**

Uí Amalgaid, Uí Fiachrach, and Cera, King of *(1067-99)*

Uí Amalgaid and Uí Fiachrach of the river Muaid, King of **(1167-99)**

Uí Bairrche, King of *(1034-66)*

Uí Branain, Lord of **(1167-99)**

Uí Bresail Macha, King of *(1000-33)*

Uí Bresail, King of *(1034-66)*

Uí Briúin and Conmaicni, King of **(1167-99)**

Uí Briúin Archaille, King of **(1100-33)**

Uí Briúin Bréifne, King of *(1067-99 / 1100-33)*

Uí Briúin Cualu, King of *(1000-33 / 1034-66)*

Uí Briúin na Sionna, King of **(1134-66)**

Uí Briúin, King of *(1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1100-33 / 1167-99)*

Uí Cairbre, King of *(1034-66 / 1100-33)*

Uí Caisin, King of *(1000-33 / 1134-66)*

Uí Ceallaigh of Cualu, King of *(1000-33)*

Uí Ceallaigh, King of *(1034-66)*

Uí Ceinnselaigh (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Chonaill Gabra, King of (1034-66 / **1134-66**)

Uí Chonaill, Lords of(**1167-99**)

Uí Chormaic and Uí Chonaill, King of (1067-99)

Uí Diarmata, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1167-99**)

Uí Dorthainn, King of (1000-33)

Uí Dróna, King of (1000-33 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Uí Duib Innrecht, Lord of(1000-33 / 1067-99)

Uí Dunchada, King of (**1134-66**)

Uí Echach Muaid, King of (**1134-66**)

Uí Echach Mumu, Overking of (1034-66)

Uí Echach Ulaid, King of (1034-66)

Uí Echach, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Enechglais, King of (**1100-33**)

Uí Faeláin, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Failghe, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Uí Fiachrach Aidne, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1100-33** / **1134-66**)

Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha, King of (1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33**)

Uí Fiachrach, King of (**1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Uí Gabla, King of (1067-99)

Uí Ghlaisín, King of (**1167-99**)

Uí Liatháin, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99)

Uí Mac Caille, King of (**1167-99**)

Uí Maic Uais [Mide], Lord of (1000-33 / **1134-66**)

Uí Maine, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Meic Carthinn, King of (1067-99)

Uí Meith, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Moccu Uais, King of (1000-33)

Uí Muiredaig, King of (**1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Uí Nialláin, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Uí Tuirtre, Fir Lí, Dál Riada, and Dál nAraide, King of (**1167-99**)

Uí Tuirtre, Fir Lí and Dál nAraide, King of (**1167-99**)

Uí Tuirtre, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1167-99**)

Ulaid into Man, King of (1067-99)

Ulaid, King of (1000-33 / 1034-66 / 1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1134-66** / **1167-99**)

Ulaid, Overking of (1034-66)

Ulaid, Two kings of (**1100-33**)

Umall, King of (1067-99 / **1100-33** / **1167-99**)

Appendix 2: Regicides

Eleventh century homicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB, & Cotton.

TOTAL: 317

1000

1. Domnall ua Domnalláin, k. Thurles
2. Flaithbertach ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Conaill

1001

3. Diarmait ua Lachtnán, k. Tethba

1002

4. Meirlechán, k. Gailenga

1003

5. Dongal m. Donnathaig, k. Gailenga
6. Sínach ua hUargusa, k. Uí Méith
7. Cathal m. Labraid, k. Mide
8. Cellach m. Diarmait, k. Osraige
9. Aed ua Con Fhiachla, k. Tethba
10. Conchobor m. Mael Sechnaill, k. Coro Modruad
11. Flaithbertach ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Eogain & Cenél Conaill

1004

12. Gilla Cellaig m. Comaltán, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne
13. Eochaid m. Ardgar, k. Ulaid
14. Gairbíth, k. Uí Echach
15. Aed m. Domnall ua Néill, k. Ailech [Ulaid – ALC]
16. Donnchad ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
17. Muiredach m. Diarmait, k. Ciarraige Luachra

1005

18. Gilla Comgaill, k. Ulaid
19. Aed m. Tomaltach, K. Leth Cathail

1006

20. Eichmílid ua hAitid, k. Uí Echach
21. Cathalán, k. Gailenga
22. Gilla Comgaill m. Ardgar m. Matudán, k. Ulaid

1007

23. Tréinfher ua Baigelláin, k. Dartraige
24. Matudán m. Domnall, k. Ulaid
25. Cú Ulad m. Aengus, k. Leth Cathail
26. The Torc, k. Ulaid
27. Domnall m. Dub Tuinne, k. Ulaid
28. Cú Chonnacht, k. SíL Anmchada

1008

N/A

1009

29. Maelan, k. Uí Dorthainn

1010

30. Donn Cuan, k. Mugdorna

1011

31. Mael Runaid ua Domnaill, k. Cenél Lugdach
32. Aengus ua Lapáin, k. Cenél Énna

1012

33. Crínán m. Gormlaith, k. Conaille

1013

34. Cernachán m. Flann, k. Luigne
35. Senán ua Leocháin, k. Gailenga
36. Ualgarg ua Ciardai, k. Cairpre

1014

37. Mael Mórda m. Murchad, k. Laigin
38. Domnall m. Fergal, k. Fotharta
39. Brian m. Ceinnétig, hk. Ireland
40. Mothla m. Domnall m. Faelán, k. Déisi Muman
41. Tadhg ua Cellaig, k. Uí Máine
42. K. Uí Maine 2
43. Mael Runaid ua hEidin, k. Aidne
44. Géibennach ua Dubagáin, k. Fernmag
45. Mac Bethad m. Muiredach Claen, k. Ciarraige Luachra
46. Domnall m. Diarmait, k. Corco Baiscinn
47. Scannlán m. Cathal, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
48. Cathal m. Domnall, k. Uí Echach
49. Ruaidrí ua Donnocáin, k. Arad
50. Brogarbhan m. Conchobor, k. Uí Failge

1015

51. Donnchad ua Goais, k. Ciannachta
52. Aed ua Ruairc, k. Bréifne
53. Cathal m. Conchobor, k. Corco Modruad
54. Lochlainn, k. Corco Modruad

1016

55. Domnall ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
56. Conchobor ua Domnalláin, k. Uí Tuirtri
57. Son of Muiredach m. Flann, k. Fir Maige Itha
58. Donn Cuan m. Dúnlán, k. Laigin
59. Tadhg ua Riain, k. Uí Dróna

1017

60. Flann ua Béicce, k. Uí Méith
61. Cormac m. Lorcán, k. Uí Echach
62. Muiredach ua Duibheóin, k. Uí Moccu Uais Brega
63. Gilla Críst ua Lorcáin, k. Caille Fallomain [AT – Ua Clerchén, k. Caille F.]

1018

- 64. Maelán m. Éichnech ua Lorcán, k. Gailenga & Tuaithe Luigne
- 65. Domnall ua Caíndelbáin, k. Laegaire

1019

- 66. Ailéne m. Oiséne, k. Mugdorna
- 67. Oiséne ua Cathasaig, k. na Saithne
- 68. Ruaidrí ua hAilelláin, k. Uí Echach
- 69. Mael Muad, k. Fir Chell
- 70. Cú Luachra m. Conchobor, k. Ciarraige Luachra

1020

- 71. Gilla Ciaráin m. Oiséne, k. Mugdorna
- 72. Mael Muad m. Oiséna, k. Mugdorna
- 73. Aed ua hInnrehtaig, k. Uí Méith

1021

- 74. Branacán ua Maeluidir, k. Mide
- 75. Cellach ua Cathasaig, k. na Saithne

1022

- 76. Cerball's son, k. Éile
- 77. Domnall ua Cellaig, k. Fotharta
- 78. Sitric m. Ímar, k. Waterford
- 79. Flaithrí m. Dub Slanga m. Aed m. Tomaltach, k. Lecale
- 80. Domnall Ua Murchada, k. the North
- 81. Mathgamain m. Laidcnén, k. Fernmag
- 82. Niall m. Eochaidh, k. Ulaid

1023

- 83. Domnall ua hEgra, k. Luigne Connacht
- 84. Domnall m. Aed the Little Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide
- 85. Lochlainn m. Mael Sechlainn, k. Inis Eoin & Mag Itha

1024

- 86. Úgair m. Dúlang, k. Laigin
- 87. Mael Mórda m. Lorcán, k. Uí Cheinnselaigh
- 88. Donn Sléibe m. Mael Mórda, k. Uí Faeláin
- 89. Mael Dúin ua Con Chaille, k. Uí Nialláin
- 90. Mael Runaid ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre

1025

- 91. Gerr Gaela, k. Brega
- 92. Ua Comaltan, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne

1026

- 93. Aimirgein ua Mórda, k. Laíges
- 94. Muirchertach m. Congalach, k. Uí Failge

1027

- 95. Dogra m. Dúnadach, k. Síil Anmchada [AI – Gadra m. Dúnadach, k. Uí Maine]

- 96. Raen, k. Mide
- 97. Donnchad ua Duinn, k. Brega
- 98. Mac Gilla Coimgin, k. Uí Briúin Cuala
- 99. Cathalán ua Crícháin, k. Fernmag
- 100. Cú Locha ua Gairbíth, k. Uí Méith

1028

- 101. Mael Mochta, k. Fir Rois

1029

- 102. Donn Sléibe m. Brogorbán, k. Uí Failge
- 103. Donnchad ua Donncaín, k. Fernmag
- 104. Cinaeth m. In Gerc, k. Conaille
- 105. Ua Ruairc, k. Cairpre
- 106. Muirchertach ua Mael Doraid, k. Cenél Conaill

1030

- 107. Donnchad, k. Cairpre
- 108. Ua Cernacháin, k. Luigne
- 109. Tadg ua Conchobair, k. Connahct
- 110. In Got, k. Mide
- 111. Cú Calgaig, k. Gailenga
- 112. John Ua Leochán, k. Gailenga
- 113. Cathal m. Amlgaid, k. Uí Ceallaigh Cualu
- 114. Conchobor m. Tadg Ua Ceallaigh, k. Uí Maine

1031

- 115. Cú Sléibe Ua Dobuilén, k. Corco Firtri
- 116. Ragnall m. Ragnall, k. Waterford
- 117. Ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Conaill
- 118. Ua Donnocáin, k. Ara Tíre
- 119. Mael Coluim, k. Caenraige

1032

- 120. Mathgamain ua Riacáin, k. Brega
- 121. Domnall ua Maíl Doraid, k. Cenél Conaill [AI – and Cenél Eogain]
- 122. Flann m. Mathgamain m. Muiredach, k. Ciarraige
- 123. Domnall m. Donn Cothaid, k. Gailenga

1033

- 124. Lorcán ua Caíndelbáin, k. Laegaire [AT – and Fir Cul]
- 125. Conchobor ua Muiredaig, k. Ciarraige
- 126. Aengus ua Cathail, k. Eoganacht Loch Lein
- 127. Fogartach ua hAeda, k. Fir Luirg and Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha

1034

- 128. Dub Daingen, k. Connacht
- 129. Gilla Pátraic Ua Flannacáin, k. Tethba
- 130. Muiredach Ua Flaithbertaig, k. Uí Briúin
- 131. Gilla Fulartaig, k. Déisi Brega

1035

132. Cathal m. Amalgaid, k. western Laigin
 133. Flaithbertach ua Murchada, k. Cenél Bógaine
 134. Ragnall ua hÍmair, k. Waterford
- 1036**
135. Donnchad m. Dúnlang, k. Laigin
 136. Mael Sechlainn Ua Mael Runaid, k. Crimthainn
 137. Domnall ua hUathmaráin, k. Fir Lí
 138. Scolóc [Niall] ua Flannacáin, k. Tethba
 139. Donnchad m. Dúlang
- 1037**
140. Árchú ua Ceilecáin, k. Uí Bresail
 141. Ruaidrí ua Lorcáin, k. Uí Nialláin
 142. Cú Inmain ua Robann, k. Waterford
 143. Gilla Coemgin m. Amalgaid, k. Uí Ceallaigh
 144. Cú Chaille m. Cennétig, k. Músraige
 145. Dúnlang's son, k. Laigin
- 1038**
146. Orc Allaid ua Ruadacáin, k. Uí Echach
 147. Ua hAimirgin, k. Tethba
- 1039**
148. Domnall m. Donnchad, k. Uí Faeláin
 149. Ruaidrí, k. Fernmag
 150. Aed ua Flannacáin, k. Lurg and Uí Fiachrach
 151. Donnchad m. Gilla Pátraic, hk. Laigin
 152. Mac Ruisse, k. Cenél Fiachrach
- 1040**
153. Ua Dublaich, k. Fir Tulach
- 1041**
154. Muirchertach Mac Gilla Pátraic, k. Osraige
 155. Cú Críche Ua Dúnlaing, k. Laíges
 156. Ua Ségda, k. Corca Duibne
- 1042**
157. Murchad m. Dúlang, k. Laigin
 158. Donnchad m. Aed, k. Uí Bairrche
 159. MacCraith m. Gormán, k. Uí Bairrche
- 1043**
160. Domnall ua Fergaile, k. Fortuatha Laigne
 161. Aed ua Cathail, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
 162. Flann ua hAinbith, k. Uí Méith
 163. Aed ua Con Fiacla, k. Tethba
 164. Ceinnétig ua Cuirc, k. Músraige
 165. Echtigern Ua Donnocáin, k. Ára
- 1044**
166. Cumuscach ua hAililléin, k. Uí Echach

167. Domnall ua Cuirc, k. Múscraige
168. Ua hAeda, k. Uí Fiachrach Arda
169. Murchad m. Bran, k. Uí Faeláin

1045

170. Carthach m. Sarbrethach, k. Eóganacht Caisel
171. Ua Donnacán, k. Múscraige ua hAeda
172. Amalgaid m. Flann, k. Callraige

1046

173. Aiteid ua hAiteid, k. Uí Echahc Ulad
174. Art ua Ruairc, k. Connacht
175. Fergal ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
176. Conchobor ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAiride
177. Ua Findgaine, k. Eóganacht Cill na Manach
178. Ua Cairpre m. Flann, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin

1047

179. Niall m. Art ua Ruairc, k. Bréifne and east Connacht
180. Muirchertach ua Matudán, k. Uí Bresail

1048

181. Dúnlang m. Dúnlang, k. Uí Briúin Cualu

1049

182. Conchobor ua Cinn Fhaelad, k. Uí Chonaill Gabra
183. Ímar ua Béicce, k. Uí Méith
184. Aneislis m. Domnall, k. Corco Baisinn

1050

185. Mael Runaid m. Cú Choirne, k. Éile
186. Donnchad m. Gilla Faeláin, k. Uí Fhailge

1051

187. Muirchertach m. Brec, k. Déisi Muman
188. Ua Conchobair, k. Uí Fhailge

1052

189. Son of Aireachtach, k. Callraige

1053

190. Mael Crón m. Cathal, k. Brega
191. Niall ua hÉicnigh, k. Fir Manach
192. Cochlán, k. Delba
193. Cú Chair ua Mael Dúin, k. Murg
194. Congalach m. Senán, k. Gailenga

1054

195. Aed ua Fergail, k. Tulach Óc
196. Árchú ua Céilecáin, k. Uí Bresail
197. Dubgall ua hAedacáin, k. Uí Nialláin

1055

198. Domnall, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne
 199. Cennfaelad, k. Ciarraige
 200. Ua Bascenn, k. Corco Baiscinn
 201. Mac Assíd m. Domnall, k. Corco Baiscinn
- 1056**
 202. Odar m. Flann, k. Calraige
- 1057**
 203. Niall ua hÉicnecháin, k. Cenél Énna
 204. Dúngal ua Donnchada, k. Eóganacht Caisel
 205. Mael Runaid ua Fócarta, k. south Éile
 206. Flaithbertach ua hEidin's son, k. Uí Fiachrach
- 1058**
 207. Rígbardán m. Cú Coirne, k. Éile
- 1059**
 208. Aed ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgada
 209. Cathal m. Tigernán, k. west Connacht
 210. Duarcán ua hEgra, k. Luigne
 211. Murchad m. Murchad Ua Bricc, k. Déisi Muman
- 1060**
 212. Anad ua Lochlainn, k. Corco Modruad
 213. Anad ua Flainn, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 1061**
 214. Flann ua Ceallaigh, k. Brega
 215. Ua Cathal, k. Eóganacht
- 1062**
 216. Ruaidrí ua Flaithbertaig, k. west Connacht
- 1063**
 217. Cathal ua Donnchada, hk. Uí Echach Mumu [AI – k. Raithlenn]
 218. Cú Duilig ua Taide, k. Fir Lí
- 1064**
 219. Muirchertach ua Néill, k. Telach Óc
 220. Ua Cairpre, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
 221. Ua Cerbaill, k. Eóganacht
- 1065**
 222. Donnchad ua Mathgamna, k. Ulaid
 223. Diarmait m. Tadhg ua Cellaigh, k. Uí Maine
 224. Ua Flaithbertaig, k. west Connacht
 225. Domnall ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
 226. Muirchertach ua Mael Fabail, k. Carraic Brachaide
 227. Leocán m. Laidcnén, k. Gailenga
 228. Echmíled ua hAitid, k. Uí Echach
- 1066**

- 229. Gilla Braite, k. Uí Briúin [AT- k. Breifne]
- 230. Son of Senán, k. Gailenga
- 231. In Finnsúilech, k. Uí Echach
- 232. Loingsech ua Domnaill, k. Uí Echach

1067

- 233. Conchobor Ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige Luachra
- 234. Aed ua Conchobair, hk. Connacht
- 235. Aed ua Concenaind, k. Uí Diarmata
- 236. Tadg ua Muiricén, hk. Tethba

1068

- 237. Flaithbertach ua Fergail, k. Telach Óc
- 238. Domnall m. Niall m. Mael Sechlainn ‘na mBocht’, k. Ailech
- 239. Cú Caille m. Cennétig, k. Músraige Tíre

1069

- 240. Diarmait m. Matadán m. Gadra ua Dunadaig, k. Síil Anmchada

1070

- 241. Ua hEochaidén, k. Dál nAraide
- 242. Conn m. Mac Cuinn, k. Tethba
- 243. King of Caipre

1071

- 244. Ua Mael Runaid, k. Ulaid
- 245. Son of Rígbardán m. Cú Corne, k. Éile
- 246. Gilla Brigte Ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 247. Tadg ua Riain, k. Uí Dróna

1072

- 248. Ruaidrí ua Canannán, k. Cenél Conaill
- 249. Son of Aisid, k. Uí Gabla
- 250. Diarmait m. Mael na mBó, k. Britons, Hebrides, Dublin, Leth Mogha
- 251. Gilla Pátraic ua Fergail, k. Fortuatha Laigin
- 252. Ua Flaithrí, k. Ulaid
- 253. Aisid, k. Uí Gabla
- 254. Ua Fogarta, k. Éile

1073

- 255. Conchobor ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Temair
- 256. Mael Mórda ua Cathasaigh, k. Brega

1074

- 257. Dunchad Ua Cellaigh, hk. Uí Maine

1075

- 258. Donnchad ua Canannán, k. Cenél Conaill
- 259. Goffraid m. Ragnall, k. Dublin

1076

- 260. Gairbeith ua hInnrehtaig, k. Uí Méith

261. Gilla Críst ua Duibdara, k. Fir Manach
 262. Domnall ua Críchán, k. Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha
 263. Murchad m. Flann ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Temair
- 1077**
 264. Ua Maelán, k. Gailenga
 265. Ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
- 1078**
 266. Lethlobur ua Laidcnén, hk. Airgialla
 267. Conchobor ua Briain, k. Telach Óc [AT – Cenél Eogain]
 268. Donmall ua Tigernán, k. Conmaicne
 269. Cathal m. Domnall, k. Cenél Énna
 270. Ua Treodán, k. Conaille
- 1079**
 271. Aed Ua Flaithbertaig, k. west Connacht
- 1080**
 272. Donn ua Lethlobuir, k. Fernmag
 273. Eochaid ua Meirligh, k. Fernmag
- 1081**
 274. Son of Ingerce, k. Conaille
 275. Mael Mithing ua Mael Runaid, k. Uí Tuirtri
 276. Ua hUathamurán, k. Fir Lí
 277. Ua Mathgamna, k. Ulaid
- 1082**
 278. Gilla Críst ua Mael Fabail, k. Carraic Brachaide
- 1083**
 279. Domnall ua Canannán, k. Cenél Conaill
 280. King of Cenél Énna
 281. An Meranach Ua hEochaidh, k. Ulaid
- 1084**
 282. Donnchad ua Ruairc, k. east Connacht
- 1085**
 283. Son of Domnall Ua Ruairc, k. Uí Briúin Breifne
- 1086**
 284. Mael Ciarán ua Caduaigh, k. Brega
 285. Cumuscach ua Laithéin, k. Síil Duibtire
 286. Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
 287. Ua Baoigelláin, k. Airgialla
- 1087**
 288. Cú Sléibe ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
 289. Mael Sechlainn m. Conchobor, k. Temair
 290. Aed ua Ruairc, k. Conmaicne [ALC – Connacht]

1088

N/A

1089

- 291. Donnchad m. Domnall Remar, k. Laigin
- 292. Donnchad ua Gilla Pátraic, k. Osraige

1090

- 293. Muirchertach ua Bric, k. Déise

1091

- 294. Donn Sléibe ua hEochada, k. Ulaid
- 295. Laidcnén Ua Duinncathaig, k. Gailenga

1092

- 296. Énna m. Diarmait, k. Uí Cheinnselaig
- 297. Donnchad m. Carthach, k. Eóganacht Caisel

1093

- 298. Tréinfer ua Ceallaigh, k. Brega
- 299. Aed ua Baigelláin, k. Fernmag
- 300. Aed m. Cathal Ua Conchobair, k. Síol Muiredaig

1094

- 301. Domnall ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Temair [AI – Mide]
- 302. Annad Ua Céile, k. Ara
- 303. Congal, k. na Renná

1095

- 304. Ua hÉicnigh, k. Fir Manach
- 305. Taichlech ua hEagra, k. Luigne
- 306. Domnall ua Muiredaig, k. Tethba
- 307. Ua Cobthaig, k. Umall

1096

- 308. Mathgamain ua Segdaí, k. Corca Duibne
- 309. Conchobor ua hAiniarraid, k. Ciannacht
- 310. Ua Céin, k. Uí Meic Cairthinn
- 311. Muirchertach ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgaid [AT - & Uí Fiachrach and Cera]
- 312. Gilla Ossén ua Cortén, k. Delbna

1097

- 313. Tadg m. Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair, k. Connacht
- 314. Lochlainn ua Duibdara, k. Fernmag

1098

- 315. Flaithbertach ua Falithbertaig, k. west Connacht [AT – Connacht]
- 316. Diarmait m. Enna m. Diarmait, k. Laigin
- 317. Muirchertach ua hArt, k. Tethba

Twelfth century regicides in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.
TOTAL: 218

1100

1. Ua Gilla Coluim ua Domnaill, k. Cenél Lugdach
2. Echrí ua Maelmuire, k. Cinnacht

1101

3. Cathal ua Muiricán, k. Tethba
4. Echtigern ua Braín, k. Bregmuine
5. Gilla Fionn m. Mac Uallacháin, k. Sí Anmchada

1102

6. Domnall m. Tigernán ua Ruairc, k. Conmaicne [AT – k. Connacht]
7. Flaithbertach m. Fothad, k. Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha
8. Sitric ua Mael Fabaill, k. Carraic Brachaide

1103

9. Son of Tairdelbach ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige
10. Ua Riain, k. Uí Dróna
11. Gilla Pátraic Ruad, k. Osraige
12. Murchad Ua Muiredaig, k. Laigin [AT – k. Uí Muiredaig]
13. Muirchertach m. Gilla Mocholmóg, k. Laigin
14. Iarann Ua Faichrach, k. Uí Enechglais
15. Ua Muireghaig, k. Ciarraige
16. Magnus, k. Lochlann
17. Cinnaed ua Amalgaid, k. Calraige in Calaid
18. Son of Mac Senáin, k. Gailenga

1104

19. Cú Ulad ua Caíndelbán, k. Loegaire
20. Dúnchad ua Conchobair, k. Ciannacht

1105

21. Gilla Braite m. Tigernán, k. Uí Briúin Breifne and Gailenga
22. Conchobor ua Mael Sechlainn m. Conchobor, k. Mide

1106

23. Donnchad m. Murchad m. Flann ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide

1107

24. Aed ua hInnrehtaig, k. Uí Méith
25. Cathasach ua Tuammán, k. Uí Briúin Archaille
26. Conchobor Cisnech ua hEochaid, k. Ulaid

1108

27. Domnall ua hAinbeith, k. Uí Méith
28. Domnall ua Ruairc, k. Uí Briúin
29. Eochaid m. Donn Sléibe ua hEochada, k. Ulaid

1109

30. Goll Bairche, k. Uí Méith
31. Domnall Ruad m. Gilla Pátraic, k. Osraige

- 32. Ua Finn, k. Fir Rois
- 33. Dartin, k. Uí Bresail

1110

- 34. Mael Runaid ua Machainén, k. Mugdorna
- 35. Gilla Coluim ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell

1111

- 36. Donnchad ua Anluain, K. Uí Nialláin

1112

N/A

1113

- 37. Mael Sechlainn ua Conchobair, k. Corco Modruad

1114

- 38. Donnchad ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide

1115

- 39. Donnchad ua Mael na mBó, k. Uí Cheinnselaig [AT – k. Laigin]
- 40. Conchobor ua Conchobair, k. Uí Failge
- 41. Tadh ua Lorcáin, k. [exact title missing]
- 42. Donnchad mac Murchada, k. Laigin
- 43. Son of Donnchad m. Murchada, k. Laigin

1116

N/A

1117

N/A

1118

- 44. Laidcnén ua Duibdara, k. Fir Manach
- 45. Brian m. Murchad, k. Tuad Mumu

1119

- 46. Ua Tuathail, k. Uí Muiredaig

1120

N/A

1121

- 47. Cú Maigi m. Deorad ua Flaind, k. Thurles
- 48. Gilla Escoip Eógain ua hAindiaraid, k. Ciannacht
- 49. Muiredach ua Flaithbertaig, k. west Connacht
- 50. Aed ua hEidin, k. Uí Fiachrach
- 51. Conchobor ua Fócarta, k. south Éile

1122

- 52. Aed ua Ruairc, k. Conmaicne [AT – k. east Connacht]
- 53. Aed m. Donn Sléibe ua hEochada, k. Ulster
- 54. Mael Sechlainn ua Donnacán, k. Ara Tíre

1123

- 55. Donnchad m. Gilla Pátraic Ruad, k. Osraige
- 56. Tadg ua Máille, k. Umall
- 57. Aed m. Donnchad ua Ruairc, k. Breifne & Conmaicne

1124

- 58. Mael Sechlainn m. Cormac ua Carrthach, k. Caisel
- 59. Mael Sechlainn m. Tadg m. Diarmata, k. Mag Lurg

1125

- 60. Mael Sechlainn m. Donnchad, k. Mide
- 61. Muirchertach ua Cerbaill, k. south Fernmag
- 62. Domnall ua Cerbaill, k. Airgialla

1126

- 63. Ua Mael Runaid, k. Fir Manach

1127

- 64. Niall m. Duinn Sléibe, k. Ulaid
- 65. Eochaid ua Mathgamna, k. Ulaid
- 66. Aed m. Duinn Sléibe, k. Ulaid

1128

- 67. Faelán ua Duibdara, k. Fir Manach
- 68. Ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 69. Domnall m. Aed ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgada [AT - & Uí Fiachrach & Cera]
- 70. Magnus m. Mac Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogain and the North
- 71. Aed Ua Cerbaill, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin

1129

- 72. Niall ua Crícháin, k. Fiachrach Ard Sratha
- 73. Flann Ua Cellaig, k. Brega

1130

- 74. Amlaíb ua Senán ‘Wet Cowl’, k. Gailenga
- 75. Aengus ua Caíndelbáin, k. Loegaire
- 76. Diarmait ua Mael Sechlainn, k. east Mide
- 77. Aed ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
- 78. Gilla Pátraic ua Serrraig, k. Dál Buinne

1131

- 79. Ragnall ua hEochada, k. Ulaid
- 80. Cu Mide ua Cridain, k. Fernmag
- 81. Donn Sléibe ua hInnrehtaig, k. Uí Méith

1132

- 82. Conchobor ua Flaithbertaig, k. west Connacht

1133

N/A

1134

- 83. Donnchad ua Conchobair, k. Uí Failge
- 84. Cerball m. Mac Faolán, k. Uí Faoláin
- 85. Ugaire ua Tuathail, k. Uí Cheinnselaig

1135

- 86. Ruaidrí ua Canannán, k. Cenél Conaill
- 87. Ua Matadán, k. Síil Anmchada & Uí Maine
- 88. Mael Mórda ua Conchobair, k. Uí Failge
- 89. Echrí ua Taidg, k. Fer Lí
- 90. Finguine Ua Cáim, k. Glenn na Manach
- 91. Mathgamain ua Donnchada, k. Cenél Laegaire
- 92. Aed ua Conchobair, k. Corco Modruad
- 93. Cu Mara m. Cu Mara m. Domnall, k. Uí Caisin
- 94. Cian m. Donnchad Donn m. Cú Mara m. Brodchú, k. Uí Echach

1136

- 95. Domnall ua Lochlann, k. North of Ireland
- 96. Domnall ua Cáidelbáin, k. Loegaire
- 97. Conchobor m. Domnall mac Lochlainn, k. Ailech
- 98. Son of Mael Sechlainn ua Bric, k. Déise

1137

N/A

1138

- 99. Domnall ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 100. Cormac mac Carthaig, k. Des Mumu

1139

- 101. Murchad ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Fir Cell
- 102. Donnchad ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 103. Aed ua Cadla, k. Conmaicne Mara
- 104. Conchobor m. Ardgar mac Lochlainn, k. Ailech

1140

N/A

1141

- 105. Domnall m. Ruaidrí ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell

1142

- 106. Donnchad ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige
- 107. Son of Fergal ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell

1143

- 108. Ua Domnaill, k. Corco Baiscinn

1144

- 109. Conchobor m. Tairdelbach ua Conchobair, k. Temair [Cotton. – Mide]

1145

110. Donnchad ua Mannacháin, k. Uí Briúin na Sionna
- 1146**
111. Gilla Pátraic ua Donnchada, k. Osraige
 112. Ragnall m. Turcaill, k. Gaill of Dublin
 113. Cellach ua Cellaig, k. Brega
- 1147**
114. Gilla Mo Chonna ua Cathail, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne
- 1148**
115. Odar, k. Gaill of Dublin
 116. Sitric ua Braín, k. Bregmuine
 117. Son of Fergal ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 1149**
 N/A
- 1150**
118. Gilla Claen ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 1151**
119. Muirchertach m. Conchobor ua Briain, k. Tuad Mumu
 120. Muirchertach ua Bric, k. Déise
- 1152**
121. Domnall m. Rigbardáin ua Cerbaill, k. Éile
- 1153**
122. Flaitbertach ua Canannan, k. Cenél Conaill
- 1154**
123. Donn Cathaig, k. Cenél Aedha
- 1155**
124. Gilla Got ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
 125. Ua Cinfældad, k. Conaill Gabra
 126. Ua Cuilén, k. Conaill Gabra
 127. Amlaíb ua hEidirsgeóil, k. Corco Laighde
- 1156**
128. Aed m. Donnchad ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Fir Cell
 129. Aed ua Canannain, k. Cenél Conaill
 130. Cuiléan ua Cuiléin, k. Uí Chonaill Gabra
- 1157**
131. Cú Ulaid ua Caíndelbáin, k. Laegaire
- 1158**
132. Amlaíb ua Donnchada, hk. Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 1159**
133. Gilla Críst m. Diarmait m. Tadhg, k. Mag Luirg

- 134. Muiredach ua Mandachain, k. Uí Briúin na Sinna
- 135. Branán m. Gilla Críst mac Branáin, k. Corco Achlann
- 136. Son of Finnan ua Sibhlen, k. Uí Echach Muaid
- 137. Aed na n-Amus, k. Conmaicni

1160

- 138. Donnchad ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide
- 139. Ua Canannain, k. Cenél Conaill
- 140. Brodur m. Torcall, k. Dublin
- 141. Diarmait ua Cathasaig, k. Saithne
- 142. Domnall m. Gilla Sechlainn, k. south Brega

1161

- 143. Muirchertach ua Ceallaigh, k. Brega
- 144. Gofraid ua Ragallaigh, k. Muintir Mael Mórda & Mag Gailenga
- 145. Aed m. Amlaíb Ua Donnchada, k. Cenél Laegaire and
Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 146. Domnall m. Mael Muad, k. Cenél Béici

1162

N/A

1163

- 147. Muirchertach Ua Donnchada, k. Eóganacht

1164

N/A

1165

- 148. Domnall ua Gilla Pátraic, k. north Osraige
- 149. Conchobor ua Broighte, k. Cenn Caille

1166

- 150. Aed ua Mael Fabail, k. Carraic Brachaide
- 151. Muirchertach m. Niall ua Lachlainn, hk. Ireland [MCB –
Ailech]
- 152. Mac Gilla mac Colmóig, k. Uí Dunchada

1167

- 153. Muirchertach m. Lagmand ua Duibhdirma, k. Fordruim

1168

- 154. Muirchertach m. Toirrdelbach ua Briain, k. Dal Cais [Cotton. –
Mumu]
- 155. Donnchad ua Cerbaill, hk. Airgialla
- 156. Murchad ua Finnalláin, k. Delbna Mór

1169

- 157. Diarmait ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide

1170

- 158. Conchobor m. Muirchertach ua Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogain
- 159. Magnus mac Duinnsléibe Ua hEochada, k. Ulaid

160. Diarmait ua hAinbheith, k. Uí Méith
 161. Cathal Ua Donnchada, k. Uí Echach
- 1171**
 162. Ascall m. Torcall, k. Dublin
 163. Domnall ua Focarta, k. south Éile
 164. Aed ua Ruairc, k. Machaire Gaileng
 165. Domnall ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
 166. Mac Gilla Seachlainn, k. Brega
- 1172**
 167. Tigernán ua Ruairc, k. Bréifne and Conmaicne
 168. Mael Muire Mac Murchada, l. Muintir Birn, l. &k. Uí Echach
 169. Ua Caellaide, k. Osraige
- 1173**
 170. Duinn Sléibe m. Cú Ulad m. Conchobor m. Duinn Sléibe, k.
 Ulaid
 171. Domnall Bregach ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide
 172. Sitric ua Flannacáin, k. eastern Tethba
- 1174**
 173. Ruaidrí ua Cerbaill, k. Éile
 174. Mael Runaid ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
 175. Mael Sechlainn ua Donnacáin, k. Ara
- 1175**
 176. Gilla Coluim ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
 177. Domnall Caemanach m. Diarmait Mac Murchada, k. Laigin
- 1176**
 178. Cu Maighi ua Flainn, k. Uí Tuirtri & Fir Li & Dál nAraide
 [MCB - & Dál Riata]
 179. Cormac Liathanach mac Carthaig, k. Des Mumu
 180. Domnall mac Gilla Pátraic, k. Cairpre ua Ciarda
 181. Domnall m. Amlaíb m. Mael Runaid, k. Fir Manach
 182. Niall m. Muirchertach m. Niall ua Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogain
- 1177**
 183. Aed ua Neill, k. Cenél Eogain
 184. Domnall ua Cathusach, k. Dál nAraide
 185. Niall ua Gailmredaigh, k. Fir Mag Itha & Cenél Énna
- 1178**
 186. Dúnlang ua Tuathail, k. Uí Muiredaig
 187. Lochlainn Ua Cinaeda, k. Eóganacht
 188. Ua hAinbith, k. Uí Méith
 189. Murchad Ua Cerbaill, k. Airgialla
- 1179**
 190. Domnall m. Amlaíb Mór ua Donnchada, k. Eóganacht & Uí
 Echach

1180

- 191. Conchobor ua Cellaigh, k. Uí Maine
- 192. Muirgius ua hEidin, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne

1181

- 193. Domnall ua Ceinnedig, k. Ormond
- 194. Donn Sléibe ua Gadra, k. Sliab Lughu
- 195. Domnall ua Concenainn, k. Uí Diarmata
- 196. Aed ua hAedha m. Ruaidrí, k. west Connacht

1182

N/A

1183

- 197. Bég ua hEgra, k. Luigne

1184

- 198. Art ua Mael Sechlainn, k. west Mide [MCB – Mide]
- 199. Amlaib m. Fergal ua Ruairc, k. Breifne

1185

- 200. Diarmait m. Cormac mac Carthaig, k. Mumu
- 201. Mael Sechlainn m. Mac Lachlainn, k. Cenél Eogain

1186

- 202. Murchad ua Cellaigh, k. Uí Maine
- 203. Gilla Críst mac Cathmail, k. Cenél Feradaig [and the Clanns]

1187

- 204. Ruaidrí ua Flaithbertaig, k. Cenél Eogain
- 205. Aed m. Mael Sechlainn ua Ruairc, k. Uí Briúin [ALC - & Conmaicne]

1188

- 206. Ruaidrí ua Canannain, k. Cenél Conaill
- 207. Domnall m. Aed ua Lochlainn, k. Ailech
- 208. Muirchertach ua Briain, k. Bregmuine

1189

- 209. Conchobor Maenmaighi m. Ruaidrí ua Conchobair, hk. Connacht

1190

N/A

1191

N/A

1192

- 210. Taichlech ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgaid & Uí Fiachrach
- 211. Conchobor m. Magnus m. Duinn Sléibe, k. Ulaid

1193

212. Cú Mide ua Floirin, k. Uí Tuirtre & Fir Li

1194

N/A

1195

N/A

1196

213. Muirchertach m Muirchertach ua Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogain

1197

214. Echmarcach ua Dochartaig, k. Cenél Conaill

215. Donnchad ua Tairchert, kl. Clann Sneidghile

216. Gilla Sronmael ua Dochartaig, k. Conaill

217. Conchobar Ua Cathain, k. Fir na Craoibhe and Cianacht

1198

N/A

1199

218. Cathalan ua Mael Fabail, k. Carraic Brachaide

Appendix 3: Homicides

Eleventh century homicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

TOTAL: 679

1000

1. Domnall Ua Domnalláin, k. Thurles
2. Flaithbertach Ua Cnannáin, k. Cenél Conaill
3. Cenn Faelad m. Conchobor, k. Gabair

1001

4. Niall Ua Ruairc
5. Diarmaid Ua Lachtnán, k. Tethba

1002

6. Tréinfher m. Céilecán
7. Meirlechán, k. Gailenga
8. Brotud m. Diarmait
9. Muirchertach Ua Ciarda

1003

10. Sínach ua hUaargusa, k. Uí Méith
11. Cathal m. Labraid, k. Mide
12. Cellach m. Diarmait, k. Osraige
13. Aed ua Con Fhiacla, k. Tethba
14. Conchobor m. Mael Sechnaill, k. Corco Modruad
15. Aicher na Traigthech
16. Aed m. Echthigern
17. Lorcán m. Brótaid
18. Donngal m. Donnathaigh, k. Gailenga
19. Amlaíb m. Lochlainn
20. Flaithbertach Ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Eogan & Cenél Conaill

1004

21. Gilla Cellaig m. Comaltán, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne
22. Brian m. Mael Ruanaid
23. Eochaid m. Ardgar, k. Ulaid
24. Dub Tuinne
25. Cú Duilig
26. Domnall
27. Gairbith, k. Uí Echach
28. Gilla Pátraic m. Tomaltach
29. Cuimasach m. Flathrói
30. Dub Slánga m. Aed
31. Cathalán m. Étrú
32. Coiméne m. Muirchertach
33. Aed m. Domnall ua Néill, k. Ailech
34. Donnchad ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
35. Ua Channáin 1
36. Ua Channáin 2

1005

- 37. Gilla Comgaill, k. Ulaid
- 38. Aed m. Tomaltach, k. Leth Cathail
- 39. Artán

1006

- 40. Eichmílid Ua hAitid, k. Uí Echach
- 41. Mael Ruanaid m. Flannacáin
- 42. Cathalán, k. Gailenga
- 43. Mael na mBó, k. Uí Cheinnselaigh
- 44. Gilla Comgaill m. Ardgar m. Matudán, k. Ulaid

1007

- 45. Cú Connacht, k. Síil Anmchada
- 46. Maelrunaid m. Ardgar
- 47. Tréinfher Ua Baigelláin, k. Dartriage
- 48. Matudán m. Domnall, k. Ulaid
- 49. Cú Ulaid m. Aengus, k. Leth Cathail
- 50. The 'Torc', k. Ulaid
- 51. Domnall m. Dub Tuinne, k. Ulaid

1008

- 52. Muiredach m. Matudáin

1009

- 53. Maelán of the large spear, k. Uí Dorthainn
- 54. Donnchad Ua Céili

1010

- 55. Aed m. Conn
- 56. Donn Cuan, k. Mugdorna

1011

- 57. Flaithbertach Ua Ceithineáin
- 58. Maelrunaid ua Domnaill, k. Cenél Lugdach
- 59. Aengus ua Lapáin, k. Cenél Enna

1012

- 60. Niall m. Gilla Pátraic m. Fergal
- 61. Muirchertach m. Artáin
- 62. Aengus
- 63. Crínán m. Gormlaith, k. Conaile

1013

- 64. Donnchad m. Donnchad Finn
- 65. Cernachán m. Flann, k. Luigne
- 66. Senán ua Leocháin, k. Gailenga
- 67. Ualgarg ua Gardai, k. Cairpre
- 68. Flann m. Mael Sechnaill
- 69. Amlaíb m. Sitric, k. Foreigners
- 70. Mathgamain m. Duibgilla m. Amlaím
- 71. Domnall m. Cathal the Cat
- 72. Muirchertach m. Aed ua Néill

73. Mael Sechnaill
74. In tAlbanach m. Mael Sechnaill m. Domnall

1014

75. Mael Mórda m. Murchad, k. Laigen
76. Domnall m. Fergal, k. Fortuatha
77. Dubgall m. Amlaíb
78. Sigard m. Lodur, Jarl Innsi Orc
79. Gilla Ciaráin m. Glún Iairn
80. Oittir Dub
81. Suartgair
82. Donnchad ua Crulb
83. Griséne
84. Luimne
85. Amlaíb m. Lagmann
86. Brodur
87. Murchad m. Briain
88. Tairdelbach m. Murchad
89. Conaing m. Donn Cuan m. Cennétig
90. Brogarbhan m. Conchobair, k. Uí Failge
91. Mothla m. Domnall m. Faeláin, k. Déisi Muman
92. Eochu m. Dúnadach
93. Niall ua Cuinn
94. Cúduiligh m. Cennétig
95. Tadc m. Murchad Ua Cellaigh, k. Uí Maine
96. Uí Maine king 2
97. Mael Runaid ua hEidin, k. Aidne
98. Géibennach ua Dubagáin, k. Fernmag
99. Mac Bethad m. Muiredach Claen, k. Ciarraige Luachra
100. Domnall m. Diarmait, k. Corco Baiscinn
101. Scanlán m. Cathal, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
102. Domnall m. Einen m. Cainnech, earl Marr
103. Cian mac Mael Muad
104. Cathal mac Mael Muad
105. Rogallach mac Mael Muad
106. Cathal m. Domnall, k. Uí Ehdach
107. Ruaidrí ua Donnocáin, k. Arad
108. Domnall m. Cathal

1015

109. Domnall m. Dub dá Barenn
110. Niall m. Fergal m. Conaing
111. Muirchertach m. Muiredach ua Néill
112. Donnchad ua Goaing, k. Ciannachta
113. Aed ua Ruairc, k. Bréifne
114. Cathal m. Conchobor, k. Corco Modruad
115. Lochlainn, k. Corco Modruad
116. Fiach m. Dubchrón

1016

117. Domnall ua Loingsigh, k. Dál nAraide
118. Niall m. Dub Tuinne
119. Conchobor ua Domnalláin, k. Uí Thuirtri

120. Coscrach m. Muiredach m. Flann, k. Maige Itha
 121. Donn Cuan m. Dúnlang, k. Laigen
 122. Tadc ua Riain, k. Uí Droma
 123. Bacthán m. Dúnlaing
 124. Ua Lochlainn
 125. Niall m. Eochaid

1017

126. Fergal m. Domnall m. Conchobor
 127. Flann ua Béicce, k. Uí Méith
 128. Cormac m. Lorcán, k. Uí Echach
 129. Donnchad m. Donnchad ua Congalaig
 130. Muiredach ua Duibéoin, k. Uí Moccu Uais
 131. Gilla Críst ua Lorcáin, k. Caille Follamain
 132. Flanducán, ua Cellach
 133. Congalach m. Mael Sechlainn
 134. Cerball m. Mael Mórda
 135. Anmchad m. Murchad
 136. Donnchad m. Dub dá Bairenn
 137. Cú Crechmael Ua Nechtain

1018

138. Maelán m. Éicnech ua Lorcán, k. Gailenga & Tuatha Luigne
 139. Gilla Críst m. Conaing m. Congalach, l. Clann Sínaig
 140. Domnall ua Caíndelbáin, k. Laegaire
 141. Cais Mide

1019

142. Ailéne m. Oiséne, k. Mugdorna
 143. Oiséne ua Cathasaig, k. Saithne
 144. Ardgar m. Mael Sechlainn m. Maelrunaid
 145. Árchú m. Mael Sechlainn m. Maelrunaid
 146. Gilla Caemgein m. Dúnlang
 147. Ruaidrí ua hAilelláin, k. Uí Echach
 148. Congalach m. Ceinnétig
 149. Gilla Muire m. Ceinnétig
 150. Mael Muad, k. Fir Cell
 151. Domnall m. Catharnach m. Aed
 152. Cú Luachra m. Conchobair, k. Ciarraige Luachra

1020

153. Aed ua hInnrehtaig

1021

154. In Lethderg
 155. Branacáin ua Maeluidir, k. Mide
 156. Cellach ua Cathasaig
 157. Aed m. Flann m. Mael Sechlainn
 158. Domnall ua Murchada

1022

159. Muirchertach ua Carraig
 160. Mathgamain m. Laidcnén, k. Fernmag

- 161. Muiren the Linguist
- 162. Son of Cerball, k. Éile
- 163. Domnall Ua Cellaigh
- 164. Sitric m. Ímar
- 165. Flaithrí m. Dub Slanga m. Aed m. Tomaltach, k. Lecale
- 166. Domnall ua Murchada, k. North
- 167. Domnall m. Aed Ua Maeldoraid

1023

- 168. Lochlainn m. Mael Sechlainn
- 169. Tadc m. Brian
- 170. Conchobor ua Carraig
- 171. Ua Machnéin 1, k. Gailenga
- 172. Ua Machnéin 2, k. Gailenga
- 173. Domnall ua hEgra, k. Luigne Connacht
- 174. Domnall m. Aed ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide
- 175. Anfith Ua Cathasaigh, k. Saithne

1024

- 176. Úgair m. Dúnlang, k. Laigen
- 177. Mael Mórda m. Lorcán, k. Uí Cheinnselaigh
- 178. Donn Sléibe m. Mael Mórda
- 179. Domnall m. Aed
- 180. Cúán ua Lothcháin
- 181. Mael Dúin ua Con Caille, k. Uí Niallán
- 182. Mael Runaid ua Ciarda
- 183. Gilla Ultáin m. Roduib

1025

- 184. Niall ua Conchobair
- 185. Gerr Gaela, k. Brega
- 186. Ua Comalta, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne

1026

- 187. Aimirgein ua Mórda, k. Laíges
- 188. Muirchertach m. Congalach
- 189. Muiredach ua Céili
- 190. Prior of Tullamore
- 191. Gerr in Cogadh

1027

- 192. Dogra m. Dúnadach, k. Síil Anmchada
- 193. Domnall m. Seaclán
- 194. Raen, k. Mide
- 195. Donnchad ua Duinn, k. Brega
- 196. Cathalán ua Crícháin, k. Fernmag
- 197. Cú Locha ua Gairbíth, k. Uí Meith
- 198. Mael Sechlainn m. k. Corco Modruad
- 199. Son of Cuilén 1
- 200. Son of Cuilén 2
- 201. Ócan ua Corc m. Anluan
- 202. Cónall m. Écertach
- 203. Gilla Ausaili

204. Mac Gilla Coimgin, k. Uí Briúin Cualu

1028

205. Brian ua Conchobair
206. Flaithbertach ua Erudáin
207. Conchobor m. Eochaid
208. Mael Mochta, k. Fir Rois
209. Donn ua Congaleng
210. Cornán ua Ruairc

1029

211. Donn Sléibe m. Brogorbán, k. Uí Failge
212. Donnchad m. Donnacáin, k. Fernmag
213. Cinaeth m. In Gerc, k. Conaille
214. Aed ua Ruairc
215. Aengus ua hAengusa
216. Superior of Druim Cliab
217. Muirchertach ua Mael Doraid

1030

218. Tadc m. Cathail Ua Conchobiar, k. Connacht
219. In Got, k. Mide
220. Ruaidrí ua Canannáin
221. Eochaid m. the Abbot
222. Mael Dúin m. Ciarmac, l. Cenél mBinnigh
223. Donnchadh, k. Cairpre
224. Ua Cearnachán, k. Laigse
225. Aed ua Mael Doraid
226. Tadc m. Lorcán
227. Cú Calaig, k. Gailenga
228. John Ua Leochan, k. Gailenga
229. Cathal m. Amalgaid, k. Uí Ceallaigh Cualu
230. Duaghter of Mac Gilla Ceomgain
231. Conchobair m. Tadc Ua Ceallaigh, k. Uí MainE
232. Royal heir of Corco Baiscinn 1
233. Royal heir of Corco Baiscinn 2
234. Royal heir of Corco Baiscinn 3

1031

235. Cleric 1
236. Cleric 2
237. Cleric 3
238. Cleric 4
239. Ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Conaill
240. Ua Donnocáin, k. Ara Tíre
241. Cú Sléibe ua Dobuilén
242. Glún Iairn m. Sitric
243. Ragnall m. Ragnall, k. Waterford
244. Donnsléibe
245. Donnsléibe's brother
246. Ua Taidc m. Fairchellach
247. Steward of Dún na Sciath
248. Mael Coluim, k. Caenraige

- 249. Heir Uí Chonaill Gabra 1
- 250. Heir Uí Chonaill Gabra 2
- 251. Heir mac Dub Daire m. Cinaed 1
- 252. Heir mac Dub Daire m. Cinaed 2

1032

- 253. Mathgamain ua Riacáin
- 254. Domnall ua Mael Doraid, k. Cenél Conaill
- 255. Flann m. Mathgamain m. Muiredach, k. Ciarraige
- 256. Gillacomgain m. Mael Brigte
- 257. Domnall m. Donn Cothaid, k. Gailenga
- 258. Étrú ua Conaing
- 259. Conchobor m. Mael Sechlainn Ua Dubda

1033

- 260. Conchobor ua Muiredaig, k. Ciarraige
- 261. Braen ua Cléirig
- 262. Muiredach uaGilla Pátraic
- 263. Ua Baete m. Cinaed
- 264. Aengus ua Cathail
- 265. Maelrunaid Ua Carraig Calma
- 266. Lorcán Ua Caindelbáin, k. Laegaire & Fir Cul
- 267. Fogartach ua hAeda, k. Fir Lurg & Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha
- 268. Aed m. Ruaidrí
- 269. Murchad ua Mael Sechlainn
- 270. Ua Dúnlaing, k. Muscraige Tíre

1034

- 271. Gilla Sechnaill m. Gilla Mo-Chonna
- 272. Dub Daingen, k. Connacht
- 273. Gilla Fulartaig, k. Déissi Brega
- 274. Béc m. Ua hAgda
- 275. Gilla Pátraic Ua Flannacáin, k. Tethba
- 276. Muiredach Ua Flaithbertaigh, k. Uí Briúin
- 277. Son of Gilla Críst ua Nechtain

1035

- 278. Cathal m. Amalgaid, k. west Laigen
- 279. Daughter of son of Gilla Caemgein m. Cinaed
- 280. Flaithbertach ua Murchada
- 281. Iarnán ua Flanchadh
- 282. Ragnall ua hÍmair

1036

- 283. Domnall ua hUathmoráin, k. Fir Lí
- 284. Scolóc ua Flannacáin, k. Tethba
- 285. Domnall ua Flainn
- 286. Murchad ua In Capall
- 287. Niall m. Muirgius
- 288. Donnchad m. Dúnlang, k. Laigen
- 289. Mael Sechlainn ua Maelrunaid, k. Cremthainn
- 290. Flaithbertach ua Néill

1037

- 291. Cú Chaille m. Cennétig, k. Múscraige
- 292. Cú Chaille's son
- 293. Mathgamain ua Cathail
- 294. Dúnlang's son, k. Laigen
- 295. Comaltáin ua Lochlainn
- 296. Cernachán Got
- 297. Ua Con Cenainn
- 298. Árchú ua Ceilecáin, k. Uí Bresail
- 299. Ruaidrí ua Lorcáin, k. Uí Nialláin
- 300. Cú Inmain ua Robann, k. Waterford
- 301. Ua Mael Doraid 1
- 302. Ua Mael Doraid 2
- 303. Ua Mael Doraid 3
- 304. Gilla Coemgin m. Amalgaih, k. Uí Ceallaigh
- 305. Fionnachta Ua hUrchada
- 306. Ua Fallomain 1
- 307. Ua Fallomain 2
- 308. Ua Fallomain 3

1038

- 309. Gilla Críst m. Cathbarr ua Domnaill
- 310. Orc Allaid ua Ruadacáin, k. Uí Echach
- 311. Cú Duilig ua Donnchada
- 312. Ua hAimirgin, k. Tethba
- 313. Eochaid m. a Abaidh

1039

- 314. Domnall m. Donnchad, k. Uí Faeláin
- 315. Donnchad Derg ua Ruairc
- 316. Ruaidrí, k. Fernmag
- 317. Aed ua Flannacáin, k. Lurg & Uí Fiachrach
- 318. Muiredach m. Flaithbertach ua Néill
- 319. Cerball m. Faelán
- 320. Donnchad m. Gilla Pátraic, k. Laigen & Osraige
- 321. Mac Ruisse, k. Cenél Fiacrach

1040

- 322. Ua Dublaich, k. Fir Tulach
- 323. Ua Maelrunaid

1041

- 324. Domnall Remar
- 325. Muirchertach m. Gilla Pátraic
- 326. Gilla Comgaill m. Donn Cuan m. Dúnlang
- 327. Cú Críche Ua Dúnlang, k. Laíges
- 328. Cú Críche's son
- 329. Cailleoc
- 330. Mac Conáin
- 331. Donnchadh m. Faolán m. Murchad
- 332. Glún Iairn m. Faolán
- 333. Muiredach m. Donnchad ua hAeda
- 334. Mac Cu Duilig

335. Ua Ségda, k. Corca Duibne

1042

- 336. Murchad m. Dúnlán, k. Laigen
- 337. Domnall m. Aed, k. Uí Bairrche
- 338. Flann m. Mael Sechlainn
- 339. Mael Petair ua hAilecáin
- 340. Mac Craith m. Gormán m. Tresach, k. Uí Bairrche
- 341. Mac Craith's wife
- 342. Ua hAnmchada
- 343. Mathgamain ua Fáilbi
- 344. Aed ua Cathail, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin

1043

- 345. Domnall ua Fergaile, k. Fortuatha Laigen
- 346. Flann ua hAinbith, k. Uí Méith
- 347. Aed ua Con Fhiacla, k. Tethba
- 348. Ceinnétig ua Cuirc, k. Músraige
- 349. Ua Donnocáin, k. Ara
- 350. Andadh Ua Ruairc

1044

- 351. Cumuscach ua hAilelléin, k. Uí Echach
- 352. Domnall ua Cuirc, k. Músraige
- 353. The Cleric Ua Conchobair
- 354. Ua hAeda, k. Uí Fiachrach Arada
- 355. Murchad m. Bran, k. Uí Faeláin
- 356. Mac Ruitin
- 357. Cuilén m. Uallacháin
- 358. Ua Leabáin

1045

- 359. Superior of Leighglenn
- 360. Muirchertach ua Néill
- 361. Carthach m. Saerbrethach
- 362. Ragnall Ua hEochada
- 363. Manchán m. Mael Sechlainn m. Cennfaeladh
- 364. Ua Donnocáin, k. Musraige Ua hAeda
- 365. Cúchonnacht m. Gadhr Ua Dúnadaig
- 366. Carthach, k. Eóganacht Caisil
- 367. Ua Cinn Faelad
- 368. Amalgaid m. Flann, k. Calraige

1046

- 369. Muiredach m. Flaithbertach ua Neill
- 370. Aited ua hAited, k. Uí Echach Ulaid
- 371. Art Ua Ruairc, k. Connacht
- 372. Fergal ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 373. Conchobor ua Loingsig, k. Dál nAraide
- 374. Ua Findgaire, k. Eóganacht Cill na Manach
- 375. Maelrunaid Got Ua Ciarda
- 376. Ua Cairpre m. Flann, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 377. Ua Cerbaill

1047

- 378. Niall Ua Ruairc
- 379. Muirchertach ua Matudán, k. Uí Bresail
- 380. Ua hIfernáin

1048

- 381. Dúlang m. Dúngal
- 382. Mac Con Mara ua Mac Liac
- 383. Anéslis m. Domnall

1049

- 384. Flaithbertach ua Loingsig
- 385. Muirchertach m. Mael Sechlainn
- 386. Conchobor ua Cinn Faelad, k. Uí Chonaill Gabra
- 387. Ímar ua Béice, k. Uí Meith
- 388. Tairdelbach Ua Cathasaigh

1050

- 389. Maelrunaid m. Cú Choine, k. Éile
- 390. Donnchad m. Gilla Faeláin, k. Uí Failge
- 391. Eochaid ua hOiséni

1051

- 392. Muirchertach m. Brec, k. Déisi Muman
- 393. Faolán m. Buatán m. Brec
- 394. Ua Conchobair, k. Uí Fhailge
- 395. Diarmaid m. Domnall m. Brian

1052

- 396. Domnall Bán Ua Briain
- 397. Domnall m. Gilla Críst m. Cú Cuailngi
- 398. Gilla Pátraic m. Domnall
- 399. Mac Aireachtach, k. Callraighe

1053

- 400. Mac na hAidche ua Ruairc
- 401. Dub Emna m. Cinaed
- 402. Cú Macha m. Cleirchén
- 403. Mael Crón m. Cathal, k. Brega
- 404. Donnchad Ua Cellacháin
- 405. Niall ua hÉicnigh, k. Fir Manach
- 406. Cochlán, k. Delbna
- 407. Cú Chiar ua Mael Dúin, k. Lurg
- 408. Gilla Críst ua hÉicnigh
- 409. Congalach m. Senán, k. Gailenga
- 410. Aed ua Cuilén

1054

- 411. Aed ua Fergal, k. Tulach Óc
- 412. Son of Archú ua Céilecáin, k. Uí Bresail
- 413. Dubgall ua hAedacáin, k. Uí Nialláin
- 414. In Croibderg

- 415. Aed m. Ceinnétig m. Donn Chuan, l. Clann Tairdelbaig
- 416. Son of Carthach 1
- 417. Son of Carthach 2

1055

- 418. Domnall Ruad ua Briain
- 419. Cennfaeladh, k. Ciarraige
- 420. Ua Bascenn, k. Corco Baiscinn
- 421. Son of Assid m. Domnall, k. Corco Baiscinn

1056

- 422. Domnall m. Cernachán the Stammerer
- 423. Odar m. Flan, k. Calraige
- 424. Cuilend m. Derga

1057

- 425. Niall ua hÉicnechán
- 426. Dúngal ua Donnchada, k. Eóganacht Caisil
- 427. Finnguire ua Finnguire
- 428. Mael Ruanaid ua Fócarta, k. south Éile
- 429. Domnall Ua Ruairc
- 430. Muigrón ua Mutain
- 431. Son of Flaithbertach ua hEidin, k. Uí Fiachrach

1058

- 432. Cairpre Ua Lígda
- 433. Cú Rígbardán m. Cú Coirne, k. Éile
- 434. Gallbrat ua Cerball
- 435. Domnall m. Niall Ua Ruairc
- 436. Ua Gébennaig, k. In Déis Bec
- 437. Donnchad ua hEochu

1059

- 438. Gilla Muire m. Airechtach, l. Clann Sínaigh
- 439. Mael Sechlainn ua Bric
- 440. Aed ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgada
- 441. Cathal m. Tigernán, k. Íar Connacht
- 442. Congalach ua Riacáin
- 443. Duarcán ua hEgra, k. Luigne
- 444. Gilla Coeimgein m. Gilla Comgill
- 445. Muirchertach m. Dalbach m. Maelrunaid
- 446. Ruaidrí Ua Gadra
- 447. Mael Mórda m. Mac Faoláin
- 448. Niall ua Mael Doraid, k. Cenél Conaill

1060

- 449. Student at Clonmacnois
- 450. Layman at Clonmacnois
- 451. Heir Uí Fócarta
- 452. Anad ua Lochlainn, k. Coro Modruad
- 453. Anad ua Flainn, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin

1061

- 454. Domnall ua Mael doraid
- 455. Flann ua Ceallaigh, k. Brega
- 456. Gairbith Ua Fallomain
- 457. Flaitbertach Ua Briain
- 458. Tadg Ua Briain
- 459. Muiredach ua Muiredaig
- 460. Ua Cerbaill

1062

- 461. Ruaidrí Ua Flaitbertaigh
- 462. Tadg m. Aed Ua Conchobair
- 463. Donn Cuan ua Machainéin
- 464. Ruaidrí m. Cú Ciarraige
- 465. In Corrdam Ua Nechtain
- 466. Uí Failbi, heir Corca Duibne 1
- 467. Uí Failbi, heir Corca Duibne 2
- 468. Dúnlang Ua Cinn Faelad

1063

- 469. Cathal ua Donnchada, k. Uí Echach Mumu
- 470. Cú Duilig ua Taidc, k. Fir Lí
- 471. Mael Sechlainn ua Matodáin
- 472. Faolán mac Murchad
- 473. Cú Meda m. Dúnlang
- 474. Scanlán Ua Dúnlaing

1064

- 475. Muirchertach Ua Néill, k. Telach Óc
- 476. Diarmait ua Lorcáin
- 477. Ua Cairpre, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 478. Ua Cerbaill, k. Eóganacht

1065

- 479. Donnchad ua Mathgamain
- 480. Brodur
- 481. Diarmaid m. Tadg Ua Cellaigh, k. Uí Maine
- 482. Flaithertaigh, k. Íar Connacht
- 483. Domnall ua Loingsigh, k. Dál nAraide
- 484. Muirchertach ua Mael Fábaill, k. Carraic Brachaide
- 485. Leocán m. Laidcnén, k. Gailenga
- 486. Echmíled ua hAited, k. Uí Echach
- 487. Son of Diarmait m. Taidelbach Ua Conchobair
- 488. Son of Maelmiadaigh ua hEolaid

1066

- 489. Aed Ua Ruairc
- 490. Cellach m. Muirchertach ua Cellaigh
- 491. Gilla Braite, k. Uí Briúin
- 492. Son of Senán, k. Gailenga
- 493. Gilla Moininme m. Aed m. Ua hUalgarg
- 494. Son of Conaing Ua Muiricéan
- 495. In Finnsáilech, k. Uí Echach
- 496. Loingsech Ua Domnaill, k. Uí Echach

1067

- 497. Conchobor Ua Conchobur, k. Ciarraige Luachra
- 498. Aed Ua Conchobair
- 499. Aed ua Concenaínd, k. Uí Diarmata
- 500. Donnsléibe Ua Gadra
- 501. Tadhg ua Muiricéin, k. Tethba

1068

- 502. Murchad Ua Briain
- 503. Flaithbertach Ua Fergail, k. Telach Óc
- 504. Domnall m. Niall m. Mael Sechlainn
- 505. Cú Caille m. Cennétig, k. Músraige Tíre

1069

- 506. Diarmaid m. Matadán m. Gadra ua Dúnadaigh, k. Síol Anmchada

1070

- 507. Ua hEochaidén, k. Dál nAraide
- 508. Cathbar ua Maelchoithaid
- 509. Muirchertach ua Loingsigh
- 510. Glún Iairn m. Diarmait
- 511. Conn m. Mac Cuinn, k. Tethba
- 512. King of Cairpre
- 513. Mael Brigte m. Cathasach
- 514. Conchobor m. Cleric Ua Conchobair
- 515. Murchad Liathach Ua Conchobair
- 516. Murchad m. Diarmait m. Mael na mBó

1071

- 517. Ua Maelrunaid, k. Ulaid
- 518. Son of Righbhardán m. Cú Corne, k. Éile
- 519. Son of Gilla Brigte Ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 520. Tadhg Ua Riain, k. Éile

1072

- 521. Diarmait m. Mael na mBó, k. Laigen & the foreigners
- 522. Cú Ulad ua Flathraí, k. Ulaid
- 523. Son of Assidh, k. Uí Gabla
- 524. Ruaidrí Ua Canannáin
- 525. Ua Fócarta, k. Éile
- 526. Gilla Pátraic Ua Fergail, k. Fortuatha Laigen

1073

- 527. Conchobor ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Temair
- 528. Sitric m. Amlaíb
- 529. Ua Brian 1
- 530. Ua Brian 2
- 531. Mael Mórda ua Cathusaigh, k. Brega

1074

- 532. Ragnall ua Matadán
- 533. Donnchad Ua Ceallaigh, k. Uí Maine

1075

534. Donnchad Ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Conaill
535. Domnall ua Caíndelbáin

1076

536. Murchad m. Flann Ua Mael Sechlainn
537. Gairbeith ua hInnrehtaigh, k. Uí Méith
538. Gilla Críst ua Duibdara, k. Fir Manach
539. Domnall ua Críchán, k. Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha

1077

540. Ua Maelán, k. Gailenga
541. Ua Loingsigh, k. Dál nAraide
542. Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn
543. Ua Célecán
544. Ruairc ua Cadusaigh
545. Donnchad ua Flainn, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin

1078

546. Lethlobur ua Laidcnéin, k. Airgialla
547. Conchobor Ua Briain, k. Telach Óc
548. Wife of Conchobor Ua Briain
549. Domnall ua Tigernán, k. Conmaicne
550. Cathal m. Domnall, k. Cenél Énna
551. Conchobor ua Donnchada
552. Gollchláraigh
553. Son of Treodán, k. Conaille
554. The man who killed Conchobor Ua Briain

1079

555. Aed Ua Flaithbertaigh, k. Íar Connacht
556. Ua Flaithbertaigh

1080

557. Donn ua Lethlobuir, k. Fernmag
558. Eochaid ua Meirligh, k. Fernmag
559. Sitric ua Coemán
560. Son of Niall ua Serraigh
561. Ua Ciarda
562. Son of Mac Finn Bair, l. Muintir Geradáin

1081

563. Son of Ingerree, k. Conaille
564. Mac Craith ua Ócán, l. Cenél Fergusa
565. Mael Mithig ua Maelrunaid, k. Uí Tuirtri
566. Uathmurán, k. Fir Lí
567. Ua Mathgamna, k. Ulaid
568. Son of Amalgaidh ua Flainn, l. Calraige

1082

569. Gilla Críst ua Maelfabail, k. Carraic Brachaide
570. Finnchad m. Amalgaidh, l. Clann Bresail

- 571. Domnall m. Conchobor ua Briain
- 572. Cathal m. Aed Ua Conchobair
- 573. Flaithbertach ua Mael Dúin, k. Lurg
- 574. Uidrín m. Mael Muire, l. Feradaigh
- 575. Domnall m. Tadg Ua Conchobair

1083

- 576. Domnall Ua Canannáin
- 577. Gilla Moinne
- 578. Áed Méranach
- 579. King of Cenél Enna

1084

- 580. Donnchad ua Maelrunaid
- 581. Conchobor ua Céfada
- 582. Donnchad m. Cailech Ua Ruairc, k. east Connacht
- 583. Ceinnétig Ua Briain
- 584. Domnall Ua Gailmredaigh
- 585. Gilla Pátraic
- 586. Congalach m. Murchad Ua Conchobair Failge
- 587. Ua Briain 1
- 588. Ua Briain 2
- 589. Ua Briain 3
- 590. Ua Briain 4

1085

- 591. Son of Domnall Ua Ruairc k. Uí Briúin Breifne

1086

- 592. Amalgaidh m. Ruaidrí ua Ruadacán
- 593. Mael Ciarán m. Cadusaigh, k. Brega
- 594. Domnall ua hAiteid
- 595. Cumuscach ua Laithéin, k. Síil Duibtine
- 596. Gilla Moinne ua hEochada, l. Clann Sínaig
- 597. Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 598. Cinaeth Ua Cathasaigh
- 599. Cinaeth Ua Cathasaigh's son
- 600. Ua Muiredaig, l. Muintir Tlamain
- 601. Ua Baoighealláin, k. Airgialla
- 602. Cathal Ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige Luachra
- 603. Ua Muirchertaig
- 604. Eóganacht king 1
- 605. Eóganacht king 2

1087

- 606. Cathal Ua Céfada
- 607. Cú Sléibe ua Ciarda, k. Caipre
- 608. Mael Sechlainn m. Conchobair, k. Temair
- 609. Domnall ua Laithein
- 610. Aed m. Art Ua Ruairc, k. Conmaicne
- 611. Ua Ragnall
- 612. Muiredach ua hEolais
- 613. Sitric m. Cú Sléibe Ua Fergail

614. Son of Gofraid ua Siridén
- 1088**
615. Son of Cailech Ua Ruairc
 616. Son of Cathal Ua Mugrón, l. Clann Cathail
 617. Cú Sinna m. Muirchertach, l. Clann Tomaltaigh
 618. Son of Gilla Críst, l. Corco Achlann
- 1089**
619. Donnchad m. Domnall Remar
 620. Lord of Fernmag 1
 621. Lord of Fernmag 2
 622. Donnchad ua Gilla Pátraic
 623. Gilla Cainnigh Ua Flaithle
- 1090**
624. Maelrunaid Ua Cairellán, l. Clann Diarmata
 625. Gilla Críst ua Luinig, l. Cenél Maién
 626. Cinnaeth ua Mórda
 627. Son of Maelrunaid Cú Coirne
 628. Mael Sechnaill m. Dungalach
 629. Son of Conén ua Duibgenn
 630. Muirchertach ua Bric, k. Déise
- 1091**
631. Son of Dub dá Bairenn ua Domnaill
 632. Killer of Son of Dub dá Bairenn ua Domnaill
 633. Donnsléibe Ua hEochada, k. Ulaid
 634. Murchad uaDomnall Remar
 635. Sítric m. Gilla Bruidhe Ua Ruairc
 636. Laidcnén Ua Duinncathaig, k. Gailenga
- 1092**
637. In Cráebdech Ua Fallomain
 638. Flaithbertach m. Ruaidrí ua Ruadacán
 639. Énna m. Diarmait, k. Uí Cheinnselaigh
- 1093**
640. Donnchad m. Carthach, k. Eóganacht Caisil
 641. Tréinfer ua Cellaigh, k. Brega
 642. Aed Ua Baighelláin, k. Fernmag
 643. Aed m. Cathal Ua Conchobair
 644. Dub Dara ua hAighenán, k. Luigne
- 1094**
645. Fedacán
 646. Donn m. Óengus
 647. Domnall ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Temair
 648. Ólaf ua hAichir
 649. Donnsléibe ua Cinnfaelad
 650. Son of Gilla Fursa Ua Mael Muaid
 651. Annadh Ua Céile
 652. Aed ua Domnaill

- 653. Ímar ua Gilla Ultáin, l. Muintir Mael Sinna
- 654. Gilla na hIngen ua Cobtaigh, k. Umall
- 655. Son of Congal, k. na Rinna

1095

- 656. Gilla Ciarán ua hUalgarg, l. Uí Duibinnrecht
- 657. Ua hÉicnigh, k. Fir Manach
- 658. Gilla Comgaill ua Carill
- 659. Taicleach ua hEagra, k. Luigne
- 660. Domnall Ua Muiredaig, k. Tethba
- 661. Amlaíb m. Cú Meda
- 662. Son of Cathal Ua Conchobair

1096

- 663. Mathgamain ua Segdai, k. Corca Duibne
- 664. Conchobor ua hAiniarraid, k. Ciannacht
- 665. Ua Céin, k. Meic Cairthinn
- 666. Son of Dubgall ua Maelchoithid
- 667. Muirchertach ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgaid
- 668. Cú Ulaid ua Ceilecán
- 669. Gilla Ossén ua Cortén, k. Delbna
- 670. Ua hAinbith, k. Uí Méith & Fernmag
- 671. Ua hAinbith's son

1097

- 672. Tadhg m. Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair
- 673. Lochlann ua Duibdara, k. Fernmag

1098

- 674. Flaithbertach Ua Flaithbertaig, k. Íar Connacht
- 675. Diarmait m. Énna m. Diarmait, k. Laigen
- 676. Éicertach ua Toircert

1099

- 677. Ua hAmráin
- 678. Muirchertach ua hAirt, k. Tethba
- 679. Ua Lachtnán

Twelfth century homicides recorded in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.
TOTAL: 829

1100

1. Ua Gilla Colium ua Domnall, k. Cenél Lugdach
2. Echrí ua Maelmuire, k. Cinnacht
3. Mael Goan Ua Loingsig
4. Son of Mael Goan Ua Loingsig
5. Ua Maíl Gáithe
6. Donnchad mac Aed ua Ruairc

1101

7. Donnchad mac Aed ua Ruairc
8. Cathal ua Muiricán, k. Tethba

9. Echthigern Ua Braín, k. Bregmhuine
10. Giolla Fionna m. Mac Uallacháin, k. Síil Anmchada
11. Soldier 1
12. Soldier 2

1102

13. Donnchadh m. Echrí ua Aitidh
14. Domnall m. Tigernán ua Ruairc, k. Conmaicne
15. Flaithbertach m. Fothard, K. Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha
16. Niall ua Niall Ua Ruairc
17. Ua Maíl Fhabhail, k. Carraig Brachaide
18. Sítrek son of Conrach m. Eógan

1103

19. Murchad Donn, i.e. Ruadacán
20. Gilla Got ua Cormaic
21. Ragnall m. Ócan
22. Donnchadh m. Tairdelbach ua Briain
23. Son of Ua Conchobar, k. Ciarraige
24. Ua Beóain
25. Muirchertach m. Gilla Mocholmóc
26. Ua Lorcáin 1
27. Ua Lorcáin 2
28. Muirchertach ua Gormáin
29. Son of Mael Mórda 1
30. Son of Mael Mórda 2
31. Ua Riain, k. Uí Dróna
32. Gilla Pátraic Ruad, k. Osraige
33. Tortstain m. Eric
34. Pól m. Amaind
35. Beollan Armunn
36. Ua Bric 1
37. Ua Bric 2
38. Heir Déisi 1
39. Heir Déisi 2
40. Ua Failbhe
41. Ua Muiredaigh, k. Ciarraige
42. Son of Ua Muiredaigh
43. Magnus, k. Lochlainn
44. Cathalán m. Senán
45. Cionaodh ua hAmalgaid, k. Calraighe in Calaidh
46. Donnubhán Ua Dubhchinn
47. Son of Iarann Ua Fiachrach, k. Uí Enechglais
48. Amalgaidh m. Aodh m. Ruaidhrí
49. Mac Gilla Mo Cholmóc
50. Cellach Ua Domnaill
51. Gilla Senáin Ua hAedha
52. In Gilla Finn Ua Fáilbi
53. Ragnall Ua Dedaid
54. Son of Eric Finn
55. Son of Mac Senáin, k. Gailenga

1104

56. Dubcain ua Damáin
57. Mac ua hAidche ua Ruairc
58. Dúnochad ua Conchobair
59. Fiachra Ua Flainn, l. Síil Mael Ruanaid

1105

60. Conchobar m. Mael Sechlainn
61. Niall Odar ua Conchobair
62. Son of Giolla Braite m. Tigernán, k. Uí Briúin Briefne and Gailenga
63. Domnall m. 'In Got' Ua Mael Sechlainn
64. Cerball m. Domnall m. Gilla Pátraic, k. south Osraige

1106

65. Donnchad m. Murchad m. Flann Ua Mael Sechlainn
66. Son of Gilla Pátraic Ua Muiredaig

1107

67. Conchobair m. Donn Sléibe
68. Aed ua hInnrechaigh
69. Cathasach ua Tuammán, k. Uí Briúin Archaille
70. Eogan ua Riabach
71. Ua Murchada, k. Cenél Conaill
72. Ua Cú Brodnai
73. Mac Broit Riabaig Ua Duileann

1108

74. Domnall ua Ainbaith, k. Uí Bloid
75. Domnall ua Ruairc, k. Uí Briúin
76. Eochaid m. Donn Sléibe m. Eochada, k. Ulaid
77. Ua Cerbaill, k. Eóganacht Loch Léinn
78. Cinaed ua Muirchertaig
79. Son of Brothchú Ua Mathgamna

1109

80. Dartin, k. Uí Bresail
81. Goll Bairche, k. Uí Méith
82. Domnall Ruad m. Gilla Pátraic, k. Osraige
83. Ua Finn, k. Fir Rois
84. Son of Gilla Fulartaigh

1110

85. Gilla Coluim ua Maelmuaid, k. Fir Cell
86. Mael Ruanaid ua Machainén, k. Mugdorna
87. Ua Fergaile 1
88. Ua Fergaile 2
89. Ua Fergaile 3
90. Wife of k. Fir Cell / daughter of Ua Bric
91. Duarcán m. Dubhdanan ua hEolais
92. Menamuin Ua Muireachaigh
93. Ruaidrí Ua Muireadhaigh
94. Son of Gilla Críost ua M., k. Fir Cell

1111

95. Donnchad ua Anluain, k. Uí Nialláin

1112

96. Cathal ua Domnaill m. Dub dá Bairenn

1113

97. Donnchad ua Tairchert

98. Domnall m. Donnchad ua Gilla Pátraic

99. Ua Criachain

100. Ua Donnagain

101. Mael Sechlainn ua Conchobair

102. Chief of Muintir Gillgain

103. Donnchad m. Eochaid

1114

104. Aed m. Donnchad ua Eochada

105. Donnchad ua Loingsigh, k. Dál nAraide

106. Ruaidrí Ua Cananán

107. Muirchertach ua Lochlainn

108. Cathal ua Duibhcinn

109. Ua Gráda

1115

110. Donnchad m. Mael na mBó

111. Conchobar ua Conchbair, k. Uí Failgi

112. Domnall m. Tadc ua Briain

113. Mael Sechlainn ua Mael Sechlainn

114. Ua Flann m. Flannacha

115. Son of Coinín Ua Duibhcinn

116. Uí Fócarta 1

117. Ua Gilla Pátraic

118. Son of Ua Crináin

119. Cellachán Ua Cellacháin

120. Lochlainn ua Fáilbi

121. Domnall ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige Luachra

122. Ua Dúnlán ua Cinn Fhaelad

123. Donnchad Mac Murchadh, k. Leinster

124. Son of Donnchad Mac Murchadh

125. Mael Sechlainn son of Aodh Ruaidrí ua Conchobair

126. Tadc ua Lorcáin

1116

N/A

1117

127. Conchobair ua Cairillán

128. Mael Brigte m. Rónáin

129. Ua Cennétig 1

130. Ua Cennétig 2

1118

131. Laidcén ua Duibdara, k. Fir Manach

132. Brian m. Murchad, k. Tuadmumu

- 133. Mael Sechlainn ua Faeláin
- 134. Ua Bric 1
- 135. Ua Bric 2
- 136. Ua Bric 3
- 137. Ua Bric 4
- 138. Tadc ua Ségda
- 139. Amláib ua Echahch
- 140. Son of Gilla Odar ua Duibenaig
- 141. Aed ua Galmredaig

1119

- 142. Cú Collchaille ua Baighellán
- 143. Wife of Cú Collchaille ua Baighellán
- 144. Son of Cú Collchaille ua Baighellán 1
- 145. Son of Cú Collchaille ua Baighellán 2
- 146. Conchobor ua Gailmredaigh, l. Cenél Moain
- 147. Niall m. Domnall ua Lochlainn
- 148. Ua Tuathail, k. Uí Muireadhaigh

1120

- 149. Conchobor m. Flannacán m. Donnchuan, l. Muintir Birn
- 150. Echmarcach m. Uidrén, l. Cenél Feradaigh
- 151. Cú Chumair Ua Néill

1121

- 152. Cú Maigi m. Deorad ua Flaind, k. Thurles
- 153. Gilla Epscoip Eógan ua Aindicraidh, k. Ciannacht
- 154. Muiredach ua Flaithbertaigh, k. West Connacht
- 155. Aed ua hEidín, k. Uí Fiachrach
- 156. Muirghius Ua Lorcáin
- 157. Conchobor Ua Focarta
- 158. Son of In Deoraid Ua Flann

1122

- 159. Aed ua Ruairc
- 160. Aed m. Donnsléibe ua hEochada, k. Ulaid
- 161. Mael Sechlainn Ua Donnacán, k. Ara Tíre

1123

- 162. Person killed in Emly 1
- 163. Person killed in Emly 2
- 164. Person killed in Emly 3
- 165. Person killed in Emly 4
- 166. Person killed in Emly 5
- 167. Person killed in Emly 6
- 168. Person killed in Emly 7
- 169. Gilla Caech ua Ciarmaic
- 170. Donnchad m. Gilla Pátraic Ruad, k. Osraige
- 171. Congalach ua Laithbertaigh
- 172. Domnall ua Donnchad
- 173. Dubhdara m. Dubh
- 174. Muiredach Ua Dedaid

1124

- 175. Mael Sechlainn m. Cormac uaCarrthadh, k. Cashel
- 176. Ua Ciarmaic from Áine
- 177. Achaire Ua Cobthaigh
- 178. Ardgar ua hAed ua Mael Sechlainn
- 179. Mael Sechlainn m. Tadg ua Mael Sechlainn

1125

- 180. Gilla Braite ua Ruairc
- 181. Mael Sechlainn m. Donnchad
- 182. Muirchertach ua Cerbaill, k. Fernmag
- 183. Flann m. Aneslei Ua hEidin
- 184. Son of Cú Felba ua Carnaig
- 185. Domnall ua Cerbaill, k. Fernmag

1126

- 186. Aed Mac Duinn Sléibe, k. Ulaid
- 187. Ua Mael Ruanaid, k. Fir Manach
- 188. Domnall ua Dubda
- 189. Ruaidrí ua Tuchair
- 190. Muiredach ua Cuillen

1127

- 191. The Airthir
- 192. Niall m. Donn Sléibe
- 193. Eochaid ua Mathgamna
- 194. Cerbaill ua Faelán
- 195. Murchad ua Sógdan
- 196. In Gilla Manntach ua Failbi
- 197. Cathal ua Cathuil
- 198. Mael Sechlainn ua Cinaeda
- 199. Muirchertach ua Cinaeda
- 200. Senán m. Gollsci
- 201. Cathal Crobderg ua Domnaill
- 202. Ragnall Mac Riabaig

1128

- 203. Faelán ua Duibdara
- 204. Gilla Pátraic m. Tuathal
- 205. Ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 206. Cathal ua Roghallaigh
- 207. Sitriuc ua Mael Brigte
- 208. Son of Aed ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgadha
- 209. Young cleric
- 210. Magnus m. Ardgar m. Lochlainn, k. Ailech
- 211. Aed ua Cerbaill
- 212. King of Fir Manach

1129

- 213. Gilla Mo-Chonna ua Duibdirna
- 214. Gilla Críst ua hUidrén
- 215. Niall ua Críchán, k. Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha
- 216. Flann ua Cellaig, k. Brega

- 217. Mac Caíme Ua Flainn
- 218. “-gel” m. Mac Lochainn
- 219. Ua hAmráin
- 220. Son of Dub Roan Ua Meic Flainn

1130

- 221. Amlaíb m. Sénán, k. Gailenga
- 222. Aengus ua Caíndelbáin, k. Loegaire
- 223. Aed ua Loingsigh, k. Dál Araide
- 224. Gilla Pátraic ua Serraiigh, k. Dál Buine
- 225. Dub Railbe m. Cairton
- 226. Gilla Comgain
- 227. Diarmaid Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. east Mide
- 228. Mac Raith ua Conchobair
- 229. Son of Cathbar ua Domnaill
- 230. Conchul Fliuch mac meic Senán

1131

- 231. Aed m. Cúconmacht Ua Conchobair
- 232. Ua Carthaigh
- 233. Ferdánan
- 234. Gabránach Ua Baoighill
- 235. Conn Ua Mael Gaoithe
- 236. Ragnall ua hEochada, k. Ulaid
- 237. Cumhide Ua Cridain, k. Fernmag
- 238. Son of Cumhide Ua Cridain
- 239. Donnsléibe Ua hInnrehtaigh, k. Uí Méith
- 240. Conchobor Ua Briain
- 241. Gilla Pádraig Ua Londgargáin

1132

- 242. Lochlann Ua Lochlainn
- 243. Conchobor Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 244. Macraith Ua Níalláin
- 245. Ua Mugróin 1
- 246. Ua Mugróin 2

1133

- 247. Flaithbertach Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 248. Ua Cathal Ua Conchobair
- 249. Gilla na Naem Ua Flainn, I. Mael Ruain
- 250. Ragnall m. Pól
- 251. Son of Cúchonnrecht Ua Conchobair 1
- 252. Son of Cúchonnrecht Ua Conchobair 2
- 253. Olaf m. Aireachtach Ua Raduibh, I. Clann Tomaltaig
- 254. Ragnall m. Pól
- 255. Radubán m. Ua hAinlighe
- 256. Conchobor m. Murchadh Ua Mael Sechlainn
- 257. Donnchadh m. Gilla Mocholmóc

1134

- 258. Ua Cathal Ua Conchobair
- 259. Ugaire Ua Tuathail

- 260. Son of Gilla Maire m. Gilla Got
- 261. Gilla Caoimghin Ua Cennétigh
- 262. Donnchadh uaMurchad Ua Briain
- 263. Son of Donnchadh ua Murchad Ua Briain
- 264. Murchadh Ua hEaghra
- 265. Daughter of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 266. Cerball m. meic Faolán Ua Broin, k. Uí Faoláin
- 267. Archú ua Flaithbertaigh
- 268. Mael Sechlainn

1135

- 269. Cathal m. Tadg Ua Conchobair
- 270. Principal of Roscommon
- 271. Lector of Roscommon
- 272. Conchobor Ua Ceallaigh
- 273. Ua Mainnín, k. Soga
- 274. Ua Máille
- 275. Ruaidrí ua Canannáin, k. Cenél Conaill
- 276. Ua Madadháin, k. Síil Anmchada & Uí Máine
- 277. Cian Ua Mathgamna, k. Uí Echach
- 278. Ua Rinn
- 279. Mac Lochlainn Ua Cinn Faoladh
- 280. Son of Lochlann Ua Cinaeda
- 281. Maelmorda Ua Conchobair, k. Uí Failge
- 282. Echri Ua Taidg, k. Feara Lí
- 283. Wife of Echri Ua Taidg
- 284. Son of Echri Ua Taidg
- 285. Finguine Ua Caoimh, k. Glennanmach
- 286. Mathgamhain Ua Donnchada, k. Cenél Laoghaire
- 287. Aed Ua Conchobair, k. Corco Modruad

1136

- 288. Aed m. Domnall Ua Conchobair
- 289. Domnall ua Lochlainn, k. north of Ireland
- 290. Domnall Ua Caoindelbáin, k. Laoghaire
- 291. Ragnall mac Pól mac Adhmainn
- 292. Síadg Ua Briain

1137

- 293. Domnall m. Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn
- 294. Ailill m. Gilla Éuáin
- 295. Son of Lestar Ua hAinlighe, l. Cenél Dubda

1138

- 296. Aed Ua Confiaccla
- 297. Domnall Ua Ciardha, k. Cairpre
- 298. Tairdelbach Ua Briain
- 299. Maelruanaidh Ua Cairellain
- 300. Cormac m. Mac Carthaig, k. Desmumu

1139

- 301. Donnchad Ua Maelmuaid, k. Fir Cell
- 302. Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Fir Cell

- 303. Son of Ragnall m. Muiredach, l. Muintir Eolais
- 304. Aed Ua Conchla, k. Conmaicne Mara
- 305. Gilla Pádraig m. Gilla na Naem Ua Fergail
- 306. Conchobair m. Ardgar Mac Lochlainn, k. Ailech

1140

- 307. Muiredach Ua Fiannachta, l. Clann Muirchertaigh and Clann Connmhaigh

1141

- 308. Domnall m. Ruaidrí Ua Maelmuaidh, k. Fir Cell
- 309. Conchobor m. Donnchad m. Domnall Ua Mael Sechlainn
- 310. Domnall m. Faolán
- 311. Muirchertach m. Gilla Mac Colmóg
- 312. Murchad Ua Tuathail
- 313. Son of Mac Gormáin 1
- 314. Son of Mac Gormáin 2
- 315. Son of Mac Gormáin 3

1142

- 316. Gilla Sinitáin ua Amalgaid, l. Callraige Calladh
- 317. Donnchad Ua Conchobair, k. Ciarraige
- 318. Donnchad m. Mac Carthaig
- 319. Son of Fergal Ua Maelmuaid, k. Fir Cell
- 320. Donnchad m. Cennétig Ua Briain

1143

- 321. Murchad Ua Mael Sechlainn, l. Temair
- 322. Ua Domnaill, k. Coro Baiscinn
- 323. Gilla Brenainn ua Flann Ua Murchada
- 324. Chief of the household of Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 325. Ua Conchobair of Kerry

1144

- 326. Conchobor m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 327. Donnchad Mac Carthaig

1145

- 328. Murchad Ua Mael Brennain, l. Clann Conchobair
- 329. Donnchad Ua Mannachain, k. Uí Briúin na Sionna
- 330. Ruaidrí m. Cathal Ua Conchobair
- 331. Ruaidrí Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 332. Serrach Ua Connachtaigh
- 333. Cathal Ua Cathluain
- 334. Ua Cumráin
- 335. Fionn Ua Cerbaill

1146

- 336. Gilla Pádraig Ua Donnchada, k. Osraige
- 337. Gilla Beraig m. Dub Dara
- 338. Ragnall m. Turcaill, k. foreigners of Dublin
- 339. Ceallach Ua Ceallaigh, k. Breg
- 340. Gilla na Naem ua Cú Meadha Ua Laegnacháin

1147

- 341. Gilla Mochonna Ua Cathail, k. Uí Fiachrach Aidne
- 342. Ua hAmalgaid Ua Flainn
- 343. Duarcán Ua hEagra

1148

- 344. Echmarcach m. Branán
- 345. Son of Aireachtach Ua Raduibh
- 346. Oitir, k. foreigners of Dublin
- 347. Sitriuc Ua Braín, k. Bregmuine
- 348. Son of Fergal Ua Maelmuaidh, k. Fir Cell

1149

- 349. Diarmaid m. Magnus m. Ardgar Mac Lochlainn

1150

- 350. Gilla Claon Ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 351. Congalach Ua Bran
- 352. Domnall m. Domnall Ua Conchobair

1151

- 353. Muirchertach m. Conchobair Ua Briain, k. Tuadmumu
- 354. Lughaidh m. Domnall Ua Briain
- 355. Conchobor Ua Briain
- 356. Muirchertach Ua Bric, k. Déise
- 357. Ua Dedaig 1
- 358. Ua Dedaig 2
- 359. Ua Dedaig 3
- 360. Ua Dedaig 4
- 361. Ua Dedaig 5
- 362. Ua Dedaig 6
- 363. Ua Dedaig 7
- 364. Flaithbertach Ua Dedaig
- 365. Ua Seancháin 1
- 366. Ua Seancháin 2
- 367. Ua Seancháin 3
- 368. Ua Seancháin 4
- 369. Ua Seancháin 5
- 370. Ua Seancháin 6
- 371. Ua Seancháin 7
- 372. Ua Seancháin 8
- 373. Ua Seancháin 9
- 374. Ua Cuinn 1
- 375. Ua Cuinn 2
- 376. Ua Cuinn 3
- 377. Ua Cuinn 4
- 378. Ua Cuinn 5
- 379. Ua Gráda 1
- 380. Ua Gráda 2
- 381. Ua Gráda 3
- 382. Ua Gráda 4
- 383. Aneslis Ua Gráda

- 384. Ua Aichir 1
- 385. Ua Aichir 2
- 386. Ua Aichir 3
- 387. Ua Aichir 4
- 388. Ua Eochaidh Ua Loingsigh
- 389. Ua Néill Buidhe 1
- 390. Ua Néill Buidhe 2
- 391. Ua Néill Buidhe 3
- 392. Ua Néill Buidhe 4
- 393. Ua Echtigirn 1
- 394. Ua Echtigirn 2
- 395. Ua Echtigirn 3
- 396. Ua Echtigirn 4
- 397. Ua Echtigirn 5
- 398. Tadhg m. Liathanach Ua Conchobair
- 399. Muirchertach Ua Cathaláin, l. Clann Focartaigh
- 400. Aed m. Maelruanaidh Ua Fallomain, l. Clann Uatach
- 401. Luigne 1
- 402. Luigne 2
- 403. Luigne 3
- 404. Luigne 4

1152

- 405. Cathal m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 406. Domnall m. Rígbardán Ua Cerbaill, k. Éile
- 407. Fíngin m. Mac Carthaig

1153

- 408. Gilla Ceallaigh Ua hEidin
- 409. Aed m. Gilla Ceallaigh Ua hEidin
- 410. Brian ua Dubhda
- 411. Muirchertach m. Conchobor m. Tairdelbach
- 412. Domnall m. Cathal Ua Conchobair
- 413. Sitriuc m. Dubhgall
- 414. Ua Birn 1
- 415. Ua Birn 2
- 416. Flaithbertach Ua Cannanain, k. Cenél Conaill
- 417. Wife of Flaithbertach Ua Cannanain

1154

- 418. Murchad Ua Flannacáin
- 419. Ua Sitriuc Ua Ceallaigh
- 420. Mael Sechlainn m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 421. Dorn Cathaigh, k. Cenél Aeda

1155

- 422. Gilla Got Ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 423. Gilla Fiadhnatán ua hAed, l. Muintir Tlamain
- 424. Gilla Riabach ua Cú Caille Ua Gablaig
- 425. Ua Cindfaeladh, k. Conaill Gabra
- 426. Ua Cuilén, k. Conaill Gabra
- 427. Amlaoibh ua hEidirsgeoil, k. Corca Laoighde

1156

- 428. Ua hInneirghi
- 429. Aed Ua Canannain, k. Cenél Conaill
- 430. Son of Gilla Deacair Ua Cairbre, l. Tuath Buada
- 431. Son of Cinaoth Brecc Ua Ruairc
- 432. Aed m. Dub Dothair
- 433. Donn uaFionbarr Ua Geradáin
- 434. Fogartach Ua Cuinn
- 435. Aed m. Donnchadh Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Fir Cell
- 436. Eochaidh Ua Cuinn

1157

- 437. Cu-Uladh Ua Caindelbain
- 438. Ua Cathain
- 439. Fergal Ua Ruairc

1158

- 440. Sitriuc m. Gilla Éanáin
- 441. Bishop's man 1
- 442. Bishop's man 2
- 443. Tomaltach Ua Maelbreanainn
- 444. Gilla Dá Ua Tresaig
- 445. Ua hAed mac Ruadirí
- 446. Ua Meic Liag
- 447. Son of Aed of the Soldiers
- 448. Fearchar Ua Fallomain
- 449. Brian m. Donnchadh Ua Briain
- 450. Donnchadh m. Aed Ua Cerbaill
- 451. Ua Donnchada 1
- 452. Ua Donnchada 2
- 453. Ua hlfearnáin
- 454. Ua Cathail
- 455. Amlaoibh ua Donnchadh, k. Eóganacht Loch Léin
- 456. Mathgamain m. Mathgamain m. Mac Carthaig

1159

- 457. Son of the Night Ua Cernachain
- 458. Ua Maeldoraid 1
- 459. Ua Maeldoraid 2
- 460. Ua Maeldoraid 3
- 461. Aed m. Ruaidrí
- 462. Ua Tadm m. Tadm of the Household
- 463. Gilla Críst m. Diarmaid m. Tadm k. Mag Lurg
- 464. Murchad m. Tadm
- 465. Muireadhach Ua Mannacháin, k. Uí Briúin Sionna
- 466. Branán m. Branán, l. Corca Achlann
- 467. Ceithearnach Ua Fallomain, l. Clann Uatach
- 468. Aed m. Uallacháin, l. Muintir
- 469. Cellbuidhe Ua Sechnasaigh
- 470. Donnchad m. Aed m. Ruaidrí
- 471. Diarmaid Ua Concheanain
- 472. Aithis m. Laimín
- 473. Ua Cubráin

- 474. Ua Rotaidhe
- 475. Ua of Agneór
- 476. Cú Cacuig m. Aed
- 477. Cathal Crimthainn
- 478. Gilla Éanán Ua Domnaill
- 479. Son of Mac Ualgaire
- 480. Andad Ua Morucáin
- 481. Son of Finn Ua Siblen, k. Uí Echach Muaidh
- 482. Fionnbhar Ua Gerudhain, l. Muintir Gerudáin
- 483. Aed, k. Conmaicni
- 484. Ua Donnchada

1160

- 485. Domnall m. Mael Muaid Ua Mathghamna
- 486. Donnchadh Ua Mael Sechlainn
- 487. Ua Canannain
- 488. Brodur m. Torcall
- 489. Muirchertach Ua Neill
- 490. Lochlainn Ua Lochlainn
- 491. Ua Gairmleghaidh
- 492. Lorcán Ua Cáindelbáin, k. Laegaire
- 493. Diarmaid Ua Cathasaigh
- 494. Conchobor m. Domnall Ua hAnmchada

1161

- 495. Geoffrey Ua Raghallaigh, l. Breifne
- 496. Muirchertach Ua Ceallaigh, k. Brega
- 497. Gilla Íosa
- 498. Domnall m. Cú Maedha Ua Laoghacháin, l. Clann Suibne
- 499. Matadán Ua Rónán, k. Cairbre Grabra
- 500. Son of Matadán Ua Rónán
- 501. Aed Ua Cáim
- 502. Aed m. Amlaíb Ua Donnchada, k. Cenél Laeghaire & Eóganacht Loch Léinn
- 503. Mael Sechlainn m. Cellachán
- 504. Domnall m. Mael Muaid, k. Cenél Béici

1162

- 505. In Cosnomaid Ua Dubda
- 506. Ulsterman 1
- 507. Ulsterman 2
- 508. Ulsterman 3
- 509. Ulsterman 4
- 510. Ulsterman 5
- 511. Ulsterman 6
- 512. Mael Sechlainn Ua Ruairc
- 513. ??? Ua Dubhda
- 514. Cú Brogha
- 515. Cealladh Ua Diomsaigh

1163

- 516. Cú Caisil Ua Fionnalláin
- 517. Son of Donnchadh Mac carthaigh

- 518. Muirchertach Ua Donnchada
- 519. Son of Finn Ua Cerbaill
- 520. Murchad Ua Cennétig

1164

- 521. Dáibhí m. Donnsléibe Ua hEochada
- 522. Domnall m. Domnall
- 523. Mael Sechlainn Ua Conchobair Failghe
- 524. Coarb of Aibhe
- 525. Son of Coarb of Aibhe
- 526. Coarb of Mo Laca
- 527. Amlaíb ua hAmlaíb Ua Cinn Fhaelad
- 528. Kinsman of Amlaíb, ua hA. Ua Cinn Fhaelad

1165

- 529. Domnall Ua Gilla Pátraic, k. north Osraige
- 530. Conchobor Ua Broighte, k. Cenn Caille
- 531. Paitin Ua hAedha
- 532. Sitriuc Ua Ruairc
- 533. Echmarcach m. Mac Gilla Espuic
- 534. Ua Lomanaigh
- 535. Conchbor Ua Diarmata
- 536. Gilla na Trínóite Ua Dálaig
- 537. Gilla Aibhi Ua Dedaid
- 538. Donnchad m. Einnétig Ua Cinn Fhaelaid
- 539. Flaithbertach Ua Domnaill

1166

- 540. Domnall Mac Gilla Mocholmoic, k. Uí Dunchada
- 541. Cucuach Mac Gilla Espuic
- 542. Aed Ua Maelfabhail, k. Carraic Bracidhe
- 543. Muirchertach m. Niall Ua Lochlainn
- 544. Diarmait Mac Murchada
- 545. Conchobor Ua Fogartaigh
- 546. Mael Sechlainn m. Domnall Ua Carthaig

1167

- 547. Muirchertach m. Lagmad Ua Duibhdirma, k. Fordruim
- 548. Son of M. m. L. Ua Duibdrima 1
- 549. Son of M. m. L. Ua Duibdirma 2
- 550. Muiredach Mac Canai

1168

- 551. Muirchertach m. Tairdelbach Ua Briain, k. Dal Cais
- 552. Ua Conchobar Ua Briain
- 553. Son of King 1
- 554. Son of King 2
- 555. Son of King 3
- 556. Son of King 4
- 557. Son of King 5
- 558. Son of King 6
- 559. Son of King 7
- 560. Donnchadh Ua Cerbaill

- 561. Gilla Leithderg Ua Conchobair
- 562. Murchadh Ua Fionnalláin, k. Delbna Mór
- 563. ‘The first man of Raymond’s who crossed the moat’

1169

- 564. Diarmait Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. Mide
- 565. Donnchad Ua Mael Sechlainn

1170

- 566. Conchobor m. Muirchertach Ua Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogan
- 567. Donnchadh Ceinnselach Ua Cellaigh
- 568. Ua Mac Murchada / son of Domnall Caemanach
- 569. Son of Ua Caellaidhe
- 570. Magnus m. Donnsléibe, k. Ulaid
- 571. Diarmait Ua Ainbheith, k. Uí Meith
- 572. Leader of k. of Ailech’s horse-host
- 573. Ragnall Ua Rígbardáin
- 574. Son of Ímar Ua Cathail

1171

- 575. Ascall m. Torcall, k. Áth Cliath
- 576. John the Mad from the Islands of Orc
- 577. Domnall Ua Focarta, k. s. Eili
- 578. Magnus Mac Duinnsleibe
- 579. Lord of Fernmag 1
- 580. Lord of Fernmag 2
- 581. Lord of Fernmag 3
- 582. Lord of Fernmag 4
- 583. Lord of Fernmag 5
- 584. Mael Mochta Mac Confhebla, l. Cenél Feradaigh
- 585. Conchobor Mac Confhebla, l. Cenél Feradaigh
- 586. Peter Ua Mordha
- 587. Domnall Ua Mael Muaid, k. Fir Cell
- 588. Diarmaid Ua Cuinn
- 589. Ua Ligda
- 590. Mac Giolla Seachlainn, k. s. Brega
- 591. Gilla Éanáin m. Lughaidh, l. Coircne
- 592. Ua Donnchada
- 593. Aed Manach Ua Ruairc

1172

- 594. Tigernan Ua Ruairc, k. Breifne
- 595. Mael Muire Mac Murchada, l. Muintir Birn, k. Uí Echach
- 596. Domnall Ua Fergail, l. Muintir Angail
- 597. Murchadh Mac Murchada
- 598. Murchadh Ua Briain
- 599. Diarmaid Ua Ceallaidhe, k. Osraige
- 600. Ua Domnall Ua Briain
- 601. Son of Gilla Easpaig, l. Clann Ailebra

1173

- 602. Aed m. Oengussa
- 603. Donnsléibe, k. Ulaid

- 604. Domnall Bregach Ua Mael Sechlainn
- 605. Lochlann m. Mac Lachlainn
- 606. Domnall m. Anrad Ua Ruairc
- 607. Sitric Ua Flannacáin, k. east Tethba
- 608. Cathal Ua Domnaill
- 609. Torgar's son
- 610. Tadg Ua Cuairc

1174

- 611. Maelruanaid Ua Ciarda, k. Cairpre
- 612. Ruaidrí Ua Cerbaill, k. Éile
- 613. Maelsechlainn Ua Donnacáin, k. Ara

1175

- 614. Gilla Coluim Ua Maelmuaid, k. Fir Cell
- 615. Magnus Ua Mael Sechnaill
- 616. Domnall Caemanadh m. Diarmait Mac Murchada
- 617. Tadg m. Ruaidrí ('of the Mountain')
- 618. Son of Gilla Leithderg Ua Conchobair
- 619. Fergal Ua Braoin
- 620. Tadg m. Fergal Ua Ruairc
- 621. Ímar m. Mael Muaid
- 622. Knight 1
- 623. Knight 2
- 624. Knight 3
- 625. Knight 4

1176

- 626. Daughter of Ruaidrí Ua Conchobair
- 627. Niall m. Mac Lochlainn
- 628. Cu Maighi Ua Flainn, k. Ui Tuirtri & Fir Li & Dal Araidhe
- 629. Cormac Liathánach Mac Carrthaigh
- 630. Domnall Mac Gilla Pátraic, k. Cairpre Ua Ciarda
- 631. Flann m. Donnchad Ua Mael Sechnaill
- 632. Conchobor Ua Domnaill
- 633. Mac Raith Ua Súilliubáin
- 634. Gilla na Naem Ua Duinnsleibe
- 635. Corc Ua Muirchertaig
- 636. Domnall Ua Maelruanaid, k. Fir Manach

1177

- 637. Conchobor Ua Cairellain, l. Clann Diarmata
- 638. Gilla Mac Liac Ua Dunngaille, l. Fir Droma
- 639. Domnall Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 640. Aed Ua Néill
- 641. Ardgal m. Mac Lochlainn
- 642. Ua Coinnecen
- 643. Wife of Ua Coinnecen
- 644. Domnall ua Cathusach, k. Dál nAraide
- 645. Niall Ua Gailmredaigh, k. Mag Itha and Cenel Ennai
- 646. Mael Mórda m. Faolán

1178

- 647. Galach Ua Luinigh
- 648. Domnall m. Domnall Ua Gailmredaigh
- 649. Tigernán m. Ragnall m. Domnall
- 650. Ragnall m. Echmarcach Ua Cathain
- 651. Muircertach Ua Peatain
- 652. Dúnlaing Ua Tuathail, k. Uí Muiredhaigh
- 653. Muirchertach m. ‘The Fox’
- 654. Ua hAinbith, k. Uí Méith
- 655. Murchad Ua Cearbail, k. Airghialla
- 656. Conchobor Ua Donnchada
- 657. Muirchertach ua Domnall Ua Carthaig
- 658. Domnall Mór Ua Donnchada, k. Eóganacht and Uí Echach
- 659. Lochlainn Ua Cinaeda, k. Eóganacht
- 660. Cormac m. Mael Sechnaill m. Domnall Ua Carthaig
- 661. Gilla Críst Ua hAdhmhail, l. Clann Adhmail
- 662. Gilla Mártaín, l. Clann Conchada
- 663. Gilla Comhghaill Mac T???, l. Muintir Mongáin
- 664. Gonaobh Mac Carthaig, l. Clann Faghartaigh
- 665. Tomás Ua Corcarán

1179

- 666. Amlaim m. Menman
- 667. Amlaim’s man 1 – Cinaeth m. Art Ua Bracain
- 668. Amlaim’s man 2 – son of Gilla Críst
- 669. Amlaim’s man 3
- 670. Ragnall m. Ragnaill, l. Muintir Eolais
- 671. Muirchertach Ua Briuin

1180

- 672. Son of Niall Ua Coemain
- 673. Donnchadh Mac Cathmail
- 674. Ragnall Ua Cairellan
- 675. Son of Aindiles Ua Dochartaigh
- 676. Donnchada Ua Cairellain
- 677. Conchobor Ua Ceallaigh, k. Uí Maine
- 678. Son of Conchobor Ua Ceallaigh
- 679. Tadhg Ua Ceallaigh
- 680. Diarmaid Ua Ceallaigh
- 681. Mael Sechlainn m. Diarmaid
- 682. Son of Tadhg Ua Conchobair
- 683. Gilla Críst m. Mac Cardamna, l. Muintir Maíl Sinna
- 684. Muirgius Ua hEidin, k. Uí Fiachrach

1181

- 685. Aed Mac Murchada, l. Muintir Birn
- 686. Domnall Ua Ceinnedig, k. Íarmumu
- 687. Donnsléibe Ua Gadra, k. Sliab Lugha
- 688. Domnall Ua Concaninn, k. Uí Diarmata
- 689. Acan Ua Fallamain, l. Clann Uatach
- 690. Briain of Luighni, m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 691. Magnus m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 692. Mael Sechnaill m. Aed m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 693. Muirethach m. Aed m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair

- 694. Muircertach m. Aed m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 695. Muirchertach m. Tadc m. Cellachán
- 696. Aed hAed m. Ruaidrí, k. Íar Connacht
- 697. Donnchad m. Brian Ua Fallamain
- 698. Sitric Ua Cinn, l. Muintir Gillcán

1182

- 699. Ragnall Ua Breslin
- 700. Gilla Críst Ua Cathain
- 701. Milo Cogan
- 702. Remonn
- 703. Cenn Cuilind
- 704. Fitz Stephen 1
- 705. Fitz Stephen 2
- 706. Knight 1
- 707. Knight 2
- 708. Knight 3
- 709. Knight 4
- 710. Knight 5
- 711. Mac Sleimne
- 712. Thomas Sugach

1183

- 713. Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 714. Donnchad m. Domnall
- 715. Gilla Ultan mac Cergamna
- 716. Beg Ua hEgra, r. Luigne
- 717. Domnall m. Gilla Enain, l. Clann Flaithemail
- 718. Son of Ua Gairmleghaigh

1184

- 719. Art Ua Mael Sechlainn, k. west Mide
- 720. Amlaib m. Fergal Ua Ruairc, k. Breifne

1185

- 721. Son of Cormac Mac Carthaig, k. Mumu
- 722. Gilla Críst Mac Cathmail, l. Cenel Feradaig
- 723. Mael Sechlainn m. Muirchertach Ua Lochlainn
- 724. Foster brother of the son of the King of the Saxons
- 725. Ruaidrí Ua Grachan
- 726. Ruaidrí Ua Conaing

1186

- 727. Hugh de Lacy
- 728. Conn Ua Breslin
- 729. Conchobor Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 730. Diarmaid Mac Carghamhna
- 731. Murchad Ua Cleaigh, k. Uí Maine

1187

- 732. Ruaidrí Ua Flaithbertaigh, k. Cenél Eogain
- 733. Daughter of Ua hEidin / wife of Conchobor Mac Diarmata
- 734. Mael Sechlainn Ua Ruairc

1188

- 735. Ruaidrí Ua Canannain, k. Cenél Conaill
- 736. Brother of Ruaidrí Ua Canannain
- 737. Magnus Ua Gairb, l. Fir Droma
- 738. Domnall Ua Lochlainn, k. Ailech
- 739. Domnall m. Lochlainn Ua Maelrunaid
- 740. Fergal Ua Taidg
- 741. Flaithbertach Ua Finnachta
- 742. Muirchertach Ua Briain
- 743. Murchad m. Fergal Ua Maelrunaid
- 744. Taithlech m. Conchobor m. Diarmaid m. Tadg Ua Maelrunaid
- 745. Mael Sechlainn Ua Matachais
- 746. Brother of Mael Sechliann Ua Matachais

1189

- 747. Domnall m. Muirchertach Ua Lochlainn
- 748. ‘Son of the night’ Ua Maelrunaid, k. Fir Manach
- 749. Conchobor Maenmaighi m. Ruaidrí, k. Connacht
- 750. Conchobor Ua Diarmata
- 751. Mael Cainnigh
- 752. Cuilén Ua Cuiléin
- 753. Diarmaid Ua Meic Thire
- 754. Fingen Ua Caím
- 755. Muirchertach Ua Caím
- 756. Mael Sechlainn m. Lochlainn
- 757. Amlaíb Ua Failbi
- 758. Diamaid m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair

1190

- 759. Mael Sechlainn Ua Neachtain
- 760. Gilla Beraigh Ua Sluaigheadhaigh

1191

- 761. Muirchertach m. Cathal Odar

1192

- 762. Taichleach Ua Dubda, k. Uí Amalgaidh & Uí Fiachrach
- 763. Mathgamain Ua Muirchertaig m. Muiredach
- 764. Branán Mac Branain
- 765. Conchobor, k. Ulaid
- 766. Son of Mac Carmhagan 1
- 767. Son of Mac Carmhagan 2
- 768. Son Tadg Mac Ua??? 1
- 769. Son of Tadg Mac Ua?? 2

1193

- 770. Eochaid Ua Baighill
- 771. Cathal Odar m. Mac Carthaig
- 772. In Brec Ua Muirchertaig
- 773. Diarmaid m. Cubrogha Ua Diamsaigh, l. Clann Mag Lurg & k.
Uí Failge
- 774. Aed Ua Maelbrennan, l. Clann ?

1194

- 775. Cu Midhe Ua Flainn
- 776. Kinsman of Cu Midhe Ua Flainn
- 777. Tadg m. Mathgamain Ua Briain
- 778. Gilla Ailbi Ua Caím
- 779. Kinsman of Gilla Ailbi Ua Caím
- 780. Son of Magnus Mac Duinsléibe

1195

- 781. Son of the Cleric Ua Cathala
- 782. Sític Ua Gailmredaigh

1196

- 783. Muirchertach m. Muirchertach Ua Lochlainn, k. Cenél Eogain
- 784. Ua Curin, m. Bloscaadh
- 785. Donnchad Ua Donnacáin
- 786. Muirchertach m. Cennétig Ua Briain
- 787. Foreigner 1
- 788. Foreigner 2
- 789. Foreigner 3
- 790. Foreigner 4
- 791. Foreigner 5
- 792. Foreigner 6
- 793. Foreigner 7
- 794. Foreigner 8
- 795. Domnall Ua Mórda
- 796. Mac Dubháin
- 797. Mac Sergail
- 798. Gillabrighdach Dochartaigh
- 799. Corc Ua Muirchertaigh
- 800. Aed Ua Fergaill, l. Muintir Anghaile
- 801. Mathgamain m. Conchobor
- 802. Echmarcach Ua Dochartaigh, k. Cenel Conaill
- 803. Cathal Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 804. Son of Mael Íosa Ua Conchobair
- 805. Son of Mac Murchada
- 806. Son of Ua Flaithbertaigh
- 807. Gilla Ruaid m. Mac Ragnaill. l. Muintir Eolais
- 808. Donnchad Ua Tairchertm l. Clann Sneidghile
- 809. Domnall m. Ragnaill, l. Muintir Eolais

1197

- 810. Mac Gilla Eidich
- 811. Mac Craith Ua Flaithbertaigh, k. Tír Eogan
- 812. Maelrunaid Ua Fercomais, l. Clann Diarmata
- 813. Horseman 1
- 814. Horseman 2
- 815. Cú Maeda Mac Con Mara
- 816. Conchobor Ua Cuinn
- 817. Echmarcach Ua Dochartaigh
- 818. Gilla srónmael Ua Dochartaigh, k. ???
- 819. Conchobor Ua Cathain, k. Fir na Craoibhe

1198

- 820. Ruaidrí m. Brin m. Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair
- 821. Ua Langán
- 822. Goffraid m. Goffraid Ua Raghailagh

1199

- 823. Ua Néill 1
- 824. Ua Néill 2
- 825. Ua Néill 3
- 826. Ua Néill 4
- 827. Ua Néill 5
- 828. Niall Ua Duibhirma
- 829. Donnchad m. Raudrí Ua Conchobair

Appendix 4 – Dearth, disease and the supernatural

Eleventh century entries in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

TOTAL: 53

- 1005 – Scarcity
- 1008 – Snow and frost
- 1010 – Hot summer and fruitful autumn
- 1012 – Colic
- 1012 – Rain
- 1014 – A vision
- 1015 – Scarcity
- 1016 – Wind
- 1018 – Comet
- 1019 – Lightning
- 1019 – Colic
- 1021 – Abundance of wheat
- 1023 – Drought
- 1023 – Solar eclipse
- 1026 – Ice
- 1028 – Snow
- 1030 – Large man washed up from the sea
- 1031 – Snow
- 1033 – Murrain
- 1033 – Blood from relic
- 1037 – Wet and stormy weather
- 1039 – Solar eclipse
- 1045 – Poverty and dearth in France and Germany
- 1046 – Lightning
- 1047 – Snow
- 1052 – Wind
- 1054 – Moving lake
- 1054 – Steeple of fire
- 1056 – Lightning
- 1057 – Mast and murrain
- 1061 – Smallpox and colic
- 1066 – Abundance of nuts
- 1066 – ‘Hairy star’
- 1075 – Mast
- 1077 – Lumps/*sinech*
- 1077 – Wind
- 1084 – Pestilence
- 1087 – Mast
- 1091 – Good weather
- 1092 – Snow and frost
- 1093 – Mast
- 1093 – Wind
- 1093 – Pestilence
- 1094 – Bad weather
- 1095 – Snow

1095 – Mortality
1095 – Mast
1096 – Panic surrounding feast of St John
1096 – Lightning
1097 – Nuts
1098 – Rain and fertility
1099 – Epidemic
1099 – Famine

Twelfth century entries in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB & Cotton.

TOTAL: 53

1101 – Good weather
1101 – Cattle mortality
1103 – Child born with two heads
1105 – Snow
1105 – Huge fish
1107 – Snow
1107 – Wind / lightning / bad weather
1108 – Lightning
1108 – Wind
1108 – Oak mast
1108 – Good weather / corn
1109 – Rain / bad weather
1109 – Abundance of apples
1111 – Frost
1112 – Mast
1113 – Ball of fire
1113 – Mortality
1113 – Huge salmon
1114 – Murrain
1115 – Bad weather / snow / frost
1116 – Pestilence / famine
1118 – Earthquake / mermaid
1121 – Ball of fire
1121 – Wind
1129 – Hot summer / mortality
1130 – Nut crop
1133 – Cattle murrain
1134 – Hailstones
1139 – Eclipse
1149 – Thunder and lightning
1153 – Famine
1156 – Snow
1156 – Great crop
1165 – Snow
1168 – Nuts
1170 – Lightning
1172 – Bad weather
1173 – Pestilence

1173 – Illumination of the sky
1177 – Lightning
1177 – Hail
1178 – Dried up river
1178 – Wind
1178 – Frost
1178 – Talking crozier
1178 – Appearance of an island on the Shannon
1179 – Dearth
1179 – ‘Snow of destruction’
1185 – Oak crop
1189 – Warfare and sickness
1191 – Wind
1195 – Mast
1199 – Mast and fruit

Appendix 5 – Church burnings, synods, visitations, church building and the installation of new churchmen

Eleventh century non-obit ecclesiastical events in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB, and Cotton.

TOTAL: 163

1000

N/A

1001

1. Mael Muire replaces Muirecán as abbot of Armagh

1002

2. Cell Cleithe plundered
3. Inis Cumsraig (Inch) plundered

1003

N/A

1004

N/A

1005

N/A

1006

N/A

1007

4. Ferdomnach installed as coarb Colum Cille

1008

N/A

1009

N/A

1010

N/A

1011

N/A

1012

N/A

1013

5. Cork burned
6. Glendalough burned
7. Cell Maignenn burned

1014

N/A

1015

8. Cell Mo-Chellóc burned
9. Emly vacated
10. Lorrha attacked
11. Most of the churches of Munster vacated

1016

12. Dún Lethglaise burned
13. Clonmacnoise burned
14. Clonfert burned
15. Kells burned

1017

16. Glendalough burned

1018

N/A

1019

17. Kildare burned
18. Church at Dermag destroyed
19. Kells plundered

1020

20. Kildare burned
21. Glendalough burned
22. Clonard burned
23. Clonmacnoise burned
24. Swords burned
25. Armagh burned
26. Amalgaid made coarb of Armagh

1021

27. Amalgaid's visitation of Munster

1022

28. Kildare plundered

1023

29. Glebeland of Clonmacnoise burned

1024

30. Slane plundered and burned

1025

31. Termonfeckin plundered

1026

- 32. Domhnach Seachnaill plundered
- 33. Tullamaine plundered
- 34. Coarb of Patrick spent Easter with Donnchad m. Brian
- 35. Inismot ravaged

1027

- 36. Desecration of the Staff of Jesus

1028

- 37. Duleek plundered
- 38. Oratory of Sláine fell down

1029

- 39. Burning of Aed Ua Ruairc's house
- 40. Burning of Inis Lainne

1030

- 41. Roscommon laid waste
- 42. Elphin laid waste

1031

- 43. Ard Brecán plundered
- 44. Kildare burned
- 45. Cell Chomair burned
- 46. Swords burned
- 47. Clonfert plundered
- 48. Inis Eogain plundered

1032

- 49. Aed Ua Furreid accedes to bishopric of Armagh
- 50. Church of Ailbe attacked

1033

N/A

1034

- 51. Aengus m. Cathán becomes abbot
- 52. A house in Clonmacnoise stormed by the men of Munster

1035

- 53. Ardbreccan plundered
- 54. Swords plundered and burned
- 55. Clonfert plundered

1036

N/A

1037

- 56. Muichertach made abbot

1038

- 57. Clonard burned
- 58. A battle in the middle of Clonmacnoise

1039

N/A

1040

- 59. Kildare burned
- 60. Kells burned
- 61. Dún dá Lethglas burned
- 62. Colum Cille's moon plundered
- 63. Dísert Diarmada plundered
- 64. My Senoc's Mugna plundered
- 65. Clonmore plundered
- 66. Larabrien plundered and burned

1041

- 67. Church of Clochar built

1042

- 68. Ferns burned
- 69. Glenn Uisen burned

1043

- 70. Clonfert burned
- 71. Glebe of St Kevin plundered
- 72. Louth plundered
- 73. Druim Inesclainn plundered

1044

- 74. St Patrick's Skreen burned
- 75. Clonmacnoise plundered

1045

- 76. Clonfert burned
- 77. Swords burned

1046

- 78. Ardfert destroyed by lightning

1047

N/A

1048

- 79. 'Almost all the churches of the men of Mide' burned
- 80. Inis Locha Cime ravaged

1049

- 81. Dub dá Leithe becomes abbot
- 82. Aed ua Forreid becomes lector
- 83. Churches of Mide burned
- 84. Roscommon burned

1050

- 85. Kildare burned
- 86. Emly burned
- 87. Clonmacnoise burned 1
- 88. Clonmacnoise burned 2
- 89. Clonmacnoise burned 3
- 90. Lann Léire burned

1051

N/A

1052

- 91. Carthach assumes the abbacy of Emly by force

1053

- 92. Lusk raided

1054

N/A

1055

- 93. Cell Finnabrach burned
- 94. Kilfenora burned

1056

- 95. Disert Tola damaged by lightning

1057

- 96. Scattery Island plundered

1058

- 97. Emly burned
- 98. Lorrha raided

1059

- 99. Findabair Eba burned and plundered

1060

- 100. Kells burned
- 101. Leithglenn burned
- 102. Ua hErudain succeeds Dub dá Leith as abbot
- 103. Clonmacnoise plundered

1061

- 104. Killaloe burned
- 105. Glendalough burned

1062

N/A

1063

N/A

- 1064**
106. Mael Ísu m. amalgaoid takes abbacy of Armagh
- 1065**
107. Clonmacnoise burned
108. Clonfert burned
- 1066**
109. Shrine of Patrick plundered
- 1067**
110. Kildare burned
- 1068**
111. Mael Ísu on a visitation of Munster
112. Clonfert vacated
- 1069**
113. Dún dá Lethglas burned
114. Ardstraw burned
115. Lusk burned
116. Swords burned
117. Granard burned
118. St Fechín's Fore burned
119. Ardbrackan burned
- 1070**
120. Termonn Da Beóc plundered
- 1071**
121. Kildare burned
122. Glendalough burned
123. Clondalkin burned
- 1072**
N/A
- 1073**
N/A
- 1074**
124. Armagh burned
125. Part of Ardpatrick burned
- 1075**
N/A
- 1076**
N/A
- 1077**
126. Clonmacnoise burned

1078

N/A

1079

N/A

1080

N/A

1081

- 127. Cork burned
- 128. Killaloe burned
- 129. Mungret burned
- 130. Aran of the Saints raided

1082

N/A

1083

N/A

1084

- 131. Glendalough burned
- 132. Killaloe burned
- 133. Tomgraney burned
- 134. Mayo burned
- 135. Church of St Fuinche of Ros Oirrchir founded

1085

N/A

1086

N/A

1087

N/A

1088

- 136. Cluain Uama burned
- 137. Mungret burned

1089

- 138. Lusk burned
- 139. Kildare burned 1
- 140. Kildare burned 2
- 141. Kildare burned 3
- 142. Inis Bó Finne ravaged
- 143. Inis Clothrann ravaged

1090

- 144. Stone church of the Fert burned
- 145. Reliquaries of Colum Cille brought out of Tír Chonaill

1091

- 146. Part of Armagh burned
- 147. Domnall ua Amalgaid made abbot of Armagh

1092

- 148. Clonmacnoise raided
- 149. Domnall ua Amalgaid on a visitation of Cenél Eógain
- 150. Part of Armagh burned

1093

N/A

1094

- 151. Domnall ua Amalgaid on a visitation of Munster

1095

- 152. Kells burned
- 153. Dermagh burned
- 154. Ardstraw burned
- 155. Durrow burned
- 156. Fore burned
- 157. Clonard burned
- 158. Clonmacnoise plundered

1096

N/A

1097

- 159. Bell-tower of Mainistir burned

1098

- 160. Aed ua Mael Eogain born

1099

- 161. Kells burned
- 162. Kildare burned
- 163. Ardstraw burned

Twelfth century non-obit ecclesiastical events in AU, AT, AI, ALC, MCB, and Cotton.

TOTAL: 241

1100

1. Church of St Sinell of Cláininis founded
2. Oratory of Both Medba burned

1101

3. Scattery Island plundered
4. Fathain of Muru burned
5. Ardstraw burned
6. Cúl Rathain burned

7. Armagh raided
8. Convention at Cashel

1102

9. Swords burned
10. Cashel burned
11. Ros Ailithir plundered
12. Fochart Muirthemne ravaged

1103

13. Armagh ravaged

1104

N/A

1105

14. Cellach m. Aed ordained coarb of Armagh

1106

15. Dísert Diarmata burned
16. Cellach went on a visitation of Cenél Eógain
17. Cellach went on a visitation of Munster for the first time
18. Cellach appointed bishop

1107

19. Mael Pátraic ua Drucán becomes lector of Armagh
20. Mael Coluim ua Brolcháin becomes bishop

1108

21. Cellach went on a visitation of Connacht

1109

22. Ardraccan burned

1110

23. Mucnám plundered
24. Cellach went on a visitation of Mide

1111

25. Louth burned
26. Kells burned
27. Dún dá Lethglas burned by lightning
28. Clonmacnoise plundered
29. Synod of Rath Fiadh Mic Aenghusa
30. Synod of Uisnech
31. Termon da Beóic plundered

1112

32. Armagh burned
33. Terryglass burned
34. Fore burned

1113

35. Lismore burned

1114

- 36. Fore burned
- 37. Clonard burned
- 38. Kilbannon burned
- 39. Cong burned
- 40. Kilcullen burned
- 41. Kilenny burned
- 42. Ardpatrick burned
- 43. Desecration of St Ciarán's 'Gapling'

1115

- 44. Ardbreccan burned

1116

- 45. Cellach went on a visitation of Connacht
- 46. Killaloe burned
- 47. Cork burned
- 48. Emly burned
- 49. Lismore burned
- 50. Achad Bó burned
- 51. Clonard burned
- 52. Abbots house in Armagh burned

1117

N/A

1118

N/A

1119

N/A

1120

- 53. Cellach on a visitation of Munster

1121

- 54. 70 churches raided by Tairdelbach ua Conchobair
- 55. Termon of Lismore plundered
- 56. Cellach becomes bishop of Dublin
- 57. Trian Masan burned
- 58. Bell-tower of Armagh damaged by wind

1122

- 59. Cell Ruaid raided

1123

- 60. Emly attacked
- 61. Part of the True Cross enshrined in Roscommon
- 62. Part of Duleek burned

1124

N/A

1125

- 63. Lismore burned
- 64. Ridge built over the stone church of Armagh

1126

- 65. Cork burned
- 66. Consecration of the stone church of the oratory of SS Peter and Paul
- 67. Successor of Patrick away making peace for a year

1127

- 68. Cork plundered

1128

- 69. Churches of Trim burned
- 70. Louth plundered
- 71. Armagh plundered

1129

- 72. Muirchertach m. Domnall made coarb of Armagh
- 73. Cill-mic-Nenain captured and burned
- 74. Stone house of Clonmacnoise raided

1130

- 75. Swords burned
- 76. Churches ravaged by the Ulaid

1131

- 77. Kildare burned and the abbess raped

1132

- 78. Cell Bian plundered

1133

- 79. Lusk burned
- 80. Consecration of Cormac's chapel

1134

- 81. The Cathach of St Iarlaithe desecrated

1135

- 82. Derry burned
- 83. Clonard burned
- 84. Ráith Lúraigh burned
- 85. Kells burned
- 86. Ráith Both burned
- 87. Roscommon burned
- 88. Eanach Dúin burned
- 89. Part of Cunga Fhéichín burned
- 90. Part of Lismore burned
- 91. Lann Eala burned
- 92. Mael Maedóc Ua Morgair appointed coarb of Armagh

1136

- 93. Clonard plundered
- 94. Ráith Muighe Deiscirt plundered and burned

1137

- 95. Many churches damaged by a storm
- 96. Churches of the Ciarraige plundered by the Síl Briain

1138

- 97. Lismore burned
- 98. Kildare burned
- 99. Tech Moling burned
- 100. Swords burned

1139

- 101. Church of Rathán burned

1140

- 102. Terryglass burned and the shrine broken

1141

N/A

1142

N/A

1143

- 103. A great assembly by the clerics of all Ireland and Connacht

1144

- 104. Hosting and convention by the clerics of Ireland
- 105. Great gathering of the men of Ireland, lay and cleric

1145

N/A

1146

N/A

1147

N/A

1148

- 106. Boyle abbey founded

1149

- 107. Churches of the Ulaid ravaged

1150

N/A

1151

- 108. Cardinal John Paparo comes to Ireland with four pallia

1152

109. Synod of Kells

1153

N/A

1154

N/A

1155

110. Door of Derry church made

111. Inis Clothrann burned

1156

112. Durrow burned

1157

113. Lismore burned

114. Daimh-Inis burned

115. Mellifont church consecrated

116. Roscrea burned

1158

117. Synod at the Hill of Mac Taidhg

118. Church of Achadh Dá Eó completed

1159

119. Glebe of Clonfert plundered

1160

N/A

1161

N/A

1162

120. Emly burned

121. Synod at Cloenad

122. Locan Ua Tuathail ordained successor of St Coemghen

123. Eighty houses in Derry destroyed and a stone wall built

1163

124. Glendalough burned

125. Construction of a lime kiln

1164

126. Arrival of a delegation from Iona

127. Part of Armagh burned

128. Church built at Derry

129. Newry destroyed

130. Sabhall Pádraig plundered

131. Downpatrick plundered

132. Aointreabh plundered

- 133. Baile Cluig Comhghaill plundered
- 134. Inis Pádraig plundered
- 135. Tomgraney burned
- 136. Clonfert burned
- 137. Terryglass burned

1165

- 138. Churches of Ulaid ravaged
- 139. Senguala burned

1166

- 140. Ferns burned
- 141. Armagh burned
- 142. Kells burned
- 143. Louth burned
- 144. Inis Cain burned
- 145. Derry burned
- 146. Ard Bó burned
- 147. Synod at Lismore

1167

N/A

1168

N/A

1169

- 148. Damhliac of St Ciannan burned
- 149. Churches of Osraige ravaged

1170

- 150. Churches of Leinster and Mide destroyed
- 151. Congregation in Saball expelled
- 152. Durrow burned
- 153. Clonard plundered
- 154. Kells burned
- 155. Dulane burned
- 156. Slane burned
- 157. St Coman's relics raised in his shrine

1171

- 158. Cul Rathain and other churches raided
- 159. Bell house of Tulach Ard burned

1172

- 160. Successor of Patrick goes on a circuit of Connacht
- 161. Cell Achaid plundered and burned
- 162. Synod held at Tuam

1173

- 163. Armagh plundered
- 164. Lismore plundered

1174

- 165. Synod of Birr
- 166. Diocese of Westmeath annexed to Clonmacnoise

1175

- 167. Gilla Mac Liac Ua Branain appointed successor of Colum Cille
- 168. Plundering of the churches of the Ciarraige
- 169. Clonard plundered
- 170. Durrow plundered

1176

- 171. Fabor St Feichin ravaged
- 172. Kells ravaged
- 173. Louth ravaged
- 174. Scattery Island ravaged
- 175. Glendalough ravage

1177

- 176. Dun dá Lethglas destroyed
- 177. Churches of Tuaim Da Gualann burned
- 178. Churches at Cul Rathain burned
- 179. Churches at Airthir Maighi burned
- 180. Donnchad Ua Cairellain bestows gifts to the community at
Derry
- 181. Cardinal Vivianus comes to Ireland
- 182. Churches burned in Munster
- 183. Tech Saxan burned by lightning
- 184. Tuam plundered
- 185. Cell Beneóin burned
- 186. Cell Medóin burned
- 187. Leccach burned
- 188. Cell Chathgaile burned
- 189. Ros Cáim burned
- 190. Outbreak of water in Glendalough
- 191. Ailfind burned
- 192. Imlech Fordeorach burned
- 193. Imlech mBroccada burned

1178

- 194. Lismore burned
- 195. Cashel burned
- 196. Mael Ísu Ua Cerbaill becomes bishop 'of the Airgialla' (1182
Cotton.)

1179

- 197. Armagh burned
- 198. Churches of Tír Eógain desolated
- 199. Cluana plundered
- 200. Ardstraw plundered
- 201. Domhnach Mór plundered
- 202. Ernaidhe plundered
- 203. Churches of the Airgialla plundered
- 204. Ardfert burned

- 1180**
 205. Inisfallen plundered
 206. Ardfert plundered
- 1181**
 207. Tomaltach Ua Conchobair appointed successor of Patrick
- 1182**
 208. Gospel of St Martin carried off
- 1183**
 N/A
- 1184**
 209. Armagh pillaged
 210. Mael Ísa appointed successor of Patrick
 211. Church at Tuaim Da Ghualann fell
- 1185**
 212. Fogartach Ua Cerbaill made bishop of Armagh
 213. Mael Caining Ua Fercomais made lector of Derry
 214. Churches of West Connacht burned
 215. Killaloe burned
- 1186**
 216. Order of Carthusians confirmed
- 1187**
 217. Drumcliff pillaged
- 1188**
 218. Some of the churches of Connacht burned
- 1189**
 219. Armagh burned
 220. Armagh pillaged
- 1190**
 N/A
- 1191**
 N/A
- 1192**
 221. The door of the refectory of Derry made
 222. Ua hÉinne made legate of Ireland and he convened a synod in
 Dublin
 223. Emly burned
- 1193**
 224. Inis Clothrann plundered
- 1194**

N/A

1195

N/A

1196

- 225. Termonn Dabheóg burned
- 226. House of Canons Regular of SS Peter and Paul in Armagh
burned
- 227. Domnach Mór plundered
- 228. Refectory of Crimthear Coluim plundered
- 229. Church if Doire Loráin plundered
- 230. Termonn Comáin plundered
- 231. Disert Dá Crích burned
- 232. Cork plundered

1197

- 233. Mac Gilla Eidich stole from the altar at Derry
- 234. Burning of churches by the Galls
- 235. Churches of Thomond plundered

1198

- 236. Gilla Críst Ua Cernaigh ordained abbot of Coluim Cille

1199

- 237. Ardstraw destroyed
- 238. Rath Bó destroyed
- 239. Daire ravaged
- 240. Inis Eogain destroyed
- 241. Monastery of SS Peter and Paul plundered

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